

# **ST. JOSEPH'S INSTITUTION INTERNATIONAL MALAYSIA**



## **GEOGRAPHY HANDBOOK 2017-18**

# Why study Geography?

Geography is a dynamic subject firmly rooted in the real world. Geography examines patterns, trends, and interactions between humans and the physical environments they inhabit, as well as strategies to effectively deal with the consequences of these interactions.

As our world becomes increasingly interdependent, the coming century will require novel approaches to solving a host of critical issues pertaining to resource management, environmental sustainability, and climate change. Hence, the study of Geography informs and equips students to understand and offer solutions to the critical environmental and socio-economic issues of our time.

Although no specific prior learning is required, Geography is quite broad, and thus frequently overlaps with areas of the natural sciences, economics, and statistics. As such, it serves as an excellent foundation for a wide array of careers, such as environmental assessment, urban planning, and policy analysis, to name a few.

At SJI Malaysia, Geography is offered at both higher level (HL) and standard level (SL).

## Approaches to teaching and learning in Geography

The Geography course is based on four key elements: content, concepts, context, and synthesis. These four elements are seen as being inextricably linked.

**Content:** The DP Geography course involves a solid base of factual knowledge to underpin the development of conceptual understanding. Specific examples and case studies also help to ground abstract concepts, allowing students to see a concept represented in a particular context.

**Concepts:** Concepts are big powerful ideas that have relevance both within and across subject areas. In DP Geography, concepts help to provide bridges between old knowledge and new knowledge, and facilitate transfer of knowledge across subject areas/contexts. Understanding the “big ideas” behind a topic can also help students get to the heart of why they are learning specific geographical content. In DP Geography, the key concepts include: *place, scale, spatial interaction, processes, power, possibilities*.

**Context:** Throughout the DP Geography course, students will develop their understanding of geographical issues in context, through a variety of specific case studies that ground all content and concepts into the real world.

**Synthesis:** The application of geographic skills allows for the synthesis of knowledge and ideas, and brings understanding of concepts and contexts together through the study of specified or appropriate content.

Thus, the teacher will not expect you to simply learn information then repeat it in an examination. The teacher will expect you to take responsibility for your own learning. This is the same in all IB DP subjects, not just Geography.

This means that we expect you to develop a **broad set of skills**. How these skills can relate to Geography is outlined below.

**Research skills** – how to look up information and find things out for yourself in constructive ways, how to tell if information you have found is trustworthy and how to use information honestly. For example, you may want to research the ecological footprints of various countries to ascertain the level of impact countries at different stages of development have on our planet.

**Communication skills** – this means expressing your judgements and views distinctly, and writing responses to questions succinctly. In Geography, students are required to reveal understanding through an appreciation of concrete, real-world examples, frequently using data to support judgements. Good communication is paramount evidence of good understanding.

**Social skills** – in Geography students often work in pairs or small groups, in activities ranging from data analysis, short research tasks, to presentations. You are expected to participate fully, but also listen to and encourage the participation of others.

**Thinking skills** – these skills are required in Geography in every lesson! You must be prepared to learn how to analyse, explain, evaluate, discuss, make links and see the “big picture”. As Geography is an evidence-based discipline, empirical support of geographical arguments is emphasized over mere speculative hypotheses.

**Self-management skills** – these are crucial to success in the IB DP, because you will be studying a lot of subjects and participating in a lot of activities. You must be able to work independently, effectively and in an organised manner.

This means that your teacher will also use a **broad set of approaches**, including:

**Inquiry** – whilst teachers know that they have to give students information, they know that students finding things out and coming to conclusions by themselves rather than always being told is very good. You will be expected to find things out AND ask questions throughout your Geography course. This is especially important in light of the fact that case studies require updates and revision due to our rapidly changing world.

**Emphasising concepts** – teachers will try to encourage you to see the big pictures, like some of the ideas above, rather than expect you to see each lesson as an individual entity that can be pushed to one side as soon as it is over.

**Differentiation** – teachers will use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches so that everyone’s different needs and preferred ways of learning can be addressed.

**Development of independence** – your teacher will set challenging tasks to do on your own, and have high expectations of you, so they will help you to develop your self-management skills.

**Assessment** – your teacher will use a variety of assessment methods and give feedback in different ways; he or she will also expect you to be able to assess your own and your classmates' work in a useful way. The aim is that you will not simply be looking to see what marks you have gotten – but what you *need to do next in order to improve*.

## Geography and the IB Learner Profile

While you progress through your diploma programme studies and activities, you will develop a number of attributes. The IB calls this the IB “learner profile”. This table shows you what the learner profile attributes are and some examples of how Geography can help you develop these.

