

Our curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure cumulative knowledge and progression. Each unit builds on the last, with clear concepts that students must grasp to progress. We define end points to illustrate what mastery looks like by year-end.

Location of resources:	Geography Share Point > Staff Resources > -KS3 > - Year 8
Curriculum intent and rationale:	At John Port Spencer Academy, our Geography curriculum is carefully designed and sequenced to be ambitious, inclusive, and knowledge rich. We aim to develop confident, articulate, and culturally aware students of Geography who: • Explore and appreciate the physical and human processes that shape the Earth’s landscapes, environments, and societies. • Develop a sense of place and scale, understanding local, national and global connections. • Foster curiosity and critical thinking about social, economic and environmental challenges facing the world today, such as climate change, urbanisation, and resource management. • Recognise the opportunities that the world offers alongside challenge, such as economic development, cultural exchange, and innovation. • Encourage students to become responsible global citizens who can make informed decisions about sustainable futures. • Build key geographical skills including map reading, data interpretation, enquiry, and fieldwork. • Promote independent learning and the ability to analyse complex information, communicate findings clearly, and evaluate evidence. Curriculum Organisation: Students are taught in mixed ability classes. Students have 1 lesson of Geography a week with the same teacher.
National Curriculum Links:	Students follow the KS3 Geography National Curriculum and in year 8 cover the following: • Extending their locational knowledge and deepen their spatial awareness of the world’s countries using maps of the world to focus on Africa, Russia, Asia, and the Middle East, focusing on their environmental regions, including polar and hot deserts, key physical and human characteristics, countries and major cities. • Understanding, using detailed-place based exemplars at a variety of scales, the key processes in physical geography relating to plate tectonics and hydrology. • Understanding, using detailed-place based exemplars at a variety of scales, the key processes in human geography relating to the use of natural resources. • Understanding how human and physical processes interact to influence, and change landscapes, environments and climate; and how human activity relies on effective functioning of natural systems. • Build on their knowledge of globes, maps and atlases and apply and develop this knowledge routinely in the classroom and in the field • Interpreting Ordnance Survey maps in the classroom, including using grid references and scale, topographical and other thematic mapping, and aerial and satellite photographs • Use Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to view, analyse and interpret places and data

What content needs to be covered? Key Knowledge and skills / misconceptions to address (with vocab in bold and spelling underlined>

By the end of the year students will know:

Half Term 1-2	Half Term 2-3	Half Term 4-5	Half Term 5-6
Extreme Environments Students will learn key knowledge about: • What are extreme environments • Surviving in hot deserts • Adaptations in hot deserts • Hot deserts in the Middle East • Characteristics of polar regions • People in polar regions • Extreme weather in Russia Students will learn key skills including: • Describing the physical characteristics of extreme environments such as deserts and polar regions. • Explaining how plants, animals, and humans adapt to survive in hot desert and polar conditions. • Comparing climate, location, and ecosystems of different extreme environments using maps and data.	Restless Earth Students will recap, retrieve and build on key knowledge and skills from half term 1-2. Students will learn key knowledge about: • Earth’s structure • Tectonic theory • Plate boundaries • Earthquakes • Volcanoes • Tsunamis • Hazard protection Students will learn key skills including: • Understanding and explaining the structure of the Earth and how it relates to tectonic activity.	Exploiting Resources Students will recap, retrieve and build on key knowledge and skills from half term 1-3. Students will learn key knowledge about: • Resources and sustainability • Food and sustainable strategies • Water and water management • Energy and climate change • Waste and sustainability • Sustainable transport Students will learn key skills including: • Understanding the concept of sustainability and why managing resources responsibly is important for the environment and people.	Hydrology Students will recap, retrieve and build on key knowledge and skills from half term 1-4. Students will learn key knowledge about: • The water cycle • How water gets to the river • Infiltration investigation • Changing river profile • Flood risk and OS maps • Flooding comparison • Flood management Students will learn key skills including: • Understanding and explaining the processes of the water cycle and how water moves through the environment.



