

An armchair introduction to A Level Geography: Week 1

Geographers are curious about the world around them. We are always asking questions and recognise that there is rarely a simple answer to the complex challenges our world faces. We also understand that 'our world' can mean many different things to different people. Right now, our world is a combination of the 'local' and 'essential', yet at the same time the global perspective has never been more important.

The geography department would love you to take an hour or two each week to browse the resources that we will send you links to. Each week, I will select a theme that relates to the A-level course you will begin in the Autumn Term. This isn't about formal study or answering exam style questions. It's an opportunity to explore some resources and ignite your curiosity. You are not expected to understand everything (or even much at all), but you will hopefully see/read/hear things that will make you think and want to know more.

You are not expected to make notes and there is no requirement to purchase resources.

This week I have provided a link to an article written by Danny Dorling. Here is a link to his twitter page:

https://twitter.com/dannydorling?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

You will see I have been influenced by the title of this article when you click on it. He wrote it shortly after the news that the 2020 exam season was 'cancelled' and it is primarily aimed at year 13 students. I think it's a brilliant read for geographers of all ages as it contains a number of links to data sites that help us to explore the theme of 'Inequalities'. There's a lot to explore and you don't need to look at everything- find something that looks interesting and go for it. Remember that this is about exploring, which is very different to understanding, so if it gets confusing just stop and look at something else. Here's the link:

https://www.dannydorling.org/?page_id=7701

Enjoy!



An armchair introduction to A Level Geography: Week 2

This week is about giving your eyes a rest and allowing your ears to do the work instead!

Podcasts are brilliant and there are usually free. Have a browse at the range of podcasts available through the Royal Geographical Society and listen to anything that appeals to you:

<https://www.rgs.org/schools/resources-for-schools/ask-the-geographer-podcast-series>

Below is a direct link to the podcast available on the Royal Geographical Society website that features Tim Marshall. He is a geopolitical journalist who has become a household name in recent years. Geographers are brilliant at seeing the bigger picture. Tim Marshall's work demonstrates how geography impacts the lives of people and affects decisions by governments around the world.

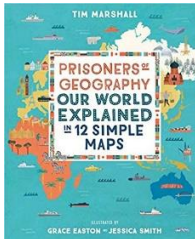
<https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/a-conversation-with-tim-marshall/>

If you would like to access his best-selling book 'Prisoners of Geography', it is currently **available for free** in audio form on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Prisoners-Geography-Everything-Global-Politics-ebook/dp/BooY16BEM2>

And finally if you want to look as well as listen:

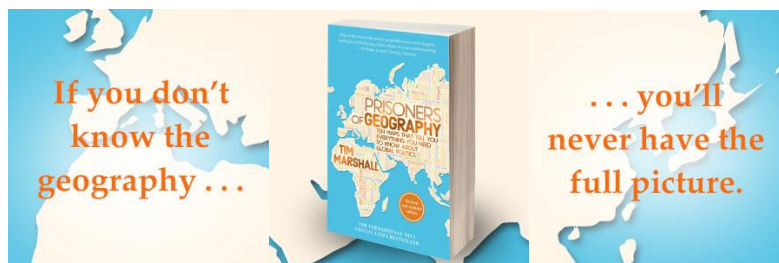
1. Here he is introducing us to the adapted version of his book for children:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiVOhCCJrGI>

2. Here he is being interviewed on BBC Newsnight:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ohFeFXV4mY>



An armchair introduction to A Level Geography: Week 3

This week is about heightening your sense of awe and wonder for the world we inhabit, something as geographers we have in abundance. Simon Reeve is a journalist, writer and broadcaster who has certainly helped bring the world to our living rooms. He shows the natural beauty of the landscape, but also asks difficult questions in the countries and communities he has visited.

This week, we'd like you to watch the first episode of his TV series, 'The Americas with Simon Reeve', it is available on BBC IPlayer;

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00095nt/the-americas-with-simon-reeve-series-1-episode-1>

Watch the episode, it focuses on a landscape of wild beauty, enormous distances and diverse wildlife, but also unsustainable economic development and resource exploitation. Whilst watching, look out for these issues that interest us as geographers and feature in the Edexcel A level spec;

- Climate change on a local, national and international scale
- The Trans Alaskan Pipeline – energy security vs environmental disruption
- Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) – the opinions of a range of stakeholders over its future
- Alberta Tar Sands – economic growth vs environmental damage

Want to know more...? Of course you do! Here are some links to find out more about the issues raised in this episode...

