



# **A Level Geography Transition Pack**

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## I. Introduction

It is great that you are considering studying Geography at A Level.

This pack contains a set of tasks and resources to prepare you to start an A Level in Geography. It should be used after you complete your GCSE, throughout the remainder of the summer term and over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September.

The pack will touch on a range of key topic areas and some skills linked to A level Geography: Coasts, Water Cycle, Hazards, Globalisation, Population, Urban Environments and Changing Places.

*“The study of geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It is about understanding the complexities of the world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exist across continents. And in the end, it is about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together.”* Barack Obama.

## II. ‘Scrap book challenge’

**TASK 1:** Over your A level geographical studies you will be expected to create ‘**Geographical scrap books**’. You will create two separate books, one for human geography and one for physical geography. You will be expected to collect relevant news clips, photographs and articles etc. These snippets of geography can then be used to support your answers in your exams. Over the summer you need to start your scrap books. We will expect you to have at least three pieces of information in each book.

### III. Things to read or watch and places to go

#### **Things to read or watch**

##### **Some good general geography sources:**

Geography Review: <http://www.philipallan.co.uk/geographyreview/index.htm>

Geographical: <http://www.geographical.co.uk/Home/index.html>

Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World – and Why Things Are Better Than You Think. By Hans Rosling, Ola Rosling, Anna Rosling Rönnlund

Useful websites: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>

<http://www.geographyalltheway.com>

<http://www.gatm.org.uk>

##### **More specific articles and lectures that will broaden your geographical knowledge and understanding.**

DON'T PANIC — Hans Rosling showing the facts about population

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FACK2knC08E&t=1583s>

Interactive map of coastal map of the UK coastline

<https://www.gov.uk/check-plans-to-stop-coastal-erosion-in-your-area>

What is happening to the plates?

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22329843-000-earths-tectonic-plates-have-doubled-their-speed>

How can technology improve a country's vulnerability?

[https://www.ted.com/talks/paul\\_conneally\\_digital\\_humanitarianism](https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_conneally_digital_humanitarianism)

What is a 'global sense of place'? Why is this important to the understanding of 'place' as a concept? Massey, D (1991) [http://banmarchive.org.uk/collections/mt/pdf/91\\_06\\_24.pdf](http://banmarchive.org.uk/collections/mt/pdf/91_06_24.pdf)

#### **Places to go**

If you visit any interesting places over the holidays take geographical photographs of the area. Build up a photographic record for the area. It does not need to be a place far from home, it could be in your local area. Consider: What is the physical geography of the area? How is the physical environment influenced by human activity? What geographical investigation could be carried out in this area?

**TASK 2:** You will be expected to report back to your new class in September on one of the areas listed above. So, when you read an article, remember to jot down a few notes on what you learned from it. If you visit a place, take some photographs and be ready to explain the geography that you have experienced.

#### IV. Topic based task – photograph analysis – THINK!

In Geography it is vital that you learn how to use photographs effectively.

**TASK 3:** Study the images provided and annotate them to show your knowledge and understanding. Use the prompts to help you.

##### Physical Geography: coasts.

**Prompts.** Think about coastal processes, coastal features, threats, management, human uses and what might happen in the future?

A beach in the Algarve, Portugal



##### Physical Geography: hazards

**Prompts.** Think about tectonic processes, threats, impacts, risks and management.

Mt Agnu. Bali. (Photography by Martina Russell-Smith)



### **Human Geography: Changing Places**

**Prompts.** Think about; character of place, media representation of place, how and why this area developed, how it has changed over time, the reasons for regeneration and relative success of the regeneration.

London Docklands, London, England



### **Human Geography: Globalisation**

**Prompts.** Think about; character of place, media representation of place, how might this place link to the global market? How is this place linked to globalisation? Where does this place fit into global governance?

A market place on Mahe, in the Seychelles.



