A-Level Geography

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 6 in Geography, GCSE Grade 6 in English Language OR Literature, and GCSE Grade 6 in a GCSE Science.
Exam Board: OCR
Subject Lead: Mr A Kennedy akennedy@taptonschool.co.uk

Main Syllabus Areas:

Changing Spaces; Making places: People are at the heart of places, living their lives, forming attachments and making connections. Places are dynamic, multi-layered and the history and culture of a nation can be found in their buildings, public spaces and towns and cities. Our environment includes a wide variety of places, from rural to urban, small streets to megacities and diversity exists not only between but also within all of these places. Changing Spaces; Making Places allows students to look through a local lens to understand regional, national and global issues.

Earth's Life Support Systems: Water and carbon support life on Earth. 71% of the Earth's surface is covered in water however 68% of the freshwater is locked in ice and glaciers. Water is moved and stored beneath our feet and this 30% is critically important to life on Earth. Forests, soils, oceans and the atmosphere all store carbon and yet they are threatened and altered by human activity. This will be examined in detail through the Tropical Rainforest and the Arctic Tundra case studies as well as at a global scale.

Disease Dilemmas: Diseases do not discriminate who becomes infected or develops symptoms. Diseases can be communicable and noncommunicable and a number of physical and human factors affect an individual's and a community's susceptibility to the risk. The global nature of some diseases in terms of their geographical spread and scale has encouraged international efforts to combat them. The causes of disease are often complex and the impacts even more so especially when dealing with these at epidemic and pandemic levels. Continued research into diseases and developments in pharmaceuticals and 'our' understanding of diseases offers opportunities to combat diseases, however unequal access to drugs and information has implications for communities and countries.

Hazardous Earth: Movement of the Earths land masses, from Pangaea to present day are evidence that forces beneath our feet are at work. Seismic and volcanic activity creates hazards as populations have grown and inhabited more of the Earth. Although hazardous, earthquakes and volcanoes create new landforms and can support life on Earth from flora and fauna to populations. As technology has evolved, the capacity to predict and mitigate against tectonic hazard events has improved although the impact of an event can leave communities and countries devastated.

Global Connections: Through two overarching themes of global systems and global governance, students will investigate how these shape relationships between citizens, states and organisations around the world. Global systems, including those that regulate and order trade, financial transactions and migration, create interdependencies, which produce uneven geographies of winners and losers. States and non-state organisations respond to these flows and global systems, which can sometimes act to promote stability,

growth and development, but which can also be the cause of inequalities, conflicts and injustice.

Landscape Systems: This topic introduces students to the integrated study of earth surface processes, landforms and resultant landscapes. Students will explore how a glacial landscape can be viewed as system; how glacial landforms develop within this landscape and the influences of both climate and human activity on the landscape. As part of our study, we will visit the Lake District for a short residential

where we will carry out quantitative and qualitative fieldwork to support the learning in this unit and the fieldwork assessment in the exam.

Method of Assessment

A-Level - all examined papers taken at the end of Year 13

There are three exams at the end of the A-Level course and the independent investigation (coursework). The topics studied in Y12 as well as those in Y13 will be assessed.

- Physical Systems: 1 hour 45 minutes (24% of the A-Level)
- Human Systems: 1 hour 45 minutes (24% of the A-Level)
- Geographical Debates: 2 hours 30 minutes (32% of the A-Level)
- Independent investigation: (20% of the A-Level – submitted in November of Y13)

Qualities Required

The OCR A-Level Geography course favours an enquiry-based approach which poses challenging questions about the world we live in. Students should demonstrate a keen interest in how places are changed and moulded by the humans which use them and a fascination with the processes and landforms found in the natural world. We also expect our student's to:

- communicate effectively by learning and using technical vocabulary
- commit to independent research and reading around topics
- carry out practical fieldwork in urban and physical settings
- present, analyse and evaluate a range of geographical data

Links with other subjects

Geography combines well with most subjects. Past and present students have combined Geography with a diverse range of other subjects which include the Sciences, Mathematics, English Language, Economics, Languages, History, Psychology and Sociology amongst others.