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/07012020/arctic-drilling-trump-oil-gas-lease-sales-anwr-wildlife-refuge-petroleum-reserve-offshore>

<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/arctic-village-alaska-frontlines-climate-change>

<https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/canadas-oil-sands>

Smitten with Simon...? (Aren't we all...)

Listen to these podcasts;

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2018/oct/02/around-the-world-with-simon-reeve-and-neil-macgregor-books-podcast> 26 minutes in

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p06zhsts>

Or read his book;

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/40311472-step-by-step>

An armchair introduction to A Level Geography: Week 3



Globalisation is a key topic and concept that is key to the A Level Geography syllabus that you will be studying in Year 12. This task will give an insight in to how containerisation aided globalisation.

Using the container series of podcasts to

<https://soundcloud.com/containersfmg>

Listen to Episode 1: Welcome to Global Capitalism (40mins long)

Try some of the following tasks:

- Create a map showing the connections talked about in this podcast.
- What is containerisation and how does it work?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of containerisation?
- How did containerisation develop the places connected?

How often do you see these boxes in your area? Are there places in your area where you can see many of these boxes.

Further reading & listening:

There are other podcasts in the same series.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/business/2008/the_box/default.stm

<https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2013/ports/>

The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger, Second Edition with a new chapter by the author Paperback – 5 April 2016 by Marc Levinson. The book may be able to access at Birmingham Central Library

An armchair introduction to A-Level Geography: Week 5

This week is about examining levels of wealth and development around the world, and about challenging stereotypes about where poverty and wealth exists. We hope it also encourages you to question what having access to certain things (eg hand washing, cooking facilities) means for your life chances and opportunities...

'Dollar Street' is a fantastic online photo-resource, featuring images from over 240 families living in 50 countries around the world. The site arranges them all on a street called Dollar Street, in order of their monthly income.

Look at the website; <https://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/>

Click on the website above and follow the quick tour; It briefly shows you how easy it is to compare different aspects of everyday life around the world, at different income brackets. This is a great resource for exploring similarities and differences. As well as the fairly mundane themes such as homes, food, cooking and water, there are many more specific items to compare, such as: 'lock on front doors', 'toothbrushes' and 'things I dream of having'.

Watch the Ted X Talk by Anna Rosling Ronnlund,

https://www.ted.com/talks/anna_rosling_ronnlund_see_how_the_rest_of_the_world_lives_organized_by_income?language=en . Here she explains the thinking behind the site and how it can help us to challenge pre-conceptions and to understand what life in certain income brackets means for families around the world.

Once you have navigated the website and listened to the TED Talk, consider the following questions;

1. Look at the homes in the highest income bracket (the right hand end of the street!) – Were there any in locations that surprised you? Why were they there? Why did it surprise you?
2. Look at the homes in the lowest income brackets (the left hand end of the street) – What common features do they share, regardless of global location?
3. How does looking at households with similar incomes, but in different global locations help us to challenge pre-conceptions of life in different parts of the world?
4. What do you think are the main barriers to development around the world?

Want to know more...? Of course you do!

Gapminder is a website devised by Hans Rosling, which uses data to myth-bust pre-conceptions regarding population growth, wealth and development – it uses fantastic graphics to show global changes over recent centuries and to suggest how future changes will alter the power structures and wealth across the world. All of the website is fascinating; <https://www.gapminder.org/>

Also check out the short video clip, '200 years that changed the world' -

<https://www.gapminder.org/videos/200-years-that-changed-the-world/>

Or read the book;

Factfulness - (Hans Rosling) , there's a review here by Bill Gates;

<https://www.gatesnotes.com/Books/Factfulness>

An armchair introduction to A-Level Geography: Week 6

Switched on / switched off places

This 'Armchair Geography' task will look at globalisation in a bit more depth. In particular how some countries appear to be much more 'switched on' to the effects of globalisation than others. Questions to consider whilst undertaking these tasks are:

- How uneven is the spread of globalisation around the world?
- Where /who are the more 'globalised' nations?
- Which regions of the world are more 'switched on' / 'switched off' to globalisation?

