IGCSE GEOGRAPHY

WHICH COURSE?

Cambridge IGCSE Geography – this course is graded on the A*-E system.

PAPER 1: CONTENT-BASED
1HR 45 MINS, 45%
(CHOOSE 3 OF 6 QS)

PAPER 2: SKILLS-BASED
1HR 30 MINS, 27.5%
(MAPWORK, THEN GRAPHS)

PAPER 4: FIELDWORK-BASED
1HR 30 MINS, 27.5%
(HUMAN & PHYSICAL FIELDWORK)

WHY DOES GEOGRAPHY MATTER?

Geography is one of the most popular options for IGCSEs in international schools globally. It offers opportunities for essay-writing, graph work and discussion, providing a rich base for skills for future studies. Geography graduates have one of the highest employability rates globally, because their skills give them a wide-base to adapt to new markets.
The qualification feeds into IB Geography (Group 3 in the IB Diploma) and is classed as one of the Humanities for the English Baccalaureate.

THEME 1: POPULATION & SETTLEMENT

How will Singapore cope with an ageing population?
How many people in the world is too many?
How are population policies helping to reduce development?

What is bright light syndrome and who does it affect?
What are governments for refugees and is it enough?
Why does urbanisation happen far faster in LICs?

Why does Singapore not fit any settlement model?
How are squatter settlements being improved?
What are the common characteristics of a CBD?

THEME 2: THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Why are earthquakes so unpredictable?
How do you prepare for a volcanic eruption?
Why to HICs cope so much better than LICs with tectonic events?

Why do river valleys always get flatter downhill?
How to waterfalls 'walk' upstream and how do they form?
Why are flood prevention walls being torn down?

How do mangrove trees 'breathe' underwater?
Why is coral so fragile and what can be done to help it survive?
How should be tackle coastal management strategies?

How can the clouds tell you if thunder and lightning due?
What should be placed in a Stevenson screen?
What in the world is a hygrometer and a barometer?

How have societies adapted to hot desert climates?
What are the leading causes of deforestation?
How do ocean currents help to regulate climates?

THEME 3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Why do so few people work in the quaternary (innovation) sector?
How can we measure which countries are more developed?
How is globalisation affecting lives for the better and worse?

How can we classify farming into different types?
What are the causes of food shortages and are they solvable?
What are the long-term impacts of famines?

How are labour laws improving life for factory workers?
How can we predict where industries will base themselves?
How does government policy influence industry in Singapore?

What factors influence where people go on holiday?
Does ecotourism actually make a difference?
How is the global tourism market evolving?

Is nuclear energy a solution or a problem?
Which types of renewable energy are most viable for Singapore?
Can we keep our lifestyles in life after fossil fuels?

What is grey water and how can it help?
What are the consequences of a lack of clean water access?
How can we better manage water resources?

How can economic activities pose environmental risks?
Is sustainable development possible on a national scale?
What can be done to halt desertification?

DO WE DO FIELDWORK?

Yes! As part of your course you complete human and physical fieldwork around Singapore. There is also the possibility of additional optional residential trips.

The human fieldwork is based around Raffles Place and the CBD of Singapore. We look at to what extent the area has the common characteristics that urban models tell use all CBD share.

The physical fieldwork is at East Coast Park and looks at the coastal protection in place and whether it is suitable for the shape of beach and angle of longshore drift experienced.

Once we're back at school we follow-up the trips so students have a clear idea of what is expected in Paper 2.

Students will also complete map skills practice and experiment with weather data equipment on the school grounds.

We've had a run of excellent weather on our fieldtrips so we are hoping your year maintain this record – but if not then at least you will be able to explain to us (after studying Theme 2) why we are experiencing convectional precipitation!

LEARNING SCHEDULE

	MICHAELMAS	LENT	TRINITY
YEAR 9	POPULATION MIGRATION	URBANISATION	SETTLEMENTS FIELDWORK
YEAR 10	VOLCANOES & EARTHQUAKES	RIVERS COASTS FIELDWORK	WEATHER CLIMATE & VEGETATION GEOGRAPHY SKILLS
YEAR 11	DEVELOPMENT FOOD PRODUCTION INDUSTRY	TOURISM ENERGY WATER	ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS OF DEVELOPMENT REVISION

TRACKING ASSESSMENTS

Students are introduced early to the format of the papers, starting with Paper 1 (content-based).

The units in Paper 1 always follow the format: 1 mark, 2 marks, 3 marks, 4 marks, 3 marks, 5 marks, 7 marks for a total of 25 marks. This allows students to experiment and find their personal strategy for tackling questions (some like to start with the 7 mark question, others like to get the short ones out of the way first)). The 7 mark questions usually require case study detail.

For each unit there is a 25 mark end of unit test. In the exam students would have just over 30 mins to answer this section, but we start with a full lesson timeframe in Year 9 and slowly work our way towards. These assessments are closed book and class / homework time is given beforehand for the preparation of revision materials. The assessments occur roughly once a half term. In addition students will use past papers for homework and class exercises, so by the end of Year 9 they are familiar with the format and style of wording.

Once students are confident tackling the demands of Paper 1 we then introduce Papers 2 & 4 (skills and fieldwork respectively). The three year IGCSE allows us to make this transition to IGCSE standard work slow and well-scaffolded, so students feel supported.

The end of year exam in Year 9 includes only Paper 1; in Year 10 Paper 2 is added and in the Year 11 mocks students sit all three papers.

HOW ARE STUDENTS SUPPORTED?