Career Prospects

The diversity of Geography as an academic subject is one of its great strengths. The Russell Group of universities consider Geography to be a facilitating subject which allows access to a wide range of degree courses. Past students have gone on to study popular degrees such as Medicine, Law, Economics, Architecture, Engineering as well as specialising in the

Sciences. Those who enjoy the Geography AS Level may continue to study the subject at university, perhaps later specialising in either the human or physical strands, or they may opt for a related degree such as Geology, Environmental Science or Geopolitics amongst others.

Beyond university business leaders today value employees who have a wide array of skills, similar to the qualities developed in Geography, but they also seek to appoint people who can understand the global dimension of business in our globalised economy. Geo-located data is now at the centre of many economic decisions so people who understand the spatial extent of data and its applications are highly sought after. See our display board for ideas of a range of possible careers.

Extension and Enrichment Opportunities

As you would expect we offer a range of fieldwork opportunities which include day trips in the local region, a residential in North Wales and for students who wish to attend we arrange a study visit to Iceland every two years. We also have good links with the Geographical Association and have access to their local events and meetings.

Reading List

There is no Planet B: A Handbook for the Make-or-Break Years – Mike Berners-Lee
Feeding the world, climate change, biodiversity, antibiotics, plastics - the list of concerns seems endless. But what is most pressing, what are the knock-on effects of our actions, and what should we do first? Do we all need to become vegetarian? How can we fly in a low-carbon world? Should we frack? How can we take control of technology? Does it all come down to the population? And, given the global nature of the challenges we ow face, what on earth can any of us do?
Fortunately, Mike Berners-Lee has crunched the numbers and plotted a course of action that is practical and even enjoyable. 'There is no Planet B maps it out in an accessible and entertaining way, filled with astonishing facts and analysis.

Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World- and Why Things are Better Than You Think – Hans Rosling
When asked simple questions about global trends - why the world's population is increasing; how many young women go to school; how many of us live in poverty - we systematically get the answers wrong. So wrong that a chimpanzee choosing answers at random will consistently outguess journalists, Nobel laureates, and investment bankers. In Factfulness, Professor of International Health and a man who can make data sing, Hans Rosling, together with his two long-time collaborators Anna and Ola, offers a radical new explanation of why this happens, and reveals the ten instincts that distort our perspective. It turns out that the world, for all its imperfections, is in a much better state than we might think. But when we worry about everything all the time instead of embracing a worldview based on facts, we can lose our ability to focus on the things that threaten us most. Inspiring and revelatory, filled with lively anecdotes and moving stories, Factfulness is an urgent and essential book that will change the way you see the world.

Beyond the Map: Unruly Enclaves, Ghostly Places, Emerging Lands and our Search for New Utopias – Alistair Bonnett

Geography is getting stranger. Out there, fleets of new islands are under construction and micro-nations are struggling into the light. As new borders and boundaries ebb and flow with increasing speed, it feels as if our old maps are being discarded, redrawn or torn up. Alastair Bonnett uncovers the stories of thirty-nine extraordinary places, each of which challenges us to re-imagine the world around us. From emerging islands, disruptive enclaves and bold utopian visions to uncanny ruins, ghostly tunnels and hidden landscapes – these are destinations that lie beyond ordinary coordinates. A follow on from the critically acclaimed Off the Map, this is a timely and fascinating discussion of place, ownership and ideas of state.