## V. Topic based task – ‘the big questions’

When studying geography, it is important to be aware of the ‘big questions’ that impact upon our world today. Below is a set of ‘big questions’ for you to consider.

**Question 1.** ‘It is a country’s level of economic development that will determine how well it copes with natural hazards.’ Evaluate the validity of this statement.

**Question 2.** ‘Wars in the future will be fought over water.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

**Question 3.** ‘Globalisation is positive to all.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

**Question 4.** Doreen Massey’s work revolves around the concept of “*a sense of place*”. What do you consider this phrase to mean?

**Question 5.** ‘Coastal areas in developing countries are more at risk than those in developed countries.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

**Question 6.** Urban areas are better places to live than rural areas. Discuss.

**Question 7.** How should Antarctica be used by people in the future, if at all?

**TASK 4:** Read through these seven big questions.

For each one briefly outline what your opinion is on the ‘big question’.

Choose **one** of these big questions, expand upon your brief opinion and write your key arguments linked to this issue. Where appropriate use evidence to back up your opinions.

## **Research Recommendations**

- Redfern, M. (2003) *The Earth: A very short introduction*. Oxford, OUP
- Matthews, J. and Herbert, D. (2008) *Geography: A very short introduction*. Oxford, OUP
- Koser, K. (2007) *International Migration: A very short introduction*. Oxford, OUP.
- Maslin, M. (2008) *Global Warming: A very short introduction*. Oxford, OUP.
- Dodds, K. (2007) *Geopolitics: A very short introduction*. Oxford, OUP
- Holloway, S., Rice, S. and Valentine, G. (eds.) (2003) *Key Concepts in Human Geography*. London: Sage.
- Coe, N., Kelly, P. and Yeung, H. (2007) *Economic Geography: A contemporary introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Mitchell, D. (2000) *Cultural Geography*. Oxford, Blackwell

### **Magazines, Newspapers and Journals**

- Geography Review magazine, New Scientist, the Economist.
- National Geographic Magazine
- Any broadsheet newspaper for current events linked to the course
- Joe Bennett [2010]: *Where Underpants Come From: From Checkout to Cotton Field – Travels Through the New China*

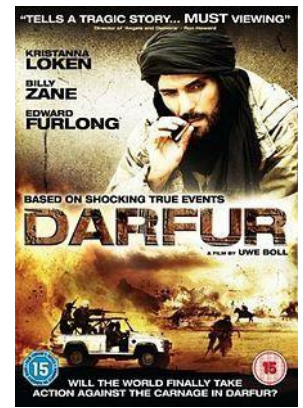
### **Profile Books**

- Khaled Hosseini [2008]: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* - Bloomsbury Press
- Khaled Hosseini [2004]: *The Kite Runner* - Bloomsbury Press
- Jung Chiang [2004]: *Wild Swans* – Harper Perennial
- John Le Carre [2006]: *The Constant Gardener* – Sceptre
- Fred Pearce [2010] *People Quake: Mass Migration, Ageing nations and the Coming Population Crash* – Eden Project
- Mike Berners-Lee [2010]: *How Bad Are Bananas? The Carbon Footprint of Everything* – Profile Books
- Charles Clover [2005]: *The End of the Line. How Overfishing is Changing The World and What We Eat* - Ebury Press
- Eric Schlosser [2002]: *Fast Food Nation: What the All American Meal is Doing to the World* - Penguin



## Development and Globalisation

**Darfur** - A group of international journalists travel to a village in Darfur in search of evidence to persuade the UN that genocide has occurred, but are forced to leave after the Janjaweed turn up and threaten to kill them. I am sure you are all aware of the Darfur Crisis and it is a case study you could name-drop into an answer, and it could also be useful for the population module, but be warned it is very graphic and definitely not one for the faint-hearted!



**Invictus** - After 27 years imprisonment, Mandela becomes South Africa's first elected president and this film follows his bid to unite the country via the rugby world cup, seeing unification as a prerequisite to development.

