

IGU CGE Geography Education Questionnaire

Country: UK: Wales

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1. What is the aim of geography in primary education in your country?

Foundation phase/Early Years (4 to 6 years old): The aim is to provide for young children experience of the familiar world and environment (indoor and outdoor) through safe and systematic enquiry.

Key Stage 2 (7 to 10 years old): The aim of geography teaching is to stimulate pupils' interest in and foster a sense of wonder of places and the world about them; to understand the importance of sustainability; to develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment; and to recognise they are global citizens.

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

The aim of secondary school geography teaching is to stimulate pupils' interest in, be inspired by and foster a sense of wonder about the variety of places and the complexity of the world; to develop awareness of the interdependence, interactions within and between societies, economies, cultures and environments at scales from the local to the global, and how these are linked to sustainability; to develop a sense of responsibility for the environment; and to foster their role as global citizens.

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

Foundation phase/Early Years (4 to 6 years old): geographical learning is integrated into broad experiential topics, so is not possible to provide a meaningful estimation of time spent in teaching geography.

Key Stage 2 (7 to 10 years old): one hour per week. In most school schools geography is integrated into an holistic topic, often with a local, historical or environmental focus.

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

Lower Secondary (11-14 year olds): Two hours.

Upper Secondary (14-19 year olds): Three hours.

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

The following themes are part of primary geography:

- Locating places, patterns, environments and processes;
- Geographical investigation (enquiry);
- The use of maps and atlases;
- Living in Wales;
- Two contrasting localities;
- Caring for places and environments.

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

The following are the key themes in secondary geography:

- geographical investigation (enquiry);
- the use of maps, atlases, photographs and spatial data;
- the variations and changes in quality of life in rural and/or urban environments;
- the processes and landforms of coasts and rivers;
- population patterns, change and movement;
- people as consumers and the impacts on and changes in economic activity;
- economic development in different locations/countries;
- global distribution, causes and impacts, and human responses to extreme tectonic and other hazardous events;
- threatened environments and possibilities for their sustainable development;
- issues in Wales and the wider world of living sustainably and the responsibilities of being a global citizen;
- development, poverty and inequality.

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

Geography is optional in the upper levels of secondary education. About 30% of students opt to study geography up to 16 years old and about 10 to 15 % of students opt to study geography in the post-16 year old levels of secondary education. The number of students studying geography in the upper levels of secondary education is relatively stable.

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

There are several concerns about geography in school education:

- Emphasis of the curriculum and learning has been on (generic) skills for the last six years, which has eroded teaching geography as a distinct subject in primary education and also in the lower years of secondary education.
- A literacy and numeracy framework, in place since 2012, has impacted on a trend toward geography acting as a vehicle for literacy and numeracy rather than study of the subject for its own intrinsic value.
- Having time to teach geography effectively: a 2013 survey of subject specialist geography teachers in Wales indicated that 51% of respondents consider they are limited in the time they have to teach geography effectively. (GA Wales Special Interest Group Survey).
- The position of geography within the curriculum: a government curriculum review process is currently underway (from May, 2014), and the position of geography in the primary and lower secondary education is uncertain. This may impact on the number of students opting to study geography in the upper levels of secondary education in future years.

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

- *Atlas of Wales/Atlas Cymru* (Gill Miller) - a comprehensive cartographic resource of key aspects of life and landscapes in modern Wales, available in both English and Welsh language versions and aimed at secondary level geography teaching.
- *Cardiff Case Studies* – a teaching resource of case studies for upper secondary level geography teaching (16-18 years old) using contemporary research ideas and topics, produced by Cardiff University, School of Planning & Geography and School of Earth & Ocean Sciences, and supported by an annual show-case and update conference for teachers.

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

No current research projects in the field of geography teaching exist in Wales.

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

Welsh Government (2008) *Geography National Curriculum in Wales*:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculumwales/arevisedcurriculumforwales/nationalcurriculum/geographyc/?lang=en>

Welsh Government (2008) *Geography: Guidance for Key Stages 2 and 3:*

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/geography-in-the-national-curriculum-for-wales/?lang=en>

Welsh Government (2008) *Knowledge and Understanding of the World:*

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/knowledge-and-understanding-of-the-world/?lang=en>

Bond, J. (2009) *All Change! Popeth yn Newid!* Presentation given at the Geographical Association Conference, University of Manchester.

http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_Conf09L6PPT.ppt

Jones, A. (2012) Let's talk about Curriculum Cymreig, *Primary Geographer*, 78, 29.

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

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