“Geography is the subject which holds the key to our future.”

Michael Palin

Why study Geography?

Geography is an incredibly diverse, stimulating, exciting and relevant subject to study. Its breadth is one of the aspects of the subject which appeals most to students; there is something for everyone, it’s never out-of-date and it’s all around us, all of the time.

While geographers study a huge range of topics, from population change to volcanic eruptions, everything is linked to people and places in the world today. Geographers develop not only an excellent general knowledge of countries, environments and cultures but are aware of contemporary conflicts and challenges which can be global in scale or more local.

Geography is very much an enquiry-based subject; we are always asking questions about the world and encourage students to investigate places and issues that spark their interest. For instance, we will consider:

✓ Is the Yellowstone supervolcano a threat to mankind?

✓ What factors have made Honduras one of the most crime-ridden and dangerous countries in the world?

✓ Should countries develop their nuclear energy supplies or focus on greener renewable energy instead?

✓ Why are Egypt and Ethiopia locked in a conflict over the ownership of the Nile’s water resources?

✓ Having reached 7.8 billion people in 2020, will the world population keep growing at the same rate?

✓ What will the world look like in 100 years if climate change continues?

✓ How has Qatar become the richest country in the world per person while the Central African Republic is the poorest?

Which topics do geographers study in Year 9 at Judd?

In Year 9, we begin to teach some of the GCSE content alongside our own schemes of work. Topics include:

• World Development: understanding why countries have developed at different rates, using statistics to measure development, explaining how countries trade with each other and suggesting how the poorest countries in the world might develop in the future.

• Extreme Geography: exploring the most extreme places on Earth, from the world-record breaking physical landscapes to the extraordinary human environments and freak events which have shaped our planet. We discover what qualifies a place as ‘extreme’ and take an extreme tour of the world!

• Population Change: measuring the world’s population as it is now and tracking different countries as their populations rise or fall, understanding the reasons behind these changes, discovering the impacts of a population’s size on countries and how governments can try to influence their population growth.

• Water Resources: understanding where the world’s water resources are stored and how they can be accessed, explaining why ‘water wars’ can occur between countries and where the world’s worst water conflicts are now. We also consider how the world can use its water resources sustainably in the future.

Which topics are included in GCSE Geography at Judd?

In Years 10 and 11, students follow the Edexcel Geography A syllabus (1GA0) and the areas of study are:

Year 10: Changing cities, UK Landscapes, Glaciers and glaciated uplands, Resources and energy, Coastal landscapes.

Year 11: Weather hazards and climate change, Ecosystems and biodiversity, UK challenges.

What other skills will I develop?

Geography is an excellent subject for establishing a wide skill set which is why it is such a popular choice at GCSE, A-level and beyond. Throughout Year 9 and into the GCSE course, students continue to develop their skills of literacy and numeracy, map skills, graphical skills, ICT and GIS (Geographical Information Systems) techniques, investigative and practical skills, data interpretation and discussion.

These not only enhance geographical understanding but also contribute to learning in other subject areas, which students have found to be a real advantage.

Do we go on fieldwork?

Yes! Fieldwork is an essential part of the Geography curriculum and covers the practical side of the course, allowing us to investigate the topics that we are studying in class in the outdoor environment.

Currently, students complete two days of fieldwork in Year 10 (one in an urban environment in Hastings and the second on a beach on the south coast investigating coastal environments). We are also looking to introduce fieldwork into Year 9 for those choosing this option.

How will I be taught?

At Judd, the Geography Department comprises three specialist teachers (Ms Yarham, Mr Taylor and Mr Mayes). We all teach both sides of the subject (Physical and Human) and are passionate about sharing our knowledge and experience. We also encourage students to think for themselves; students bring their own ideas and observations of different places to class and that is what makes this subject so exciting.

We use a range of teaching strategies which include teacher-led activities, group work, independent investigation and practical work. We also ensure that the material we teach is as up-to-date as possible.

What do Judd geographers say?

We asked three current Year 10 geographers for their thoughts on the course so far. They said:

• “I chose Geography because I enjoy Science but also found the human side of the subject really interesting. Every topic is totally different – so one week you are finding out what it’s like to live in the most polluted city on earth and the next, you’re learning about ice sheets and how glaciers move.”

• “I love how current it is. What you can learn in the lesson that day might be on the news that night!”

• “The fieldwork is really good fun. It’s great to be able to go somewhere with a research question, collect some data and then come back and analyse what you’ve found. And Hastings has great ice cream!”

If you have any questions about the Geography course in Year 9 or at GCSE, you can talk to your teacher in lessons or come and find us in the department at any time.

Head of Geography Department: Ms M C Yarham