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- Analysing case studies such as hot deserts in the Middle East and extreme weather in Russia. - Interpreting and evaluating the impact of extreme weather on people and landscapes. - Using geographical sources (e.g. climate graphs, satellite images, photos) to draw conclusions about extreme environments. Key terminology: Adaptations, arid, characteristics, deserts, extreme weather, glaciers, indigenous, permafrost, polar, remote, satellite images, survival, temperature, wildlife Challenge: All students are challenged in lessons by encouraging students to compare the harsh conditions of hot deserts and polar regions and explain how living things adapt to survive there. They are required to interpret and analyse unfamiliar data such as climate graphs, satellite images, and maps of extreme environments. Students explore the physical and human geography of remote places, often outside their lived experience, developing empathy and critical thinking. Case studies push them to evaluate the impacts of extreme weather and climate on people’s lives and ecosystems. Throughout the topic, students are expected to use precise geographical vocabulary and justify their ideas using evidence. Misconceptions: - Deserts are always hot, ignoring the existence of cold deserts like the Gobi or Antarctic deserts. - Polar regions are completely barren with no life, overlooking the plants, animals, and people adapted to survive there. - Extreme environments are unchanging and static, rather than dynamic and affected by seasonal and climatic variations. - All people living in extreme environments struggle to survive without any technology or adaptation. - Extreme weather events only happen in tropical or temperate zones, not in polar or desert regions. - Survival adaptations are only physical (e.g., thick fur), ignoring cultural and technological adaptations like clothing and housing.	- Identifying and describing different types of plate boundaries and their associated geological processes. - Interpreting and analysing data related to earthquakes, including causes, effects, and measurement (e.g., Richter scale). - Explaining the formation and impact of volcanoes and understanding volcanic hazards. - Evaluating the causes, consequences, and management of tsunamis as a secondary hazard. - Assessing and comparing different hazard protection and mitigation strategies used to reduce risks from tectonic events. Key terminology: Crust, constructive, destructive, earthquakes, faults, geology, hazard protection, magma, mantle, outer core, plate boundaries, plate tectonics, seismic waves, tectonic plates, volcanoes Challenge: All students are challenged in lessons by asking students to understand complex concepts like Earth’s structure and plate tectonics, which involve abstract scientific ideas. They analyse how different plate boundaries create varying hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis, requiring critical thinking to connect cause and effect. Students evaluate the effectiveness of hazard protection strategies, considering both physical and human factors, which encourages problem-solving skills. Interpreting data from seismic graphs and case studies pushes students to apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios. Throughout the topic, learners are challenged to use precise geographical terminology and justify their explanations with evidence. Misconceptions: - Earthquakes and volcanoes happen randomly, rather than mostly along plate boundaries. - The Earth’s crust is a single, unbroken shell instead of being made up of moving tectonic plates. - Tsunamis are just large waves caused by storms, not by underwater earthquakes or volcanic activity. - Volcanoes only erupt violently and explosively; some eruptions can be gentle and slow. - All tectonic hazards affect people equally, ignoring variations in preparedness and vulnerability. - Hazard protection can completely prevent damage and loss, rather than just reducing risk.	- Evaluating different food production methods and sustainable strategies to reduce environmental impact. - Analysing issues related to water availability, usage, and sustainable water management practices. - Exploring the links between energy consumption, climate change, and renewable versus non-renewable energy sources. - Investigating the environmental impact of waste and learning about sustainable waste reduction and recycling methods. - Assessing different transport systems and their roles in sustainability, including the benefits of sustainable transport options. Key terminology: Climate change, conservation, energy, food, pollution, recycling, renewable energy, resource management, resources, sustainability, sustainable transport, waste, waste reduction, water, water management Challenge: All students are challenged in lessons by encouraging students to