

GEOGRAPHY

Awarding body: Cambridge IGCSE

Assessment Method: 72.5% examination (papers 1 & 2), 27.5% coursework

Length of Exam: Paper 1 (Geographical Themes) 1 hour 45 mins, Paper 2 (Geographical Skills) 1 hour 30 mins

Breakdown of units:

Unit 1: Geographical Themes

Students will study three core themes, each encompassing a range of geographical topics and issues.

- Population and settlement – This unit investigates the factors that affect population growth and decline and the impacts of over and under population on countries at contrasting levels of development. It also looks at the ways in which population structures change over time and how these changes can influence the size, function and location of different settlement types, as well as the problems this can cause and the ways in which these issues can be sustainably managed.

- The natural environment – This unit looks at various aspects of physical geography including;

- Plate tectonics
- Marine and river processes
- Weather and climate

For each of these topics students investigate the physical processes that shape the natural environment as well as the ways in which human actions and the natural environment interact and their associated impacts.

- Economic development and the use of resources – This unit looks at various aspects of human geography including:

- Agricultural systems
- Industry and technology
- Leisure and tourism
- Energy and water resources
- Resource conservation & management

For each of these topics students will investigate the ways in which economic development is affected by both human and natural processes, and the impacts these interactions have at a range of scales. They also consider the various ways in which these resources and activities can be sustainably managed.

Unit 2: Geographical Skills

This unit develops students' core geographical skills including map reading, interpreting and creating basic and complex graphs, analysis of geographical data and responding to written and visual sources. This unit will not require specific information of place as specific resources will be provided in the exam where one question is based on a 1:25 000 or 1:50 000 topographical map of a tropical area such as Zimbabwe, the Caribbean or Mauritius.

Unit 3: Coursework

This unit allows students to investigate a geographical issue as set by the exam board and selected by their subject tutor. Students attend a compulsory field trip to carry out fieldwork and data collection and use their findings to produce a 2000 word report, which is worth 27.5% of their overall iGCSE grade.

This coursework will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts (12 marks)
- Observation and data collection (12 marks)
- Organisation of data and presentation of data (12 marks)
- Analysis of data (12 marks)
- Conclusion and evaluation (12 marks)

Other field trips

Alongside the coursework field trip, RIC has given students the opportunity to visit the Volcano and Earthquakes Expedition at the National History Museum, as well as a trip during lesson time along the River Medway at Rochester to identify management techniques and land use. Students have also practised field work techniques on the college's on site river. In a human geography aspect, students have visited Rochester High Street to assess how shops meet the needs of the local population. There has also been an opportunity to participate in the British Cartographic Society cartographic workshops.

Skills and further study

iGCSE Geography is a widely respected and internationally recognised academic subject in which students will develop strong written and verbal communicative skills. There is emphasis on the importance of literacy, enabling students to develop their English language skills, alongside developing and complimenting numeracy and ICT skills through use of cartographic and graphical presentations and tasks. Although students are required to work independently during the iGCSE, the opportunity for field work, discussion and debates helps build team work skills. The dynamic nature of Geography is represented in lessons through a range of learning materials to the varsity of learning needs and styles, and current Geographical events, such as the Nepal and Kent Earthquakes of 2015, are integrated into lessons alongside current affairs in order to encourage students to apply their learning, challenge their understanding and appreciate the versatile nature of iGCSE Geography.

Following iGCSE Geography many students have gone on to study Geography at both A-level and beyond, investigating a range of Geographical principals at university including Geopolitics, Geophysics and Environmental Sciences.

Overlap with other subjects

The course includes some, but not particularly extensive, use of statistical analysis and students who also do Statistics or Maths find such aspects enjoyable. The essay writing element to the GCSE also means that a number of skills can be successfully transferred to other subjects within the field of the humanities.