

 Subject Vision — Why Geography Matters

Our Vision

Year 13 is the year in which pupils complete the journey from confident geographer to independent geographical thinker. The Year 12 foundation is extended to the global systems that sustain life on Earth — water, carbon, climate — and to the power structures that shape human destinies: superpowers, development, rights, migration and sovereignty.

Year 13 is where geography reveals itself as the discipline best placed to answer the defining questions of the twenty-first century: how do we live within planetary limits, who governs the planet, and how should competing claims for resources, dignity and security be reconciled? The Independent Investigation sits at the heart of this vision — the moment students cease being learners of geography and become practitioners of it.

The A Level Assessment Architecture

- ▶ **Paper 1** — Physical Systems & Sustainability: water and carbon cycles, insecurity and energy futures.
- ▶ **Paper 2** — Human Systems & Geopolitics: superpowers and global development, rights and sovereignty.
- ▶ **Paper 3** — Synoptic decision-making paper (20%) drawing on the whole specification.
- ▶ **NEA** — the 3,000–4,000 word Independent Investigation, worth 20% of the A Level.

 Curriculum Journey — Learning Sequence by Term

AUTUMN 1	AUTUMN 2	SPRING 1	SPRING 2	ALL YEAR
Water Cycle & Water Insecurity	Carbon Cycle & Energy Security	Superpowers	Topic 8: Global Governance	NEA + Synoptic Revision
Topic 5 — drainage basins, water budgets and contested water futures (Nile, Colorado, Aral Sea)	Topic 6 — stores, fluxes and feedbacks; fossil fuels, energy pathways and players	Topic 7 — economic, military, cultural and ideological power; colonialism to the rise of China	Health, Human Rights & Intervention (8A) or Migration, Identity & Sovereignty (8B)	Independent Investigation support throughout; summer term devoted to Paper 3 preparation
Synoptic by Design Physical systems are taught first to set the planetary context for the human geography that follows; water and carbon share isomorphic mechanisms, allowing rapid conceptual transfer into the geopolitics of Topics 7 and 8. The NEA is launched early and supported throughout — data analysis in autumn, written analysis in spring, submission in early spring term — while revision and Paper 3 synoptic preparation are interleaved across the year rather than left to the final term.				

 Assessment Information

How Pupils Are Assessed

Assessment operates at its most demanding, with feedback held to the standard of university tutorial work:

- ▶ Weekly retrieval practice across the full two-year specification
- ▶ Regular 12- and 20-mark essays marked using PATHS with mark-scheme levels
- ▶ End-of-topic past-paper assessments and full mock examinations
- ▶ Structured NEA milestones: data analysis, drafting, evaluation, submission
- ▶ Paper 3 synoptic decision-making practice using pre-release style resources

Assessment Across the Year

- ▶ Water & Carbon: data-response and 20-mark essays on insecurity, feedbacks and management futures
- ▶ Superpowers: essays evaluating shifting patterns of power, using theorists and quantitative measures
- ▶ Topic 8: extended essays on intervention, sovereignty and contested global governance
- ▶ NEA: 3,000–4,000 word Independent Investigation (20% of the A Level), submitted early spring
- ▶ Summer: full synoptic Paper 3 preparation across Players, Attitudes and Actions, and Futures

 PATHS Marking Framework

Every formal assessment is followed by feedback using PATHS — the school's consistent feedback model. No PATHS cycle is complete until the pupil has responded.

	Element	What it means	Example in this year
P	Positive Comment	A specific, sincere comment on a genuine strength of the work — never generic praise.	“Your introduction defined hegemony precisely; paragraph two integrated a quantitative measure with a named theorist — Level 4 behaviour.”
A	Attainment Mark / Grade	A clear mark, level or working grade showing where the work sits against expectations.	Raw mark, mark-scheme level and working grade, with grade-boundary indication where relevant.
T	Target to Improve	One single, specific, prioritised geographical target — never a list.	“Develop a sustained line of argument: reorganise so your strongest point comes last and the case builds throughout.”
H	How-to Instructions	Concrete, do-able steps telling the pupil exactly how to act on the target.	“Move your strongest argument to the third body paragraph; open each subsequent paragraph with a link back to your judgement; apply in the attached redraft.”
S	Student Response	Pupils respond in green pen in dedicated improvement time; the teacher checks the response.	Full redraft or re-attempted paragraph in green pen during DIRT; the cycle continues until the target is mastered.