



Our Approach to Teaching Geography

At Whitehall Junior School, we are committed to providing our pupils with a well-rounded education. Our curriculum is planned in a logical and well-considered way, to enable pupils to build upon their skills and have a secure knowledge base from which connections in learning are made. We use 'beautiful' resources from credible sources to enrich our lessons.

What is the big picture for geography?

Geography is the study of places; the relationships between people and their environments. For that reason, it is an essential part of understanding our world and our place within it. It is where we learn about real places, people and global issues; to enthuse pupils and stretch them to become skilled geographers. Geography is about today and tomorrow; exploring the subject brings an enthusiasm to pupils' understanding of the world around them.

Thinking geographically offers a uniquely powerful way of seeing the world and it enables pupils to make connections between the big and the small - from the local to the global.

Geography is also learning about the people and places in our communities and how we fit together. It is about developing a sense of place; it is also about knowing that we belong in the physical world, around us, and in the social and cultural world we share with others.

What is magical about it?

Geography opens a window to the world and allow us to explore the physical features of remote and local places.

Through geography, children have the opportunity to explore both the physical properties of the Earth's surface and the human societies spread across it. Children also examine how human culture interacts with the natural environment and the way those locations and places can have an impact on people. Geography seeks to understand where things are found, why they are there, and how they develop and change over time.

Why is geography an important subject to learn?

Geography is important so the children can make connections with their physical and social environments; children enhance their cognitive skills, as well as social and emotional ones. Geography is a subject that is packed with excitement and wonder.

It is crucial for pupils to develop a sense of place, in order to understand their part in the world and form a sense of self-identity. Through interactions with the environment and each other, children develop geo-literacy skills; they become empowered and see themselves as capable social beings.

Children need to develop the necessary skills to become the informed and active decision-makers of the future, who are deeply connected to the world around them. As Attenborough writes: *'The truth is: the natural world is changing. And we are totally dependent on that world. It provides our food, water and air. It is the most precious thing we have and we need to defend it.'*

'Sense of place becomes part of what adults need to be considered geo-literate - having the tools and knowledge to protect natural and cultural resources, reduce violent conflicts and improve the quality of life worldwide.' Edelson 2011.

'It seems to me that the natural world is the greatest source of excitement; the greatest source of visual beauty; the greatest source of intellectual interest. It is the greatest source of so much in life that makes life worth living.' Sir David Attenborough

What do we love about geography?

- Geography helps to make sense of the world in which we live.
- It encourages practical, project-based learning.
- It is a subject open to great moments of self-discovery.
- It is essential; we need to learn about the world to plan for the future.

How do we want our pupils to talk about geography?

- We want our pupils to ask questions which are relevant and thought-provoking.
- We aim to spark curiosity and thinking about the world around them.
- We seek to develop articulate, well-informed citizens of the future who are as interested in learning more about the different locations around the world as they are about their local area.

Our approach to teaching geography

Lesson 1	<p>Regardless of the unit's focus, a sense of place is crucial to the introduction of a geography unit.</p> <p>Pupils must develop locational knowledge, place knowledge, environmental, physical and human geographical knowledge, whilst also furthering their ability to use maps and globes and to read maps and carry out fieldwork.</p> <p>Pupils can use a KWL grid to show the extent of their existing knowledge of this area of study. They can raise initial questions about what they hope to learn as this can prove useful insight for future lessons.</p> <p>Spend the first lesson establishing the context behind the unit and in seeking what pupils already know. For example, if the study was to focus on volcanoes, and Pompeii was to be the case in focus, pupils must have an understanding of where in the world Pompeii is located and the period in history which will be explored through this geographical focus. Compare the location of the place of study with our location in the world. By linking this knowledge, for example, to their study of the Romans, clear connections can be drawn which will help to make learning memorable. Similarly, exploit genuine links with previous science learning.</p> <p>When locating either the region of study, or the location of an example (e.g. volcano, earthquake, etc.), explicitly model and teach map reading skills – use atlases and globes to develop pupils' sense of place.</p>
Lesson 2	<p>Begin lesson two, with a recap of lesson one's introduction; ensure pupils have recalled the sense of place and quiz them on key aspects of learning. For example, if they located Pompeii, they should be able to recall the country this is located in, along with the continent and identify (Italy) this on a map.</p> <p>The main focus of teaching can commence once context is understood and secure. Content must be taught thoroughly, without 'corner-cutting'. Address misconceptions as they arise and exploit opportunities for note-taking and diagrams to aid pupil recall. Partially scaffolded/adapted diagrams may aid cognition when new facts/processes are first introduced. Break larger concepts into 'bite-size' chunks.</p>

	Allow time for direct teaching of subject-specific vocabulary – use school-created vocabulary lists and exploit opportunities to explore etymology.
Lesson 3+	As the unit's lessons continue to address the carefully selected and organised objectives, ensure opportunities for revision and recall (quizzes, etc). Cater for practise of map-reading/atlas skills so pupils become increasingly confident; these skills will benefit all geographical learning, now and into secondary school. For example, make explicit the type of map being referred to: physical, political, Ordnance Survey, etc.
Lesson Y	<p>As pupil understanding of the place of study or natural phenomenon develops, continue to model the use of subject-specific vocabulary so that pupils use these terms in their responses to key questions, written or oral.</p> <p>If fieldwork features within the study, pupils will need direct modelling of how to use any specific equipment, especially for measurement purposes. Ensure opportunities for pupils to set and respond to enquiry questions. Make links to PSHE and environmental issues. Expose pupils to experts in their field, so they know how to obtain further, accurate information. Use credible resources throughout.</p>
Lesson Z	<p>As the unit draws to a conclusion, use a quiz to monitor pupil recall of new knowledge. Pupils can revisit their KWL grid to demonstrate new knowledge and to reflect upon the geographical skills they have enhanced.</p> <p>To provide opportunities for writing, use a unit-specific question for pupils to respond to as a way to celebrate their progress and demonstrate the extent of their learning.</p>