<b>We hope you will become ...</b>	
Inquirers	Applying geographic skills by acting upon a geographic inquiry topic or sub-topic and collecting and selecting relevant geographic data, including the use of GIS.
Knowledgeable	Studying the content, especially the interdisciplinary aspects, of the optional themes, the SL/HL core theme, and the HL extension.
Thinkers	Applying geographic skills, including researching, processing and interpreting data and information, and the subsequent synthesis and evaluation of their knowledge and understanding. This may be expanded by systems thinking and approaches to complexity science.
Communicators	Using geographic skills, such as producing and presenting material, including essays, reports and case studies or investigations, to fellow students. This may include making links to TOK, or communicating information graphically—such as through infographics.
Principled	Applying geographic skills to research, process and interpret data and information. In cases where sensitive topics are being dealt with, students can make and justify decisions by identifying opinions, values and perceptions.
Open-minded	Using geographic skills to evaluate sources of geographic information in terms of reliability, bias, relevance and accuracy.
Caring	Considering content from the syllabus such as those elements related to sustainability and acting on CAS opportunities—especially those related to aspects of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Risk-takers	Considering their geographic skills in making and justifying decisions.
Balanced	Collecting primary data in fieldwork and the subsequent treatment, display and analysis of the information.
Reflective	Using geographic skills to evaluate methodology, develop clear logical arguments and draw conclusions where appropriate.

## Topics studied

- Food and health (HL & SL)
- Leisure, tourism, and sport (HL & SL)
- Geophysical hazards (HL only)
- Population distribution: changing population (HL & SL)
- Global climate change: vulnerability and resilience (HL & SL)
- Global resource consumption and security (HL & SL)
- Geographic perspectives: global interactions (HL only)

## Geography in the timetable at SJIIM

The IB requires 240 hours of teaching for HL and 150 hours of teaching for SL. At SJIIM, HL Geography is allocated three double lessons per week and SL Geography is allocated two double lessons per week.

It sometimes happens that HL and SL Geography are taught in the same class. In this case, the teacher will let the SL students know when they do not need to come to lessons. Sometimes students will find they need to go to all three lessons in a week; sometimes they will only attend one or two of the lessons in a week and sometimes there will be periods of time when they will not be required to attend at all.

## The IB Geography course

Geography, like all IB DP subjects, consists of two “components”.

The first of these is the theory and practical work taught during lessons, and which may be examined in the examination papers at the end of the course. Completed examination papers are sent to IB and marked by IB examiners.

The second of these is the ‘coursework’. In Geography, this is a fieldwork investigation of about 20 hours work, that each student must complete. Students investigate a fieldwork question selected by their teacher, conduct the fieldwork in groups, but are individually responsible for completing a written investigation. The investigation is marked by the teacher according to a set of criteria, then sent to IB and checked by IB moderators.

# Assessment criteria for the Geography fieldwork

So that you have some idea of what will be expected of you in advance, these are the criteria that teachers use to mark the individual investigation.

<b>CRITERION</b>	<b>EVIDENCE</b>
<b>Personal engagement</b>	Have I chosen a workable hypothesis? Have I shown that I have incorporated my own ideas into formulating an hypothesis? Have I chosen an hypothesis that is clearly related to the fieldwork question?
<b>Exploration</b>	Have I planned my investigation well, in accordance with geographical research methodology?
<b>Analysis</b>	Have I analysed and presented my primary data thoroughly in a way that allows me to answer the fieldwork question?
<b>Evaluation</b>	Have I considered the limitations of my investigation based on sample size, methods of investigation, etc?
<b>Communication</b>	Is my investigation clear and readable? Have I used the correct terminology? Have I referred to all tables of data and information correctly?

## Final assessment in Geography

An overview of how you will be assessed on the final set of skills and knowledge that you have acquired is as follows.

<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>WEIGHTING (%)</b>
HIGHER	3 exam papers	80
STANDARD	2 exam papers	75
EVERYONE	Fieldwork	20% (HL) 25% (SL)

# Geography course outline

This table reflects the topics covered but not necessarily the order in which they will be taught.

<b>Year 1</b>	HL/SL core theme: population distribution	Global and regional population distribution.	22 hours
	HL/SL core theme: global climate	Causes and consequences of global climate change.	24 hours
	HL/SL core theme: global resources	Distribution and patterns of use of global resources.	24 hours
	HL extension: power, places and networks/ human development and diversity	How global power and influence varies spatially; ways of supporting human development	40 hours
	HL/SL optional theme: leisure, tourism and sport	Examination of leisure, tourism and sport at various scales. This unit forms the basis of the IA.	30 hours
	HL/SL fieldwork investigation	IA fieldwork will be completed in June. A draft is due by year's end.	20 hours
<b>Year 2</b>	HL/SL optional theme: food and health	Examination of health indicators by region and country, as well as issues pertaining to food security and agriculture.	30 hours
	HL optional theme: geophysical hazards	Examination of various geophysical hazards.	30 hours
	HL extension: global risks and resilience	How globalization leads to new types of risks	20 hours
	Examination revision		30 hours

# Geography resources

## Textbooks

There are three principal textbooks used in the DP Geography course at SJIIM, all directly tailored to the recent curriculum review. These include:

### HL and SL

Planet Geography: Our Changing Planet (2017), by Stephen Codrington  
Planet Geography: Our Dynamic Planet (2017), by Stephen Codrington

### HL

Planet Geography: Our Connected Planet (2017), by Stephen Codrington

In addition, there is a growing selection of books related to various topics in the course available on loan from the school library.