

Geography (S4-S6)

1. Introduction

Geography is one of the elective subjects under the Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE) Key Learning Area in the senior secondary curriculum. There is a strong connection between Geography and the school-based Junior Humanities which aims at helping students understand the material foundations on which a human being is based on. Geography in HKUGA College serves as an extension of what students have learnt in their Junior Humanities / Geography / History studies - consolidation of basic geographical concepts and strengthening of students' application of these concepts in a more complex context through issue-based enquiry approach at the senior secondary level.

(a) The study of Geography

Geography is the subject which tries to explain the characteristics of places and the distribution of people, features and events as they happen and develop over the earth surface. It is about the man-environment interactions in the context of specific places and locations. Through examining the inter-relationships among people, places and the environment, Geography helps students acquire an in-depth understanding of the changing contemporary world in terms of space and environment.

The study of Geography provides opportunities for students to develop their general intellectual capacity for lifelong learning, and for generic skills such as critical thinking, communication, information processing, problem solving and decision making.

Geography also emphasizes on the following values in terms of social, environmental and cultural dimensions - a just society, sustainability and celebrating difference throughout the curriculum. Geography is a multi-disciplinary subject which can be connected to other subjects to explain historical events, scientific processes, social organization, cultural development and spatial relationships. It provides students with the survival skills for understanding and coping with their own living environment.

(b) Learning and teaching methods

Issue-based and data-based enquiries are typical classroom strategies used in Geography. Students learn to use the controversies as a framework to develop conceptual and factual understanding in the chosen subject area. Issue becomes the framework for the whole lesson or the unit. Data-based resources would be provided to bring about issue-based learning. Teachers will provide relevant data sources to students so that they can enquire from the data to induce the related concepts and principles to ensure authentic understanding.

The students' values are influenced by the approaches employed by teachers. An enquiry approach minimizes the opportunity for inculcation and develops a value of questioning different viewpoints. Engaging students in enquiry that is cooperative and in which all students are active participants is crucial to developing critical approach to values. Therefore, project-based learning is one of the most prevalent ways applied in Geography learning and teaching. Other strategies like role play, debate, decision making exercises and so on are also applicable.

To cater the needs of students with different learning styles, teachers would select different varieties of resources, for example, visual, audio, pictorial and graphic materials and texts to stimulate students' interests and enhance students' learning efficiency.

Fieldwork is a distinctive attribute of Geography. It provides students with opportunities to apply the knowledge and concepts learnt in classroom to the real world, and through this to acquire new knowledge and concepts. Enquiry-based fieldwork should be aligned with the aims and objectives of the Geography curriculum. Problem-based learning approach would be adopted in which an issue or a problem related to the interaction of people and their environment in a specific locality is identified. A range of skills can be developed through fieldworks - setting objectives, formulating hypothesis, collecting data, presenting data, making comparisons, testing ideas and predictions, solving problems and making decisions. Both local and overseas field trips would be considered.

(c) Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the whole learning and teaching process and it should not be viewed as the final stage of the whole process of curriculum development. Assessment provides solid evidence to make evaluative judgments on students' learning and teachers' teaching. Therefore, students are assessed through a continuous assessment. Both efforts spent in lesson time and at home will be counted in the assessment. Meanwhile, teacher's feedback at various stages of learning and teaching will be given to students in order to allow student reflect their learning more effectively.

2. Curriculum aims

The aims of the curriculum are to enable students to:

- (a) understand the Earth they inhabit, and enable them to recognise and interpret, from a spatial perspective, the arrangement of phenomena and features on Earth, the processes at work, the interactions that occur, the changes that result, and the issues and management responses that arise;
- (b) develop the general intellectual capacity and generic skills needed for lifelong learning through geographical enquiry, and the ability to apply these in life situations;
- (c) appreciate the wonder, interdependence and fragility of the local and global environment, and the importance of promoting sustainable development; and
- (d) develop a sense of citizenship, a global outlook, and readiness to take action for the betterment of society, the nation and the world.

3. Curriculum objectives

- (a) Knowledge and understanding

Students are expected to develop knowledge and understanding of:

- (i) how natural environments influence human activities, and how human activities alter natural environments;
- (ii) the changing development of geographical phenomena and issues in terms of space and time;
- (iii) the characteristics and functioning of major natural environments, through analysing the processes and interactions within and between them;
- (iv) the characteristics and development of major human activities, in order to achieve a sense of “region”; and
- (v) the issues arising from people-environment interactions and the human responses to such issues, as well as the implications of these human responses for resource management.

(b) Skills

Students are expected to develop:

- (i) geographical enquiry skills, including the ability to:
 - (I) identify and ask questions from a geographical perspective;
 - (II) locate, collect, select and extract appropriate information and data from primary and secondary sources (e.g. the field, surveys, documents, maps, charts, ground and aerial photos), which require the ability to observe and record data systematically and accurately;
 - (III) present and organize information and data, which involves the ability to:
 - use appropriate techniques for summarizing (e.g. descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency and variability);
 - use appropriate formats, such as texts (e.g. reports, tables, summaries, etc.) and illustrations (such as maps, diagrams, models, sketches, and graphs);
 - (IV) compare, analyze, synthesize and evaluate, in order to interpret information and data for making inferences and drawing conclusions, which includes:
 - the use of appropriate statistical techniques (e.g. correlation);
 - analysis of spatial distribution patterns.
 - (V) evaluate the findings, solutions or conclusions drawn from enquiry.
- (ii) generic skills of communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity through geographical enquiry, in particular the ability to:
 - (I) select appropriate means of effective communication;
 - (II) draw out meaning from information, and determine what and what not to believe;
 - (III) analyze problems through logical reasoning, and determine the optimal course of action from a number of alternatives;
 - (IV) view situations from different perspectives and adopt appropriate approaches to analyze problems.