**Goodbye Bafana** - Follows the unlikely friendship that forms between Mandela and his prison officer, and illustrates some of the social and political impacts of colonialism in South Africa and how they continued to hinder development.

**Blood Diamond** - Amid the explosive civil war overtaking 1999 Sierra Leone; it explores many issues including those surrounding the diamond trade, supply of arms to rebels and child soldiers. This includes links to globalisation, colonialism, the 'paradox of plenty' and simply how civil unrest prevents development.



**Painted Veil** - Set in China, in the 1920's, and explores the impact of a cholera outbreak on a village, including references as to how religious beliefs make containing cholera even more challenging and the impacts of an earthquake. Focuses quite a bit on the importance of a water supply to development - the link to the module is slightly more tenuous than with some of the other films and books but it is still worth a watch!

**Cry Freedom** - In South Africa and tells the true story of Biko and his friendship with a white liberal newspaper editor. Good film to watch for development as it explores impact of apartheid on development and the importance of political stability for development to occur.

**Gandhi** - A biopic about the life of Gandhi with particular reference to his prominent role in India's struggle for freedom from colonial rule.

**Slumdog Millionaire** - Provides an insight into the life of children living in the Indian slums and the problems associated here. Also illustrates how they are trying to improve education to enable development.

**Erin Brockovich** - A good film that presents the negative impacts of the natural gas industry and the extent to which large companies are prepared to go to cover this up. Not only would this be good for the Energy module, but also globalisation with reference to the negative impact of TNCs.



**The Constant Gardener** - A rather sad story about how a drug company exploited the Kenyan population to



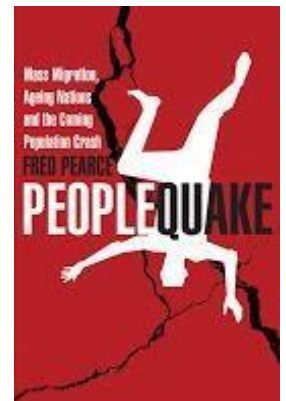
allow them to test a new drug, despite the fact they know it has harmful side effects. Also explores the idea of corrupt governments and issues faced in LDCs.

**The Cove** - This film is very thought provoking and presented the issues surrounding the dolphin trade. Before watching this I didn't know a lot about the issue, especially the scale of it in Japan, and it left me feeling very shocked that something like this still exists today in such a developed country. Issues of groupings, tied aid and trade are briefly explored also.

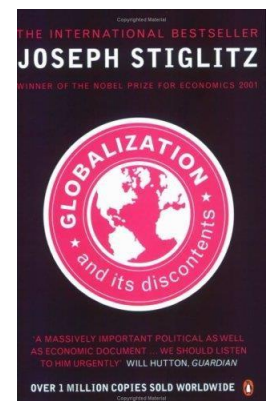
**Blood River by Tim Butcher** - Tells the story of Tim Butcher's quest to retrace the journey taken by H.M Stanley in the 1870s. From this you get an insight into the history of the Congo and the factors that have affected its development - great book for the development and globalisation module as it provides an insight into the impact colonialism has had on Africa. "Chasing the Devil: On Foot through the Killing Fields of Africa" is another Tim Butcher book, although this time based in Sierra Leone, that covers many issues intrinsic to low levels of development in Africa and the problems associated with this.

**The Boy Who Harnessed the Power of the Wind: by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer** - Tells the extraordinary true story of a Malawian teenager who overcame many obstacles to provide electricity and clean water for his village by capturing the energy in both the wind and the sun. Good for the energy as well as development unit, illustrates the importance of energy supplies and appropriate technology to development. It also touches on the issues of living in areas of climatic extremes, the role of education and how corrupt governments influence aid distribution.

