



Queen Mary's College



FAQs – Geography

Q: What topics do you study in Geography?

A: We cover the Eduqas syllabus. This includes Changing Place, Coasts, Water and Carbon Cycle, Tectonics, Ecosystems, Global Governance and Africa.

- Changing Place focuses on the UK, particularly on places the learner lives and/or has lived or studied.
- Coasts build on students GCSE knowledge. It focuses on the spatial and temporal variations that operate within coastal landscapes and how the flows of energy and movement of materials combine to create specific landforms on rocky, sandy and estuarine coastlines.
- Water and Carbon focuses on physical processes which control the cycling of both water and carbon between land, oceans and the atmosphere.
- Global Governance looks at the processes and patterns of global migration, a global flow which has historically had a major impact on most countries. Technological developments have accelerated migration over time, giving rise to a shrinking world. This brings opportunities and challenges to different localities.
- Tectonics, again, will build on students GCSE knowledge; it is based on a study of the structure of the Earth and the processes operative within the asthenosphere and lithosphere.
- The optional topics are Ecosystems and Africa and are subject to change. Ecosystems covers the processes that maintain or change ecosystems and the interactions between the component parts at a range of spatial and temporal scales. Africa covers development within Sub-Saharan Africa. Development can be defined and measured in a variety of ways and there are variations in development both between and within countries.

The full syllabus is available to download by following the link below:

<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/media/ln4locyz/eduqas-a-level-geography-spec-from-2016-e-24-01-2020.pdf>

Q: How is geography at A Level different to GCSE?

A: Geography A-Level builds on students GCSE knowledge. It introduces new content and approaches to geographical processes, systems, place, scale and space. New topics are also explored in depth; for example, ecosystems, global governance and Africa.

The examination paper is also different to the GCSE Paper. For one paper, students will be expected to write two 45-mark essays. Students are always fully prepared for the essay questions and one of the members of the department is an examiner for the Eduqas board.

The A-Level is also 20 per cent coursework. This is a non-examined assessment (NEA) and an individual piece of work. The coursework has to be on an aspect of the syllabus that the students enjoy. Recent examples have included the globalisation of Basingstoke, inequality within Basingstoke, whether Studland Bay follows the procedure of succession, an evaluation of the hard engineering defences at Bournemouth and an analysis of the carbon content at Eastrop Park. The teachers are very experienced with regards to the teaching of the NEA and one has been an A Level moderator for a number of years.

Q: How many exams are there and how long are they?

A: There are three exams –

Unit 1: This is based on Coasts and Changing Places and is one hour and forty-five minutes long. This paper is worth a total of 41 marks. It is a combination of data response questions and a longer 15-mark essay question.

Unit 2: Focuses on Global Systems and Global Governance, contains Water and Carbon cycles, Global Governance and a synoptic question. It is worth 110 marks.

The Water and Carbon and Global Governance questions are a mixture of data response questions and a 20-mark essay. The synoptic question is a 30-mark essay and is a combination of both human and physical geography. Students are given four pieces of data/ maps/ photos and have to answer a question on them.

Unit 3: This focuses on Contemporary Themes in Geography, and is worth 128 marks. There is one 45-mark essay on Ecosystems, one 45-mark essay on Africa and one 38-mark essay on Tectonics.

Q: What trips do you do?

A: The Geography Department run a variety of trips such as: Barton on Sea, Basingstoke, Odiham, Portsmouth and Gunwharf Quays, Studland Bay, The New Forest and An international trip of Iceland and invite a number of speakers to talk to the students throughout the two years of study.

Q: How large are the class sizes?

A: The class sizes vary per class. Typically, the class size is approximately 22 but some classes can be larger or smaller than this.

Q: What is your pass rate in geography?

A: The pass rate in geography at QMC currently exceeds that of Alton College and Peter Symonds.

Our current rate of grades A* to C is at 95%. For comparison, Alton College has a 74% pass rate for the same grades (A*-C), and Peter Symonds is at 89%.

Q: Do I have to have completed GCSE Geography to take A Level Geography?

A: No, a number of students choose to do A Level Geography having not taken it at GCSE. They may have to work a little harder on the topics that other students have undertaken but overall, they always do well.