

Geography Skills Progression

EYFS to Year 6

This table shows the progression of geography skills across the primary phase. It summarises what pupils typically know and can do in each year group across five core skill areas.

Skill Area	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Locational Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks about people and places in the local area Recognises simple features of familiar places (classroom, school grounds) Begins to use and make simple maps and plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names and locates the four countries and capital cities of the UK Identifies the UK's surrounding seas Names and locates the world's seven continents and five oceans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locates hot and cold regions in relation to the Equator and Poles Describes the location and features of the local area Locates a contrasting locality (e.g. Mugurameno, Zambia) within Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locates UK counties and principal cities Identifies global climate zones and key mountains of the world Situates Rio de Janeiro and South-East Brazil within South America 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locates Europe and its capital cities Identifies principal world rivers and rainforests Situates Greece and the Mediterranean region at a range of scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locates countries of Europe and South America and principal world cities Understands latitude, longitude, Equator, Tropics and Prime/Greenwich Meridian Identifies and compares regions (e.g. Lake District, Amazon Basin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locates the main countries of the world and major cities Identifies UK regions and key topographical features (coasts, hills, mountains, rivers) Understands how environmental regions and land use patterns change over time

<p>Place Knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks about similarities and differences between their local area and another place (e.g. Africa) • Describes immediate environment from observation and stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes key features of the local area and uses appropriate vocabulary • Begins to compare familiar places using simple descriptors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands similarities and differences between a small area of the UK and a contrasting non-European locality • Makes simple comparisons of how location affects everyday life (UK vs Zambia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compares and contrasts places studied in the Americas with previously studied locations • Recognises how people adapt to living in mountainous areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes distinctive features of Greece/Athens and the Mediterranean • Explains continuity and change (e.g., tourism, migration) and compares with other places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses the local region at different scales (global to local) • Explains how human and physical geography interact and compares with other studied regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains similarities and differences between the UK and other regions studied • Presents information about places to external audiences (e.g., route-planning, arguments for change)
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<p>Human & Physical Geography</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses simple geographical words for physical features (e.g., hill, river) and human features (e.g., town, shop) • Notices seasonal changes in the immediate environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes what places are like using basic physical and human vocabulary • Identifies seasonal and daily weather patterns in the UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognises human and physical features of the contrasting country studied • Identifies hot and cold areas of the world in relation to Equator and Poles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands types and features of mountains and early/modern settlements • Uses appropriate vocabulary linked to climate zones and mountain environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes key aspects of coasts, rivers and the water cycle • Recognises and describes major rivers around the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains climate and biomes (e.g., rainforest) and links to rivers and the water cycle • Makes links between economic activity, land use, natural resources and settlement; considers environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains volcanoes and earthquakes (plate tectonics); revisits climate zones and biomes • Discusses distribution of resources and links to trade; analyses settlement and land-use change
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<p>Geographical Skills & Fieldwork</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits and explores parts of the local community (e.g., church, park) • Observes and talks about features; creates simple maps and models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses world maps, atlases and globes to identify the UK and its countries • Carries out simple fieldwork in school grounds, drawing and labelling features • Uses ICT to record observations; recognises map symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses aerial photographs and plan perspectives to recognise landmarks • Devises simple maps and constructs keys; uses simple compass directions (N, S, E, W) • Asks/answers simple geographical questions; expresses views about the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses maps/atlasses/globes/digital mapping to locate counties and features • Uses the eight points of a compass; recognises some OS symbols • Analyses evidence and draws conclusions; produces simple sketches; poses more searching questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses maps/atlasses/globes/digital mapping to locate countries and features • Locates features using four-figure grid references and OS symbols • Observes, records and explains features; compares locations using photos/maps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of maps (political, physical, topographical, climatic, economic) and digital tools • Builds UK and world knowledge with 8-point compass, four-figure grid refs, symbols and keys (incl. OS maps) • Records and presents findings (sketch maps, plans, graphs, digital); asks causal questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extends to six-figure grid references; applies latitude/longitude in depth • Designs and tests simple hypotheses; uses numerical/quantitative skills to analyse fieldwork data • Uses fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present via maps, graphs and digital technologies
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<p>Mapping Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates and uses simple maps and plans of familiar places • Explores globes and map pictures; understands that symbols represent features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotates simple maps of the UK (countries, capitals, seas) • Locates continents and oceans; answers simple directional questions • Uses atlases and globes; undertakes simple map jigsaw/route tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotates world maps to show hot/cold regions; locates the Equator and Poles • Creates local area maps with basic symbols and keys; introduces OS symbols • Uses four main compass points when describing locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labels lines of latitude/longitude; identifies hemispheres and climate zones • Locates the 'Seven Summits' and UK's highest mountains; uses scale bars to measure distance • Locates South American countries/capitals; explores time zones; compares aerial views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locates principal world rivers and identifies river features from aerial images • Maps European countries/capitals; uses evidence from maps to support arguments (e.g., tourism) • Compares modern and historical Athens using maps and aerial views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores the local region at multiple scales; annotates OS maps with land-use • Uses six-figure grid references to locate features; plans routes using road maps • Maps global rainforests and Amazon Basin; locates North American countries/states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and maps a UK road trip; locates national parks and energy sources • Labels tectonic plates; maps famous earthquakes and volcanoes (e.g., Ring of Fire) • Uses OS maps confidently with six-figure grid references and route-planning
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