The Making of the British Landscape: From the Ice Age to the Present- Nicholas Crane How much do we really know about the place we call 'home'? In this sweeping, timely book, Nicholas Crane tells the story of Britain. The British landscape has been continuously occupied by humans for 12,000 years, from the end of the Ice Age to the twenty first century. It has been transformed from a European peninsula of glacier and tundra to an island of glittering cities and exquisite countryside. In this geographical journey through time, we discover the ancient relationship between people and place and the deep-rooted tensions between town and countryside. The twin drivers of landscape change - climate and population - have arguably wielded as much influence on our habitat as monarchs and politics. From tsunamis and farming to Roman debacles and industrial cataclysms, from Stonehenge to high-rise and hamlet to metropolis, this is a book about change and adaptation. As Britain lurches from an exploitative past towards a more sustainable future, this is the story of our age.

Adventures in the Anthropocene: A journey to the Heart of the Planet We Made Gaia Vince We live in epoch-making times. The changes we humans have made in recent decades have altered our world beyond anything it has experienced in its 4.6-billion-year history. As a result, our planet is said to be crossing into the Anthropocene – the Age of Humans. Gaia Vince decided to travel the world at the start

of this new age to see what life is really like for the people on the frontline of the planet we've made. From artificial glaciers in the Himalayas to painted mountains in Peru, electrified reefs in the Maldives to garbage islands in the Caribbean, Gaia found people doing the most extraordinary things to solve the problems that we ourselves have created. These stories show what the Anthropocene means for all of us – and they illuminate how we might engineer Earth for our future.

Don't Go There: From Chernobyl to North Korea - One Man's Quest to Lose Himself and Find Everyone Else in the World's Strangest Places – Adam Fletcher
They shouldn't have tear-gassed best-selling author Adam Fletcher. It made him mad. And it made him curious… In this unusual, hilarious travel memoir he sets out on a quest to visit some of the strangest places in the world. There's something he wants to know. Something no-one is telling him. To get the answer he'll enter a Chinese blizzard armed with only a pack of biscuits, ponder the apocalypse in Chernobyl, be chased down by the Croatian police on his way to the newest country in the world, meet the Devil incarnate on a night

bus in Moldova, ruin a socialist mass dance, and come face-to-face with two (dead) dictators in North Korea. But this quest to understand the world (and himself) will also threaten his
sanity, safety and relationship to his eccentric girlfriend. Will it be worth it? Don't Go There is packed full of interesting characters, uncomfortable moments, unusual destinations, and British humour from one of the most promising new travel writers of his generation

<u>Independent Study</u>

Now you are an A-Level student it is expected that you will work beyond lessons. Sometimes this will be guided, and specific work will be set by your teacher. Other times you will be guided to further resources and expected to make use of them to extend or consolidate your notes. The best students will not wait to be guided but take responsibility for their own independent study. **At university you are expected to work this way.**

What counts as independent study?

- Left the lesson a little unsure of something? **Go back and speak to your teacher**. Clearing up misconceptions and seeking advice is the simplest form of taking responsibility for your own learning and progress.
- Do you think your class notes are a bit brief? **Get hold of a textbook**, read the content again and add any details you find to be missing to your own notes (some people chose to redraft their notes or type them up). Using a different coloured pen can be a good way to evidence this to your teacher.
- **Visit the websites** recommended by your teacher where you may find additional information which will offer more complexity and depth of detail. This is a habit developed by students who get the A/B grades.
- Often sites like **YouTube** have videos explaining some key concepts and ideas studied in class. Do be careful of them as you may not know the source of the information and sometimes it is not always accurate.
- Are you generally interested in the subject? Then **widen your reading list** to include subscription magazines such as Geography Review (available in the library), Geographical Magazine (published by the Royal Geographical Society), and National Geographic Magazine (Can be a bit science based but often has interesting articles).
- Do you want to test your knowledge? Then **practice past papers** and model exam questions whenever you can. Use the mark schemes to self-assess but also show them to you teacher to check you're on the right track.

How should you evidence your independent study?

We expect you to keep a log of independent study undertaken. You can do so by adding notes to the specification document to illustrate what you have done in relation to each of the subject criteria. We will check here, and we will check the section of the folder where
you may include print outs or photocopies of information you have accessed and used. You may also include extra exam questions practiced out of lesson time.