

# IGU CGE Geography Education Questionnaire

**Country:** UK: England  
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1. What is the aim of geography in primary education in your country?

*The aim of the National Curriculum Framework for Geography is to inspire curiosity and fascination about the world and its people in pupils, so that they become knowledgeable about its diverse places, people, resources, and physical and human environments and processes. Pupils will develop knowledge of locations and the human and physical features and characteristics of places, their interactions and interdependence, and spatial variations and change across time. They will develop their competence to use, interpret and apply a range of geographical skills, involving maps, fieldwork and other geographical sources of information.*

*During primary schooling, that is key stages 1 and 2, geography teaching's purpose is to develop pupils' knowledge of their locality, the UK, Europe, North and South America and the wider world. They will appreciate the characteristics of and similarities and differences between places. They will understand aspects of physical and human geography, such as weather, environments, land use, economic activities and natural resources. They will develop map use skills and learn to undertake enquiries and fieldwork. [The National Curriculum in England Framework document (2013): Geography, pp.214-17.]*

2. What is the aim of geography in secondary education in your country?

*Geography in key stage 3 in secondary schools is based on the same aims as primary geography. Its purpose is to consolidate pupils' knowledge of the world's major nations and physical and human features. It helps pupils to make sense of a complex and dynamically changing world, in particular focused on aspects of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Russia. It explains where places are, how places and landscapes are formed, how people and their environment interact, and how a diverse range of economies, societies and environments are interconnected. [The National Curriculum in England Framework document (2013): Geography, pp.217-18.]*

*Developing from key stage 3 geographical enquiries encourage questioning, investigation and critical thinking about issues affecting the world and people's lives, now and in the future during key stages 4 and 5. Geography builds on pupils' experience and knowledge to investigate places at all scales, from the personal to the global, and across a range of aspects of physical and human geography. Fieldwork is essential for this. Pupils develop their thinking spatially and use maps, visual images and new technologies, including geographical information systems (GIS), to obtain, present and analyse information. Geography inspires pupils to become global citizens by exploring their own place in the world, their values and their responsibilities to other people, to the environment and to the sustainability of the planet.*

3. What is the average number of hours of geography teaching in primary education in your country?

*There is no official recommendation. It varies from school to school, usually between 30 minutes and 1 hour per week, depending on the school. In much practice geography either rotates with history in half term (5 week) blocks or is one of several subjects contributing to broader topics of study.*

4. What is the average number of hours of geography teaching in secondary education in your country?

*This varies enormously from school to school – but between 1 to 2 hours a week for 11-14 year olds and 14-16 year olds who opt for geography. There may be more time for advanced level pupils (16-18 year olds).*

5. What are the most important themes in primary geography teaching in your country?

*Geography covers these themes:*

*Knowledge of locations – key features of the world and key characteristics of the UK, Europe and South and North America.*

*Place knowledge – similarities and differences between their own locality and a non-European locality.*

*Human and physical geography – including settlement and land use, trade links, natural resources, food, water, weather and climate, climate and vegetation zones, rivers and mountains, earthquakes and volcanoes, and the water cycle.*

*Geographical skills – making and using maps. Fieldwork, using secondary sources of information including digital sources (and making enquiries).*

6. What are the most important themes in secondary geography teaching in your country?

*Geography covers these themes:*

*Knowledge of locations – increased awareness of the world and the key environments and characteristics of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Russia.*

*Place knowledge – similarities, differences and links between places in Africa and Asia.*

*Human and physical geography – including population, urbanization, economic activities, international development, resource use, climate, plate tectonics, rocks and soils, weathering, glaciation, hydrology, and coasts; human impact on natural systems, and the interaction of physical and human processes influencing change in environments, landscapes and climate.*

*Geographical skills – using and making map, fieldwork, and GIS to make enquiries and collect, analyse, and draw conclusions from multiple sources of geographical data..*

*It would be fair to say that most school geography is taught through a series of themes such as: Settlement, Population, Economic Activities, Tectonic processes and hazards, Rivers and Coasts, Weather and Climate, Development, Sustainable Development*

7. What is the position of geography in the upper levels of secondary education in your country?

*Students can choose to study Geography for GCSE at the age of 14. Following several years of relative decline, geography is now the fastest growing subject among 14-16 year olds and is the 8<sup>th</sup> most popular GCSE subject. Geography is promoted as a key subject facilitating university entry which pupils should consider seriously if they are aspiring to university entry. At post-16, pupil numbers selecting geography at Advanced Level have been rising and it is the 9<sup>th</sup> most popular subject. It is the most gender balanced subject.*