(c) Values and attitudes

Students are expected to develop values and attitudes that will enable them to:

- (i) have a sense of wonder and curiosity about peoples, places and environments;
- (ii) show respect for all peoples, and their cultures, values and ways of life;
- (iii) recognise environmental problems and take appropriate action to promote sustainable development;
- (iv) cultivate a sense of belonging to society and the nation and become active and responsible citizens; and
- (v) be aware of the increasing global interdependence of peoples and nations, and appreciate the importance of international solidarity and cooperation

4. Curriculum framework (2024-2025)

(a) S4

	Module	Relevant Priority Values and Attitude #
Term 1	Opportunities and Risks - Is it rational to live in hazard-prone areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - perseverance - responsibility - empathy
	Dynamic Earth - The building of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - respect for others - responsibility - empathy
Term 2	Managing river and coastal environments: A continuing challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - responsibility - commitment
	Changing Industrial Location: How and why does it change over space and time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - respect for others - responsibility - commitment

(b) S5

	Module	Relevant Priority Values and Attitude #
Term 1	Combating Famine – Is technology a panacea for food shortages?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - perseverance - responsibility - commitment - empathy
	Disappearing green canopy – Who should pay for the massive deforestation in rainforest regions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - perseverance - responsibility - commitment - empathy
Term 2	Climate Change: Long-term fluctuation or irreversible trend?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - respect for others - responsibility - commitment
	Weather and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - respect for others - responsibility - commitment - unity

Module	Relevant Priority Values and Attitude #
Weather and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - respect for others - responsibility - commitment - unity
Building a sustainable city - Are environmental conservation and urban development mutually exclusive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benevolence - respect for others - responsibility - commitment - law-abidingness
Revision	-

Priority values and attitude include “perseverance”, “respect for others”, “responsibility”, “national identity”, “commitment”, “integrity”, “benevolence”, “law-abidingness”, “empathy”, “diligence”, “unity” and “filial piety”.

5. Assessing students

5.1 Weighting of various components for achievement level

(a) Secondary 4 and Secondary 5

Components	Term 1 Modules	Term 2 Modules	Term Examination	Final Examination	<i>Total</i>
Weighting	20%	20%	30%	30%	<i>100%</i>

(b) Secondary 6

Components	Term 1 Modules	Revision Tests	Mock Examination	<i>Total</i>
Weighting	15%	25%	60%	<i>100%</i>

5.2 Assessment criteria

The following assessment criteria would be applied in various ways throughout the subject:

- Understanding of Geographical Knowledge and Skills
- Application of Geographical Knowledge and Skills
- Presentation Skills / Daily Participation / Reading Tasks

6. Level descriptors

Students at this level typically:

Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the curriculum content by understanding how natural environments influence human activities, and how human activities alter natural environments - evaluate the relative significance of factors that have shaped the physical and human environments - display a sophisticated understanding of geographical terms and concepts - assess different geographical interpretations and perspectives - present meaningful geographical findings in a logical and systematic manner
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate sound knowledge of the curriculum content by understanding how natural environments influence human activities, and how human activities alter natural environments - explain the relative significance of factors that have shaped the physical and human environments - display a sound understanding of geographical terms and concepts - argue using different geographical interpretations and perspectives - present meaningful geographical findings in a clear manner
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate adequate knowledge of the curriculum content by understanding how natural environments influence human activities, and how human activities alter natural environments - describe the significance of factors that have shaped the physical and human environments - demonstrate an adequate understanding of geographical terms and concepts - explain different geographical interpretations and perspectives - present basic geographical findings in a clear manner
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate basic knowledge of the curriculum content by understanding how natural environments influence human activities, and how human activities alter natural environments - demonstrate a basic understanding of factors that have shaped the physical and human environments - demonstrate a basic understanding of geographical terms and concepts - describe different geographical interpretations and perspectives - present basic geographical findings with some evidence of simple arguments
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate elementary knowledge of the curriculum content by understanding how natural environments influence human activities, and how human activities alter natural environments - demonstrate an elementary understanding of factors that have shaped the physical and human environments - demonstrate comprehension of simple geographical terms and concepts - recognize simple geographical interpretations and perspectives - present basic geographical findings in a simple narrative style

7. Use of Generative AI

(a) Principles

- Generative AI is one of the tools for learning.
- Plagiarism is a kind of academic dishonesty. It arises when a person copies or adapts others' (including AI's) work as a part or whole of his/her own work without proper acknowledgment.
- Correct use generative AI is essential for learning.

(b) Requirements

- Each student will sign a declaration form and cite the part(s) in his/her work which originated from or adapted from generative AI tools.
- Student work will be examined by AI detectors and cross-checked with the declaration form. Teachers reserve the right to deduct marks if a large proportion of work is found originated from or adapted from generative AI tools.
- Students are advised to keep their working drafts to prove the originality of their work.

8. The role of parents at home and homework

Parents are encouraged to understand the value of geographical education and provide supports to children to be conscientious in studying Geography.

Parent could support the implementation of fieldwork and other life-wide learning activities in Geography by encouraging their children to participate actively in them.

Parents having any issues with regard to homework and learning situation should consult the Geography teachers.