critically evaluate the complex relationships between resource use and environmental sustainability. They analyse real-world problems like water scarcity and climate change, requiring them to think about long-term impacts and trade-offs. Students must assess the effectiveness of different sustainable strategies across food production, energy use, and waste management, which involves comparing benefits and limitations. They also interpret data and case studies related to resource distribution and environmental pressures, developing their analytical skills. Throughout the topic, learners are challenged to propose realistic solutions that balance human needs with protecting fragile environments. Misconceptions: - Sustainability means using no resources at all, rather than using them responsibly and efficiently. - Renewable energy sources like solar and wind always provide unlimited, constant power without any challenges. - Water is an unlimited resource and does not require careful management. - Recycling solves all waste problems completely, without the need to reduce or reuse. - Climate change only affects extreme environments and has little impact on everyday life elsewhere. - Sustainable transport options are always expensive and impractical for most people.	- Investigating how water reaches rivers through processes like infiltration and surface runoff, including conducting practical investigations. - Analysing how river characteristics change along its course by studying the changing river profile. - Using Ordnance Survey (OS) maps to identify flood risk areas and interpret geographical information related to flooding. - Comparing different flooding events to understand causes, impacts, and responses in various locations. - Evaluating a range of flood management strategies and their effectiveness in reducing flood risk. Key terminology: Condensation, deposition, erosion, evaporation, flood management, flooding, hard engineering, infiltration, lower course, meander, middle course, rainfall, river profile, soft engineering, water cycle, waterfall, upper course Challenge: All students are challenged in lessons by requiring students to understand and explain complex processes like erosion, deposition, and the full water cycle. They analyse where river features such as waterfalls and meanders are found along a river which involves applying physical geography concepts to real-life landscapes. Students are asked to interpret data from infiltration investigations and assess flood risk using case studies and geographical evidence. Comparing the effectiveness of hard and soft engineering strategies encourages critical thinking and evaluation skills. Throughout the topic, learners use precise geographical terminology and apply their knowledge to unfamiliar river systems and flood scenarios. Misconceptions: - Rivers flow in straight lines from source to mouth, ignoring natural features like meanders. - The river is deepest at the source (upper course), rather than in the lower course. - Flooding only occurs because of heavy rainfall, without considering human and physical factors like land use or impermeable surfaces. - Erosion and deposition happen separately, not understanding they often occur simultaneously along a river’s course. - All flood management strategies are equally effective in every location. - The water cycle starts and ends in one place, rather than being a continuous and dynamic system.
Previous learning that is particularly relevant:			
The unit links to prior learning in KS3 relating to human geography in the industry and development (year 7) by considering how development is affected by extreme environments. Students build on their understanding of climate from the weather and climate unit in year 7, by	The unit links to prior learning in KS3 relating to year 7 topics on coasts and how tectonic activity influences coastal landscape e.g. tsunamis. The knowledge of industry and development in year 7 can be built upon where tectonic areas can often attract settlement despite risks. The previous topic at the start of year 8	The unit links to prior learning in KS3 relating to previous year 8 topics on extreme environments and restless earth; many resources come from extreme environments and tectonic areas. In year 7 geography coastlines are important for fishing (food) and offshore gas/oil extraction. Resource exploitation can affect climate, burning fossil fuels contributes to climate change, introduced in the weather	The unit links to prior learning in KS3 relating to previous year 8 topics on exploiting resources where water is a vital natural resource. Water shapes extreme environments which is introduced in extreme environment earlier in year 8. Processes in the year 8 coasts topic are revisited in hydrology when studying river profile. Hydrology is driven by the water cycle and weather which is introduced in the weather and