8. What is the biggest problem for geography teaching in your country?

**Primary:** *Having effective curriculum time, geographically well-informed teachers and good geography subject leadership are key concerns. Many schools no longer have a geography specialist on the staff. Limited understanding of the purpose, scope and value of geography and its subject matter and distinctive approaches are key deficiencies and problems. Obtaining time, cover and finance for regular fieldwork is a constraint. Cross-curricular studies when geography is not explicit inhibit good geographical learning.*

**Secondary:** *Curriculum time for geography and the increasing use of cross-curricular approaches have caused concern. The quality of teaching for 11-14 year olds is weaker than for examination classes, with wide variations in standards between schools.*

9. Mention one or more good practices or very successful projects of geography teaching in your country.

**Primary:** *There are several good practice projects listed on the Geographical Association website in the 'Projects' area (see below), including The Young Geographers Project. The award of the Primary Geography Quality Mark by the GA supports and encourages schools to develop their geography teaching and learning.*

**Secondary:** *There are many excellent examples of geography teaching evident on the GA website, some of which stem from GA projects such as the Living Geography and the Young People's Geography projects. Excellent departments can be rewarded the GA's Secondary Geography Quality Mark and become Centres of Excellence in geography.*

10. Mention research projects in the field of geography teaching in your country.

**Primary:** *There have been no major research projects in primary geography in England for many years. The limited research that is undertaken is done, essentially, by individuals for MA dissertations and occasionally as unfunded research by geography teacher education tutors in higher education. For twenty years until 2014 the Register of Research in Primary Geography acted as a record of primary geography research interests and activities (see the GA website).*

**Secondary:** *Research into the secondary geography curriculum, teaching and learning practices and resources is almost entirely undertaken in England by teachers and geography teacher education tutors in higher education through unfunded MA and PhD or EdD dissertations.*

*The Geography Education Collective (GEReCo) promotes research and debate about research in geography education.*

11. Mention publications or websites with information in English about geography teaching in your country.

**Primary:** *The key website to use is: [www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary](http://www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary).*

*There are a number of key publications for primary geography teaching, including:*

*Catling, S & Willy T (2009) Teaching Primary Geography, Exeter: Learning Matters.*

*Martin, F (2006) Teaching Geography in Primary Schools. Cambridge: Chris Kington Publishing.*

*Pickford, T, Garner, W & Jackson, E (2013) Primary Humanities: Learning through Enquiry. London: Sage.*

*Scoffham, S (Ed) (2010) Primary Geography Handbook, Sheffield: Geographical Association.*

*Scoffham, S (Ed) (2013) Teaching Geography Creatively. London: Routledge.*

*The core journal for primary geography practice is 'Primary Geography', published by the Geographical Association.*

**Secondary:** *There are very many websites and publication for geography teaching. The best are: [www.geography.org.uk](http://www.geography.org.uk), and the following books:*

*Balderstone, D. (ed.) (2006) Secondary Geography Handbook. Sheffield: Geographical Association.*

*Lambert, D. & Balderstone, D. (2010) Learning to Teach Geography in the Secondary School. London: Routledge.*

*Lambert, D. & Jones, M. (eds.) (2013) Debates in Geography Education. London: Routledge.*

*Lambert, D. & Morgan, J. (2010) Teaching Geography 11-18: A conceptual approach. Maidenhead: Open University Press.*

*Morgan, J (2012) Teaching Secondary Geography as if the Planet Matters. London: David Fulton.*

*Rawding, C. (2013) Effective Innovation in the Secondary Geography Curriculum: A Practical Guide. London: Routledge.*

*Roberts, M. (2013) Geography through Enquiry: Approaches to teaching and learning in the secondary school. Sheffield: Geographical Association.*

*The core journal for secondary geography practice is 'Teaching Geography', published by the Geographical Association.*

12. Mention contact addresses for information about geography teaching in your country.

The key organization to support geography teaching in primary and secondary schools is:

The Geographical Association,

160, Solly Street,

Sheffield

S1 4BF

UK

Website: [www.geography.org.uk](http://www.geography.org.uk)