Suggested tasks:

1. Take a look at the following websites. Think about how they illustrate the ways in which different places are more/less 'connected'? Have a good browse through them and consider some of the questions we've posed below...
 - o **Marine Traffic: Shows live shipping traffic.** Where are the main ports for global shipping? What commodities are being carried? (*you can click on vessels to see what they're carrying / where they're going!*) Where are the shipping companies based? What does this tell us about global trade? <https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/home/centerx:-12.0/centery:25.0/zoom:2>
 - o **Flight Radar: Shows live air traffic.** <https://www.flightradar24.com/26.51,25.32/2> Where are the major transport hubs? Which areas of the world have more/fewer flights? Remember that most flights are the moment will be carrying freight, rather than tourists. How might you expect this map to have looked before the Covid outbreak? How would tourism normally affect places around the world?
 - o **World Trade Cloud:** <http://wits.worldbank.org/visualization/trade-cloud-visualization.html> (you can toggle between exports/imports on the right-hand side.). Which regions/nations are key players in global trade? Who are the less significant players? Why might this be?
 - o This final webpage shows the **speed of internet access around the world.** Have a read through the information and look at the maps/data tables. <https://www.atlasandboots.com/remote-work/countries-with-the-fastest-internet-in-the-world/> Consider how this would restrict the flows of culture, ideas and information, and thus the effect on people's lives. How would aspects of world trade be affected by this, especially e-commerce? Can you imagine your life without the internet?! How different would it be?
2. It is clear from the maps above that some parts of the world undoubtedly remain less globalised than others. Take a look at this site, which looks at an examples of what is known as '*technological leapfrogging*'. It looks at the way in which mobile phone technology is being used in Kenya (and many other nations now!) to transform people's lives and allow people to access finance, buy/sell goods more easily, as well as access healthcare. <http://www.theperspective.se/technological-leapfrogging-and-development-the-example-of-kenya/>

This webpage also has a short video clip that explains briefly how it works:

<http://www.fao.org/e-agriculture/news/10-years-m-pesa-worlds-most-successful-money-transfer-service> Notice this is a Vodafone clip, so a bit biased – they own Safari-Com! - but nevertheless, think about the positive impacts this technology can have on people. What barriers might still exist that prevent people from benefiting from this type of technology?

An armchair introduction to A-Level Geography: Week 7

Climate Change

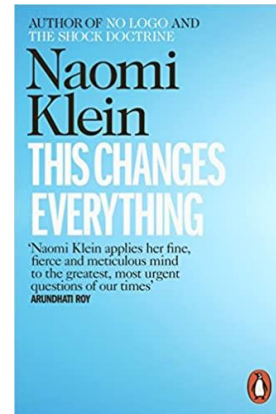
‘I am convinced that climate change represents a historic opportunity on an even greater scale.’

This is a quote by Naomi Klein. You can find out more about her work here:

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/419.Naomi_Klein

One of her books about climate change is linked below and is currently available as a free audio book:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/This-Changes-Everything-Capitalism-Climate/dp/0241956188/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=this+changes+everything&qid=1592908150&sr=8-1



Watch this 4 minute clip to remind you of the evidence for climate change:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p076w7g5>

This link is reporting on what is currently happening in the Arctic Circle:

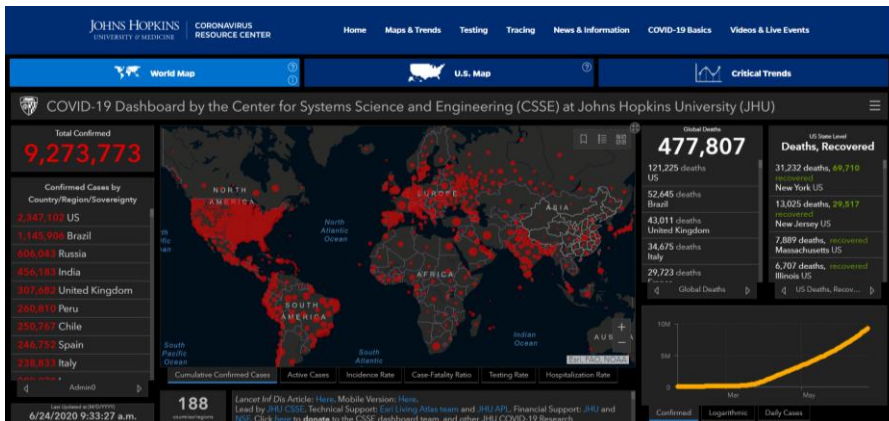
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-53140069>

<https://unccelearn.org/> is the official United Nations learning partnership for all things related to climate change. They offer self-paced and downloadable courses, meaning you can dip in and out of them as and when you please. There's an abundance of information on climate change – you can learn about climate policy, green economies, sustainable diets and personal finance, and lots more with these interactive courses. Take a look at some of the examples (Click to access these courses): Introduction to Green Economy, Climate Change and Cities.