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exploring extreme conditions found in deserts and polar regions.	on extreme environments can be explained by tectonic activity influencing why some areas of the world are extreme.	and climate topic in year 7. Developing countries may rely heavily on exploiting natural resources (oil, minerals) for economic growth which first introduced in the industry and development year 7 topic.	climate topic of year 7. River flooding can threaten communities and economic development is builds on knowledge from the year 7 topic on industry and development.
Future Learning: How does content prepare students for future units, Key Stage 4, or Key Stage 5?			
The unit links to future learning in year 8 in KS3 where concepts of adaptation and living in dangerous places is revisited in restless earth. The exploiting resources year 8 topic links to valuable resources found in extreme environments. In year 9 topics on Africa and Asia will revisit biomes of these regions. At KS4 the living world unit looks at hot deserts in more detail with adaptations of plants and animals, and more case study detail. At KS5 the carbon cycle builds on knowledge of the effects on ecosystems and extreme environments.	The unit links to future learning in KS3 relating to how tectonic activity creating many natural resources studied in the exploiting resources topic of year 8. In year 9, tectonic activity is discussed in topics of Africa and Asia and how it affects the physical landscapes of these continents. In KS4 the topic relates to the natural hazards topic in year 11 where tectonic hazards and climate change are studied further. At KS5 the topic relates to the Tectonics topic build on knowledge on plate tectonics to mega-disasters, multiple hazard zones and risk management and mitigation.	The unit links to future learning in KS3 relating to hydrology in a future year 8 topic where water is a critical resource on Earth. In year 9 topics on Africa and Asia look at how resources can help and hinder development of countries in these topics. In KS4 this topic starts the foundations for the resource management and food option at GCSE in year 11 with the knowledge learnt. In KS5 the globalisation, superpowers, water cycle and carbon cycle use the knowledge learnt in this topic to discuss in more detail about resource exploitation,	The unit links to future learning in KS3 relating to water supply and accessibility in Africa and Asia topics of year 9. The prisoners of geography topic in year 9 discusses how water access, supply and demand affects the superpower and prisoner of geography status. At KS4 the rivers topics builds on processes and identification of landforms to explain the sequential formation of these landforms. At KS5 the water cycle topic builds on knowledge learnt this topic on flood risk, flood management and how water gets to the river, using case study examples to explain in further detail.
Outcomes: By the end of the year pupils will be able to solve/create/produce/write:			
Our curriculum in structured for students to learn more to remember more ensuring that the Key Stage 3 Geography National Curriculum objectives are completed from the topics covered in this year: AO1: Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales. AO2: Demonstrate geographical understanding of concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes; the interrelationships between places, environments and processes. AO3: Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues to make judgements. AO4: Select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings.			
Assessment Strategy - How we know our students are knowing and remembering more – Data from hunting not fishing, formative and summative assessment/s is used to adapt teaching and provide targeted challenge and intervention, supporting SEND and disadvantaged pupils.			
Formative: Recall knowledge on key terminology Questioning – methods of participation Homework – knowledge, skills and application based Knowledge organiser low stakes tests Development tasks – whole class/individual Low stakes assessment Independent written work – self and peer assessment	Summative (& cumulative) Summative assessments with a combination of pink sheet tasks (on pink paper in books) and assessments in exam conditions. Pink sheet tasks are focused on assessing knowledge and skills. Students will have time to respond to these in follow up development lessons after whole class or individual feedback from teachers. There will be three main summative assessments in exam conditions in HT2, HT4 and HT6. Half Term 1 – Pink sheet on Extreme Environments topic Half Term 2 – Written assessment on Extreme Environments and Restless Earth topic Half Term 3 – Pink sheet on Restless Earth topic Half Term 4 – Written assessment on Extreme Environments, Restless Earth and Exploiting Resources topics Half Term 5 – Pink sheet on Exploiting Resources topic Half Term 6 – Written assessment on Extreme Environments, Restless Earth, Exploiting Resources and Hydrology topics		Opportunities to revisit past learning: Retrieval tasks as part of our Do Now Activity. Tasks will incorporate prior learning to study new learning in lessons. Assessments are cumulative, covering previous topics covered that year. Opportunities for homework (including apps): Students will be set homework weekly focused on tasks on knowledge organisers building on the retrieval of knowledge and practicing the application of skills learnt in lessons. A knowledge organiser will be produced for each topic.
How is the curriculum adapted to meet the needs of SEND and disadvantaged pupils, while maintaining high expectations?			
Teachers always teach to the top in every lesson ensuring all students, including SEND and disadvantaged can maintain high expectations. Repetition and retrieval practice reinforce key ideas. Students are supported through a variety of strategies including: key vocab lists, structure prompts/sentence starters, model answers and success criteria. Inclusive discussions and a calm, structured classroom environment further ensure that all students can participate and succeed. Teachers will use visual aids such as photographs and videos to support context of topics being taught. We know our students and use seating plans and pupil profiles to support the learning of all. Teachers also adapt lessons and assessments considering specific access arrangements. Teacher will know what strategies will work for specific students they teach.			
Wider Curriculum and Enrichment – cultural capital and real world application			
Enriching experiences: - Documentaries shown in lessons and widely available on streaming platforms, e.g. BBC iPlayer and Netflix, to improve their understanding and cultural capital. - Recommendations of geographical texts provided to students. Display also along department corridor displaying collection recommended.	Literacy, Oracy and disciplinary language: Embedding literacy, oracy, and disciplinary language is central to the teaching of AQA GCSE Geography, enabling students to both implicitly (through classroom activities) and explicitly (through assessments) demonstrate their ability to use geographical language accurately by reading, speaking and writing like a geographer.		Cross-Curricular opportunities / Opportunities to develop ‘character’ Science Extreme Environments — biology (plant and animal adaptations), chemistry (water cycles, soil chemistry), physics (climate systems, energy transfer).