**PeopleQuake** - Mass migration, ageing nations and the coming population crash by Fred Pearce - A book about the population bomb and how demographics is driving politics. Explore how we got to this point and where we are currently heading and how it can be solved. Therefore, it is a great book for Population (covers practically the entire module with some useful case studies and statistics!) and for development and globalisation. Human geographers will no doubt love this book but any geographer out there, like myself, who get carried away with the science and forget to mention people, this book is worth a read!

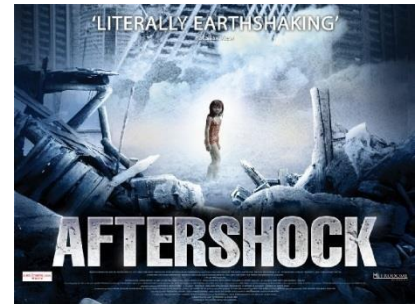


**Globalization and Its Discontents by Joseph Stiglitz** - As chief economist at the World Bank that author has a unique insider's view into the management of globalisation. In this book he speaks out against the IMF and WTO and the role of the West in driving global politics. This makes it a very good book for globalisation!



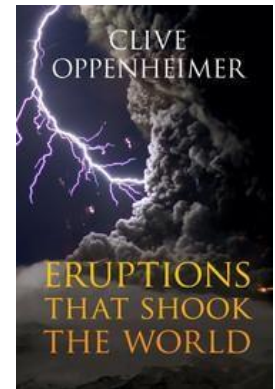
## **Plate Tectonics and Associated Hazards:**

**Aftershock** - Based around the Tangshan 1976 earthquake, which killed 242,000 people and coincided with huge political changes in China. This film covers issues including aid, politics and follows China as it changes over the time period covered. However, it is centred on one question; which 7 year twin will the mother chose to save? Be warned it is a very sad film, Millie was not over exaggerating when she said it was!



**Dante's Peak** - Covers preparation, evacuation and monitoring techniques as well as a few inaccuracies that you should be able to point out!

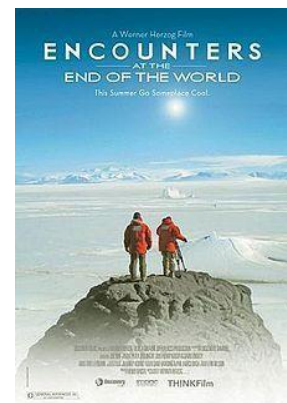
**Eruptions That Shook the World by Clive Oppenheimer** - I haven't quite finished this book yet but I thought I should mention it as I am finding it quite useful for finding the odd statistic or two! Basically, this book covers everything we need to know about volcanoes and a bit more! Geologists, this is probably a really good book for you to read, but for Geographers it does link all the volcano stuff back to its impacts on people.



## **Weather, Climate and Associated Hazards:**

**The Day After Tomorrow** - The Larsen B ice shelf collapses, the thermohaline circulation shuts down, provoking glacial inception in the northern hemisphere, with other appending impacts - a good film to watch and then point out the geographical/scientific mistakes to test how much you have understood about the influence of ocean circulation on global climate and how a freshwater input could affect it!

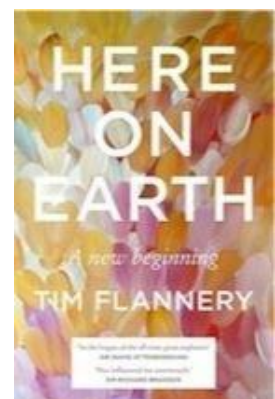
**Encounters at the End of the World** - A great documentary with some simply stunning footage and interesting interviews that collectively provide an insight into life in Antarctica and the important research that is taking place.



**The Age of Stupid** - Great film to watch for the energy module as it talks about climate change, energy consumption and production via some interesting case studies so also good for the A2 climate module.

**Gaia by James Lovelock** - Presents the Gaia hypothesis which is the idea that the Earth functions as a living organism and so self-regulates to adapt to changing conditions. This book puts forward some very interesting ideas, linked very closely to climate change both naturally and anthropogenically forced, making for an interesting read!

