



Independent Learning Guidance for Parents

Department: Geography

Year Group: 7-9

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Why is independent learning in geography important?

Home based work is often used to stretch and extend but often used as a way of providing a student driven starter or plenary to a lesson. Independent work allows students to practise the skills and apply the knowledge that we have covered in lessons, reinforcing and allowing students to gain independence. We also see homework as an important self discipline in terms of their organisation, especially in preparation for the academic independence and rigor that is expected at GCSE level after Year 9.

How will independent learning be set?

Independent work is set in lessons by the class teacher. We believe that recording, organising and completion of homework by a given deadline is an important discipline that all students should develop in preparation for the challenges of academic study. They should record all work in their planner, but may refer to Fronter for more guidance.

Independent tasks may cover a variety of skills and be in a number of formats. However, tasks are designed to take no longer than 30 minutes. During times of assessment when tasks will require longer, a block of time will be allocated for its completion.

What expectations do staff have of the work being completed?

When independent work is set we expect it to be completed by the agreed deadline as recorded in the student's planner. There may be occasions where these deadlines cannot be adhered to and when this is the case, a note to explain why will suffice.

Independent tasks should be completed to the best of a students' ability and be completed on their own merit. Independent tasks are often used to gauge a student's understanding and ability; it is therefore imperative that it is their own work.

We recommend that students attempt to complete all independent tasks on the night that they are set to avoid 'complications', stress and needless anguish.

What help and support is available?

We would like to see students use the resources open to them such as the library and their own books. Many homework tasks are topical and so may require students to watch the news or read a paper to follow a news story.

Every Monday lunch time the department runs a homework support session for students. Any students can come to this and get support. Many students use this as an opportunity to get homework completed and so relieve the pressure during their 'home time'. Other lunchtimes can be negotiated with a member of staff.

There is a homework club run within the learning support area which is staffed by Teaching Assistants.

Staff can always be contacted via the school e mail system and when appropriate, we will offer support documents and guidance via Fronter.

What work can be completed in addition to the set tasks?

Geography is a multifaceted discipline and as such there is great value to watching the news or reading a paper (whether it be an 'on line' or paper version) an awareness of the environment around us is a key feature of a higher level Geographer. We have an extensive selection of National Geographic magazines in the department that we are more than happy to loan out!

Students should also look at their 'unit starter sheets' and make sure they can competently spell and define all of the key terms we use within the units. They should also check against this sheet that they have a solid grasp of the skills, concepts and theory that we have covered within the unit; if not, they should focus on refining their skills until they can.

Practising basic map skills and data handling skills – this could be something as simple as planning a route on holiday or navigating through a town when on holiday using a basic map. The Ordnance Survey 'mapzone' is a useful resource as there are a series of challenges and games that students can play to 'hone' their skills. The 'infomapper' website is also very useful and full of interesting material with which students can further their learning.

It is always beneficial for students to learn about the Geography of holiday locations if you are planning a trip away – Geography is a subject that references the World around us!

We are also more than happy to offer extra research/reading to students on request.

Year 7

Unit/topic	Assessment	Suggested extension tasks – specific.
Intro to Geography	Geography collage	
My place	Route between your primary and secondary school.	Practise O/S mapping skills – 4 figure grid references, 6 figure grid references, compass direction etc using 'Mapzone'

		(link on Fronter)
Rocks and landscapes	Decision making exercise – Should we expand the quarry?	
Settlements	A village enquiry	Carry out research around your home settlement.
Sustainable settlements	Create a design for a sustainable house	Join us on Fridays for Eco council or join the YEP team (Young Energy People) Look through the web pages as highlighted on Fronter (including sites such as - http://www.mysusthouse.org/index2.html) and identify things that you can do to be more sustainable
The World and the Olympics	News enquiry	Watch the news and try to locate where news stories are based. Locate them using latitude and longitude for a real stretch!

Year 8

Unit/topic	Assessment	Suggested extension tasks – specific.
Weather and climate/extreme weather	Climate graph enquiry News report on Hurricane Katrina	Keep a weather diary Using the BBC Weather website, look through the factual and topical videos/factsheets outlining weather phenomena
Climate change	Mini essay	Watch the news Join the Eco-council or YEP groups Research Rio 20+ - what is this? What had they hoped to achieve? Look at websites such as 'The Pod' – what can we all do to reduce the impact that we have on our planet?
Flooding	Flooding fieldwork write up And flooding informercial	Carry out research around your home area – has it been effected by flooding? When? Research ways we can protect ourselves from flooding Watch the media and collect information on recent floods, their locations, the causes and their effects.
Development and trade	Kuapa kokoo Chocolate ad	Who are Oxfam? What work do they do?

	campaign.	<p>Why do we need charities like Oxfam?</p> <p>Look at the maps produced by the 'Infomapper' web site. What do they tell us about development? What patterns and trends can you see?</p> <p>Look at the fair trade foundation - what work do they carry out? Where do they work?</p>
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Year 9

Unit/topic	Assessment	Suggested extension tasks – specific.
Earthquakes and Volcanoes	Montserrat Decision making exercise	<p>Research recent volcanic and earthquake hazards/events.</p> <p>Look at the student section of the USGS and the BGS web sites for further information about the causes and effects of tectonic hazards.</p> <p>Follow up on the suggested reading/sources that are given during class.</p>
Population	Mini essay	<p>Watch the news – note the number of stories that reference the impact that the growth in global population is having.</p> <p>7 billion.org has followed a series of people and their lives, looking at ways standards of living and lifestyle varies around the World.</p> <p>Carry out further research looking at China's one child policy – can you find other population control policies within other countries?</p> <p>What is a pension? How do we decide what people get? What impacts will an ageing population have on the UK/Europe?</p>
Migration	Feedback report	<p>Look at immigration in the news – are the stories mainly negative or positive? Where are people moving from and to?</p>
Food for thought	Information poster on an issue we have covered	<p>Ask your friends and family about their</p>

	within the unit	<p>opinions on Organic agriculture and Genetic Modification.</p> <p>Go to a supermarket or search online via a supermarket website – can you find any GM food?</p> <p>Why are some people to ‘anti GM’?</p> <p>Is there enough food in the World to feed the population? Research this question and try to answer it.</p>
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