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- Current geographical issues and topics are included in topics, bringing in current events and issues that arise when teaching topics.

Our curriculum supports the school value of:

Joy	<i>Foster enthusiasm and engagement by cultivating a love of learning and curiosity of the world. Students learnt real-world examples that are relevant and inspiring to them. Students are encouraged to ask big questions about the world and given opportunities to explore answers creatively. Fieldwork brings geographical to life through experiences that spark wonder and joy in the natural and human environment.</i>
Progress	<i>We monitor and support progress through building knowledge and skills over time and recognising improvement. Students are shown the 'big picture' of their learning and how the topic fits into prior and future learning in geography. Students are provided with low stake quizzes to allow for retrieval practice to show their improvement in retention of knowledge towards their long-term memory.</i>
Success	<i>We celebrate success by achieving personal and academic goals, building confidence through understanding and application. Students are provided with examples of successful student work breaking down why it is good, using a success criterion to support. All achievements are celebrated from mastering a difficult concept to improved spelling of key words, success is measured on an individual basis as well as overall. Teachers give verbal praise, positive phone calls home, rewards points and department postcards.</i>
Act with care, kindness, respect, and integrity	<i>We build meaningful connections with our students by fostering empathy and ethical understanding in both geographical content and classroom conduct. We integrate debate and reflection into topics such as climate change, global responsibility, resource exploitation, fair trade, urban inequality and housing access. We promote a respectful classroom culture, modelling and expecting active listening, encouragement and fair participation in individual, pair and group work. Geography as subject builds understanding of diverse cultures, environments and people, helping students to care about the world and each other.</i>

In Year 8, students build a strong foundation in geographical literacy through:

- Reading Geography**
Students have opportunities to read information in geography from fact files, textbooks and articles in lessons. Teachers as experts will model reading of texts and may ask some students to read as well aloud. Teachers will check students understanding of key terminology (both tier 2 and 3) whilst reading, using visual aids to support their knowledge and understanding.
- Geographical Writing**
Through structured, modelled, and independent writing tasks students develop their ability to write in depth with case study detail where applicable and to make judgements on geographical topics and issues.
- Scaffolded Writing and Extended Responses**
Writing is supported with sentence starters, paragraph structures (e.g., PEEL/PEE), and model answers to help students build confidence and accuracy in geographical writing.
- Vocabulary Development**
Tier 2 academic vocabulary (e.g., "adaptation," "consequence" "region") and Tier 3 disciplinary language (e.g., "epicentre," "tributary," "renewable") are explicitly taught, regularly revisited, and embedded in written and spoken work.
- Oracy and Discussion**
Regular class discussions, debates, and oral rehearsal of arguments help students develop their speaking and listening skills, deepening understanding and encouraging respectful dialogue on geographical issues.
- Use of Subject Terminology**
Students are taught to use precise geographical terminology in both speech and writing, helping them to think and communicate like geographers.

- Restless Earth — earth science (tectonics, earthquakes, volcanoes), physics (seismic waves).
- Exploiting Resources — environmental science (resource management, pollution), chemistry (pollution effects).
- Hydrology — water cycle, river processes, water quality (biology and chemistry).

Maths

- Extreme Environments — data analysis of temperature and rainfall, graphing climate data.
- Restless Earth — measuring earthquake magnitude, data interpretation, probability.
- Exploiting Resources — analysing resource use and trade data.
- Hydrology — measuring river flow, graphing, data analysis.