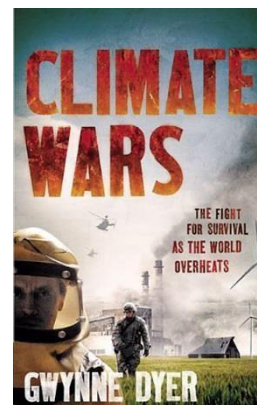
**The Revenge of Gaia by James Lovelock** - Applies the Gaia hypothesis to global climate change - again an intriguing read which presents some interesting ideas and solutions to problems we are likely to face with population expansion and coming global climate change.



**An Inconvenient Truth by Al Gore** - I am guessing most will have heard of this one! It presents the issue of climate change and discusses how it has been caused and the impacts it is likely to have - well worth a read but if you prefer there is also a film version.

**Our Choice by Al Gore** - this book follows on from "An Inconvenient Truth" by offering the solutions Al Gore thinks are required to solve the issue of global climate change

**Here on Earth by Tim Flannery** - This is essentially a "revolutionary dual biography of the planet and our species." It covers the history of the earth from its earliest origins to the world we currently live in. It offers answers to a long list of questions - How did life first emerge? What forces have shaped it? Why did humans come to dominate? And when did we start to have an impact? How has this changed us as a species? It is probably wise to have a bit of knowledge of the Gaia hypothesis before reading this as it does mention this a bit. It is a very interesting book and one that leaves you questioning why on earth we did some of the things we have and continue to do - essentially a great book for all Earth Scientists!



**Climate Wars** - The Fight for Survival as the World Overheats by Gwynne Dyer - "An increase of 2C in average global temperature - which is almost inevitable - will heat global politics to boiling point." Bringing together extensive interviews and latest research this book reveals the realities of a planet facing scarce food, water and land. Can our technology save us, or is it too late? It is written in an interesting way as takes the science, makes it understandable before focusing on what exactly this means for society now and in the future. Any geographers out there, like myself, who get too carried away with the science of climate change, without consideration of what that means for people, this book is definitely worth a read!!!

**Storms of My Grandchildren** - The truth about the coming climate change and our last chance to save humanity by James Hansen - covers global climate change, with both causes and consequences and the more contemporary role of politics, especially in the USA, in climate research - an interesting read but in places the level of science goes beyond the A-level syllabus.

### **Websites**

- <http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/geography>
- <http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/A-level/AQA/AQA%20A%20level.htm>
- <http://www.acegeography.com/aqa-a-level.html>
- <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/as-and-a-level/geography-7037>

## Ideas for day trips

### NATIONAL PARKS

Visit a National Park and explore its natural surroundings.... Why does it have those landscape features?

E.G. Lake District, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales.



### URBAN REGENERATION

Visit a city where it has changed in recent years/decades.... Why? e.g. LEEDS, SHEFFIELD, MANCHESTER .....

Any other locations in the British Isles..... Can you link them to any of the topics on the new AQA specification?

## Activity: Plan a Visit

Use the internet to research 3 places that you can visit in the future using the template below:

Place to visit	1-	2-	3-
What I would like to explore / find out / see			
Telephone No			
Location			
Travel Plans (e.g. what train/bus)			

## **Activity 2**

In the space below, list all the books, films, websites, documentaries and days out from this pack that you have researched/ completed. Remember, be honest – you may be asked about these during your induction period.

## **Activity 3**

- Imagine that you work for a geography student journal. As part of your job, you have been asked to write a review of your chosen resource. The purpose of the review is to promote it to other geography students so that they read/watch/visit it too.
- You can write your review in any format you choose (written piece, letter, PowerPoint, poster) but it must include:
  - The title of the resource and where to find it
  - A brief overview of the resource (but don't give too much away)
  - Information about why you would recommend it to other geography students.