



Curriculum Narrative - Geography

Geography helps children explore the world around them, from local places to faraway countries. Through hands-on activities and real-life investigations, pupils learn about different environments, cultures, and how people interact with their surroundings. Our lessons inspire curiosity about the planet and encourage children to think about their role in caring for it.

Geography in Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, children begin to explore the world around them and develop an understanding of places, maps, and the features that make each place unique.

Early on, pupils learn about the 7 continents and 5 oceans to help them understand where different places are in the world. They also study the countries and capital cities of the United Kingdom, along with the surrounding seas and oceans.

Children start by using maps, globes, and atlases to find and describe places. They also create simple maps and learn how to use basic map skills, like understanding direction using a compass.

To help children understand different cultures and environments, they study contrasting locations such as Nairobi in Africa and indigenous tribes in the rainforests of Brazil and Venezuela. This lets them compare different ways of life and physical features across the world.

Fieldwork is an important part of learning. Children explore their local area, using simple maps and the compass points to describe what they see. They also use online mapping tools like Digimap for Schools to help understand distance, scale, and place.

Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils build their knowledge step-by-step, making connections between places and developing a growing understanding of the world around them.

Geography in Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)

As children move into Key Stage 2, they continue to develop their geography skills by building on what they've already learned in Key Stage 1.

They revisit map skills and fieldwork, now learning to use more detailed compass directions, including intercardinal points (such as northeast and southwest). These skills help them explore and understand more about the United Kingdom, including its regions, counties, landmarks, and physical features like hills and rivers.

Children begin to analyse maps and look for patterns, such as how different landscapes are formed and how the environment varies across the country. For example, they learn how the mountains in the north differ from the flatter, low-lying areas in East Anglia.

Pupils then apply their learning to specific topics such as rivers, where they study how rivers are formed and their role in shaping the land. They also start using Ordnance Survey (OS) maps to explore local and national geography in more detail.

To help them understand the wider world, pupils are introduced to latitude and longitude, learning how we locate places on a map using these global reference points. This supports their understanding of why different places have different climates and environments.

As part of this, they study the water cycle, learning how water moves through the environment and why certain parts of the world—like deserts or rainforests—have the features they do. They also explore famous rivers like the Amazon and the Nile, which link to learning in other subjects later on.

Throughout Key Stage 2, map work, fieldwork, and real-life examples help children develop a deeper understanding of the world. They also learn about different countries and cultures, with specific focus on areas in Europe, Africa, and the Americas, encouraging cultural awareness and appreciation of global diversity.

Geography in Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6)

In Upper Key Stage 2, children continue to build on their geography knowledge with a deeper focus on world locations, mapping skills, and physical processes.

They study biomes and environmental regions—such as rainforests, deserts, and tundras—learning how climate, animals, and vegetation vary across the globe. To support this, pupils revisit their knowledge of latitude, longitude, and world geography, using quizzes and short recall tasks to help remember key facts about countries and major cities.

Mapping skills become more advanced, with children learning how to use 4- and 6-figure grid references, contour lines, and Ordnance Survey (OS) maps. These skills help them accurately read and interpret maps, find routes, and understand how landscapes are shown visually. They also take part in practical orienteering and map-reading activities, which develop their fieldwork skills.

Pupils compare human and physical features of different places around the world, learning how environments are shaped by natural processes like mountain formation (orogeny) and glaciation. They explore this through in-depth comparisons of regions such as the Lake District (UK), the Tatra Mountains (Poland), and the Blue Mountains (Jamaica).

The study of volcanoes, mountains, and earthquakes gives children a more sophisticated understanding of how the Earth changes over time. These lessons help pupils understand the impact of natural events on the environment and on human life.

Another key focus is settlement, trade, and economic activity. Children explore why people choose to live in certain areas and how geography affects things like jobs, transport, and migration. For example, they look at ports, major world cities, and how natural features like rivers or coastlines have shaped where people settle. This links with their history learning about the Windrush Generation, helping them understand why people move and how places change over time.

Throughout these topics, children are encouraged to think critically, make connections between different topics, and explain what they've learned using correct vocabulary and reasoning.