English

- Extreme Environments — report writing, descriptive writing.
- Restless Earth — narrative and report writing on disasters.
- Exploiting Resources — explanation and evaluation writing.
- Hydrology — explanation and evaluation writing.

Design & Technology / Engineering

- Extreme Environments — designing clothing and equipment for harsh climates.
- Restless Earth — building earthquake-resistant structures.
- Exploiting Resources — sustainable product design, renewable energy technologies.
- Hydrology — flood defence engineering, water treatment technologies.

History

- Extreme Environments — human settlement and survival in harsh environments.
- Restless Earth — historical earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and their impacts.
- Hydrology — historical floods and their societal effects.

Economics / Politics

- Exploiting Resources — resource use, supply and demand, international trade, and policies.
- Hydrology — water management policies and international agreements.

Ethics / Religious Studies

- Exploiting Resources — environmental ethics and stewardship.

Our curriculum supports personal development by:

Including topics such as independent learning, communication skills, ethical awareness, teamwork, risk awareness, environmental responsibility, global citizenship, social awareness, empathy and resilience.

Careers / Employability skills:

How does the curriculum link to the following employability skills:

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Listening - following instructions during fieldwork and group discussions.
interpreting information from teachers, peers, and data sources and understanding case studies and exam questions accurately
Speaking – presenting findings from enquiries and fieldwork confidently, explaining geographical processes and arguments clearly and participating in debates about environmental and social issues
Problem Solving - analysing causes and effects of geographical challenges (e.g., flooding, exploitation of resources), assessing sustainable management strategies and evaluating multiple solutions and deciding the best course of action
Aiming High - challenging case studies and enquiry tasks, striving for high-quality work in lessons and exams and acting on feedback to improve further
Critical Thinking - evaluating data reliability and different viewpoints, comparing human and physical processes and their impacts and questioning assumptions and synthesising information
Staying Positive - resilience when tackling difficult concepts or data analysis, persistence through challenging fieldwork or exam preparation and maintaining motivation to improve and learn from mistakes
Leadership - leading group work during field enquiries or projects, organising roles and responsibilities in collaborative tasks and encouraging others and managing team dynamics effectively
Teamwork - collaborating in fieldwork and class investigations, sharing ideas, listening to others, and negotiating outcomes and supporting peers to achieve common goals
Creativity - designing innovative solutions to environmental or urban problems, using creative methods for presenting data and reports (e.g., maps, infographics) and thinking imaginatively about future sustainability and development scenarios

Employment Sectors discussed include:
Extreme Environments: Environmental scientist, wildlife biologist, climate change analyst, conservation officer, polar researcher, expedition guide, environmental engineer.
Restless Earth: Geologist, seismologist, volcanologist, civil engineer (earthquake-resistant design), disaster risk manager, urban planner, emergency response coordinator.
Hydrology: Hydrologist, water resource manager, environmental scientist, civil engineer (flood defences), meteorologist, flood risk analyst, environmental policy advisor.
Exploiting Resources: Mining engineer, renewable energy engineer, environmental consultant, sustainability officer, resource economist, conservation scientist, policy maker in natural resource management.

Curriculum impact is evaluated through pupil study, work scrutiny, and progress data. Findings inform regular curriculum review to ensure continuous improvement

When was this curriculum last reviewed? Include date	What changes were made and why?	How is ongoing improvement ensured?
Summer 2025 – ongoing into 2025-26 when units will be reviewed and improved prior to teaching	Extreme Environments, Restless Earth and Hydrology moved from year 7 and Exploiting Resources moved from year 9. This is to improve the sequencing of topics as these topics can build on topics from year 7 and be the foundation for topics in year 9, KS4 and KS5.	Curriculum reviews yearly, QA processes, staff and student voice, student books, Geographical Association updates, outcomes at KS4 and KS5 where improvements can be made at KS3.



JOHN PORT
SPENCER ACADEMY

Geography

Curriculum Overview

Key Stage – KS3 Year – 8

Joy



Progress



Success



Act with care, kindness, respect and integrity

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