

Geography at Samuel Whitbread Academy

Intent

At Samuel Whitbread Academy, we aim to bring Geography into the classroom. We aim for students to see the world from their seats. We aim to inspire and aspire, and demonstrate that learning is continuous, just as changes in our world are.

Our KS5 curriculum has a high expectation of pupils and aims to develop empathy, integrity and respect for the world: to strive and be the best that we can be. We intend for our students to recognise our shared values with others' around the world and to challenge stereotypes, no matter what our race, religion, gender or political views are. Students develop an understanding of the outside world, from Shefford to Luton, India to the Philippines, and the United States to China; as well as recognise and embrace our diverse populations.

Geography at A Level is an enriching experience and provides students a broad-range of skills and knowledge. At Samuel Whitbread Academy, we instil core geographical skills, focusing on our physical environment and how human interactions in history have shaped who we are today. We aim to create a generation of geographers who will be the future of environmental sustainability, technological advances in carbon, and spreading the values of our global world. We aim to develop learners who build confidence in their own abilities, learning about the world they are living in, and providing them real world experiences so that they have the skills they need to travel, recognise and accept cultural differences, and have a successful career. Students will also learn about the importance of our own culture, and our democratic rights as citizens of the world.

Our curriculum aims to create cultured, creative and motivated individuals who sustainably interact with their world, foster a passion for its diversity, and play a role in shaping its future.

Implementation

A Level Geography at Samuel Whitbread Academy is split into two disciplines; human geography, and physical geography. This is advantageous to students as it allows for deep exploration of the fields of study separately, whilst also making links across the curriculum. Our geography lessons are structured with key learning strategies to enable students to excel. Our geography lessons follow the Edexcel A Level Geography curriculum, which sections each of our 8 topics into Enquiry Question modules. Each topic has between three and four of these Enquiry Questions, which provides helpful topic review and assessment points for students. Discussion is key to the development of verbal skills and ideas, and students receive feedback from their peers and teachers to ensure they can move to their next step of challenge.

At Samuel Whitbread Academy, we also have a key focus on developing pupil's literacy and reading skills so that they can access the best geography has to offer. Students lessons are regularly based upon challenging and specific reading tasks to be used as a learning tool. Home learning and remote learning follows this same theme, with all subject material for Geography highly accessible for students through Google Classroom and our A-Level Learning Platform. We aim to ensure pupil's get the best possible opportunity to build on their learning inside and outside the classroom, and therefore our department's homework strategy is based on recall, retrieving knowledge already visited, and wider research which enriches their experiences at Sixth Form. Finally, we have a well-established routine of Fortnightly Questions (FQ's), which is designed so that student build on prior learning, and develop examination technique. This enables students to receive regular feedback on their knowledge retentions and ability to apply it to examination style questions.

Implementation	Key Stage 5: Year 12	<p>The first year of A Level Geography considers the core and fundamental landscapes and global changes we see both historically and in the modern day. It aims to build on core GCSE knowledge.</p> <p>In physical geography, the first focus is on our tectonic landscape and the processes which create a hazardous world. This topic explores the risky world we live in, and focuses on the governance and vulnerability issues places such as The Philippines, Haiti, the Sichuan province of China, and Iceland. This makes good links to human geography in examining the relationship between physical hazards and development levels. Following this, physical geography examines current issues closer to home; through coastal landscapes. We live in an increasingly unstable world, where erosion and coastal recession area major challenge for the South of England’s coastal regions, with particular focus on the Holderness coastline. Climate change, sea level rise and urbanisation also play their role in increasing the level of challenge that exists in managing coastal landscapes. Therefore, this topic encourages an evaluative approach to how we plan for the future and protect some of the UK’s most beautiful landscapes.</p> <p>In human geography, we begin Year 12 by considering the global world we live in. We explore migration, the creation of a ‘global culture’, westernisation, and the winners and losers of the globalisation process. We consider our own consumerism, and how we have lives that have been shaped by an ever closer and changing world; through the internet, the media, and the advance of technology. Globalisation is our recent past, our present, and the future; therefore, we make judgements on the long-term impacts it has socially, economically, culturally, environmentally, and politically. In the following unit, Diverse Places, we take a lot of the ideas of a globalised world and apply them to how the UK has seen vast change culturally and ethnically. We use Shefford as an example of a small, rural area, and create comparisons to Luton, a large diverse town. We finally debate some of the issues and tensions created by increased migration and diversity in our UK cities and towns, and consider whether or not we effectively manage these issues.</p>
	Key Stage 5: Year 13	<p>Year 13 allows for the cultural capital development of our geographers; using their fieldwork skills, exploring ways of using data, and taking control of their own learning through their NEA. Students complete a five-day fieldtrip to Dorset on the south coast to explore the social, economic and environmental issues that exist. This provides students the skills and concepts they need to take advantage of their independent investigation.</p> <p>Meanwhile, student’s physical geography dives into the world of water and carbon. These are two separate modules which have fantastic links as the concepts interact and alter each other. In the water cycle, students explore the complex ideas surrounding flooding, human land-use, drainage basins and management of water issues around the world. They also make their own in-depth analysis of the major water stress issues that the UK faces, as well as possible solutions to the impending water crisis. Within the carbon cycle, we tackle the complex issue of climate change, our changing demand for energy and resources, and our increasing use of fossil fuels. This means that students can create critical links between the depleting supply of water the world is facing and the increased demand for resources.</p> <p>Human geography in Year 13 continues the synoptic links from Year 12. Students study the Superpowers unit, which can be seen as a battle between the economic giants of the USA and China. This unit provides students with a deep understanding of the military, economic and political powers of today’s world, and the fall-out of past colonialism and conflict. We also explore the future giants of economic prosperity, paying particular attention to the BRIC nations. The final unit of Year 13 is the Migration, Identity and Sovereignty module. This is a unit which builds greatly on the learning students have already carried out across all topics, to critically evaluate the role these characteristics play in nation states, and the importance of each of them individually. We look at what it means to have a sense of ‘identity’ within a community and nationally, as well as linking to key events worldwide, including the UK’s relationship with the European Union. This unit is a modern, balanced and reflective experience which illustrates the globalised world we live in.</p>

Our Intent and Implementation aim to ensure that all geography students gain knowledge and understanding of how the world works, as well as developing the ability to evaluate and critically analyse key events at KS5.

Students are regularly assessed to check their understanding and progress within each of the units they are taught in Key Stage 5.

Our assessments include:

- Regular Enquiry Question assessments which are teacher marked.
- Peer and self-assessment of lesson tasks.
- Fortnightly Question cycles which are teacher assessed and whole-class feedback is provided.
- IPE exams throughout Year 12 and 13.

The Geography department consistently and regularly provide feedback to our students through our KS5 folder scrutiny process, assessment-based questions, and enquiry question assessments, ensuring that all of our learners make progress through their topic-based learning.

One of the key ways we measure our success as a geography department and for our students is through the uptake of our subject at GCSE and A-Level, and those progressing to university and apprenticeship schemes in geography related careers. The number of students taking A Level geography at Samuel Whitbread Academy continues to be above 50 students every Year, and we currently have over 100 students studying A Level Geography. In addition to this, there has been a marked increase in the number of our students taking geography related career and university pathways, highlighting the success and enthusiasm our geography curriculum has created.

At Samuel Whitbread Academy, our success as a geography department relies on the enthusiasm students have for our subject, our lessons, and their voices are vital in our continuing growth.