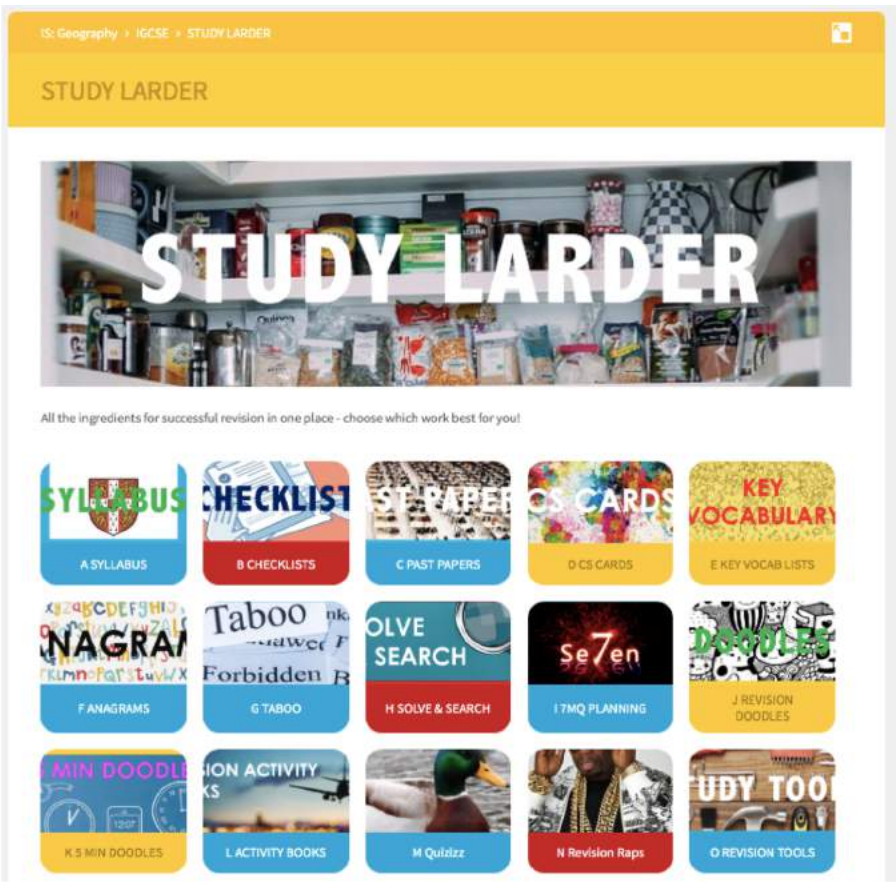
Students are issued with a textbook when they start the course and other materials are provided by their teachers as they progress through units.

The Geography Firefly page for IGCSE is divided into 4 sections – one for the content of each Paper and then the Study Larder. This makes is easy for a student who has missed a lesson or wants to read about a topic in more detail to find material at a suitable level.

The Study Larder is the one-stop revision shop and has lots of tools to help students, from over 100 past papers (and markschemes); to tailored revision lists; a full set of case study materials, wordsearches; test-yourself-quizzes; doodle revision sheets and key vocabulary lists.

In addition, as attention turns to revision in Year 11 revision classes are laid on, with the topics clearly advertised in advance, so students can pick and choose which sessions to come to.

There is something for everyone, regardless of their preferred learning style!



THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT: THE FUTURE'S GEOGRAPHY

You only need to glance at a newspaper – Australian bushfires, Greta Thunberg, falling birth rates in China, the Taal Volcano eruption in the Philippines and haze prevention in South East Asia to see the relevance of Geography to your generation. There are difficult decisions to be made and when it's the turn of your peers to be making them then I would hope they have a background which gives them an insight into sustainability and how the human and physical worlds are interconnected.

Even if your future job does not directly require an understanding of the world around you, Geography will help you understand the everyday issues in the society around you and will help make you a better informed decision-maker. Hopefully this means you make more balanced judgements and recognise the way in which your decisions can have a positive impact on other people.

There are, of course, a growing number of jobs in the 'green' sector, but Geography also combines well with...

SCIENCE
- Agriculture (e.g. hydroponics and food shortage solutions), water shortage solutions, renewable energy infrastructure, architecture, cartography, landscape design, surveying

MATHS
- Civil engineering (e.g. designing urban infrastructure, bridges, earthquake proofing), meteorology, mining, navigation & GPS systems, photography, aviation

ECONOMICS & BUSINESS
- Social & youth work, investment banking, business Mas, civil service, police, army, health services, teaching, leisure industry incl. tourism, transport network planning, surveying

HISTORY
- Archeology, law, librarianships, museum curators, publishing, politics

ART & DT
- Graphic design, advertising, architecture, cartography, landscape design, surveying, urban infrastructure planning, green technologies and materials

MODERN LANGUAGES
- Business, banking, translation services, overseas management, leisure and tourism

MAKING YOUR CHOICES

So, there are too many subjects you want to study and not enough option slots? Congratulations, what a lovely position to be in – far better than not having any subjects you enjoy!

The most important factor in making your decision is: what do you love? You are going to be studying these subjects for three years and when it comes to Easter of Year 11, passion is what will make you sit down and open that revision workbook. It's so much easier to be motivated to study if you have a genuine interest in the subject.

Don't worry too much at this age about what career you might like to pursue – there is plenty of time for that later and there are plenty of jobs out there that you haven't even heard about, but might be the one that your heart yearns for. Many of the jobs your generation will do haven't even been invented yet!

BUT I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS...

Speak to your Geography teacher, a current IGCSE Geography student or one of our IB Geographers.