An armchair introduction to A-Level Geography: Week 8

GIS

GIS is a tool that you may have come across in Geography. It stands for Geographical Information Systems. Its basically a software package that allows to map data and carry out analysis of the data for example how many people live within 1km of school. You may have seen this tool used in the current pandemic to monitor the spread of the disease across the world.



This task gives you a starting point in learning some of the basics that you will be using during the Geography Alevel course especially when you carry out the NEA part of the course. GIS is a tool that you will find is used in many subjects not just geography such as

Getting Started with Maps and Data in ArcGIS

by Microsoft COURSE - BEGINNER

START COURSE

Description

Digital maps are more than just a view of the world. They allow everyone to ask and answer questions about the planet, its people and to understand the critical role geography plays in every aspect of their daily life.

The technology that underpins this is called Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and this course is a great starting point for anyone that is curious about our World.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to find and navigate digital maps, and add your own data to them
- Learn how to create your own maps

Get a free ArcGIS account to complete the course

ArcGIS is free for all schools and you can use this map to find country specific information on how to register your school. To complete this course you will need an account to sign into that you can add data, save your work and share it.

Either use your current school's account or create a free single user ArcGIS account here.

See weblink: <https://education.microsoft.com/en-us/course/07047034/overview>

This is a free online course that will take you through learning the basics of a GIS package called ArcGIS Online that the school has a free account to use. It is used across the school from Year 7 through to Year 13. It should take you around an hour to complete. You can get an account to use it from the weblink at the bottom of the page.

A Perfect Planet: Humans

Life flourishes on planet Earth thanks to powerful natural forces. However, it is a fragile system. There is one force so powerful it threatens the future of life on Earth.

We will lose _____ the species of animals on Earth over the next eight decades. The last time we had an extinction event of this magnitude was _____ million years ago.

Global Warming

- Through burning **fossil fuels**, we now release _____ times more CO² into the atmosphere than all Earth's volcanoes combined.
- Warming our planet by just _____ degrees means that the atmosphere is sucking up 7% more water and causing more **extreme weather events**, making it increasingly difficult for animals to survive.
- It is not just affecting wildlife though. For every 1 degree rise in global temperatures a _____ people will be pushed into **extreme unlivable conditions** and this will trigger one of the greatest human migrations in history. Climate refugees will move north into _____.
- There is hope. The **Sahara Desert** is advancing southwards so 1 billion drought resistant trees are being planted to stop top soil from blowing away. It will stretch 5,000 miles across Africa and is called _____.

Tropical Rainforests

- The **Amazon** stores as much as _____ years' worth of emissions as all of the cars in the world
- Urban expansion, cattle ranching and mining means that forest is being lost at a frightening rate. Every minute an area the size of _____ football pitches is destroyed by humans.
- There is hope. A new jungle of _____ million trees is being **planted** in the Amazon. Using the knowledge of indigenous people, this seed network scatters _____ tonnes of seeds over degraded land and after 6 years, restores an area the size of _____ football fields. It is the largest tropical forest restoration project in the world.

Oceans

- The oceans produce up to _____% of the **oxygen** we breathe and **feed** over _____ billion people.
- Since the start of the **Industrial Revolution** the oceans have absorbed almost _____ our CO² emissions. Warm, acidic waters are destroying coral reefs and decimating _____, the basis of survival for everything else in the oceans.
- Oceans are being damaged in another way. **Overfishing** has removed as much as _____% of all large predatory fish. Fewer fish means a marine system that stores less carbon.
- There is hope. Around 5% of the oceans are currently **protected**. A global campaign to increase this to _____% will help many of the planet's most vulnerable species to recover and a healthier ocean can absorb more CO².

Renewable Energy

- We can reduce CO² emission by **consuming less** or **reusing** some of our resources. But, the biggest saving we could make would be to _____.
- We can power the whole world with just a fraction of the **solar and wind energy** that we get every year. **Volcanic heat**: so far we've only tapped ____% of its global potential. The wind in our skies could provide ____% of our energy by 2050.
- Is this transition to a **low carbon society** happening fast enough? In 2015, 195 of the world's nations pledged to reduce their CO² emissions. To avoid planetary disaster, the goal was to limit the warming of the Earth to well below ____ degrees.
- The news is _____. This year, CO² levels in the atmosphere went up again. Hitting another **world record high**. We are in a crisis right now.

Frozen Zoos

- Species are becoming **extinct** at around _____ times faster than the normal rate.
- There is hope. Zoos around the world are taking drastic action, collecting _____ from endangered species to build a genetic store of life before they become extinct.