

ST. JOSEPH'S INSTITUTION INTERNATIONAL MALAYSIA



GEOGRAPHY HANDBOOK

Why study Geography?

“Geography is the only subject that has given me the skills to interpret and understand reality in a way I could not imagine before and that will remain for life.”
A student at the British School of Rio de Janeiro (2013)

Geography is a dynamic subject that is firmly grounded in the real world and focuses on the interactions between individuals, societies and physical processes in both time and space. It seeks to identify trends and patterns in these interactions. It also investigates the way in which people adapt and respond to change, and evaluates actual and possible management strategies associated with such change. Geography describes and helps to explain the similarities and differences between different places. These may be defined on a variety of scales and from the perspectives of a different range of actors, with varying powers over decision making processes.

Within individuals and societies subjects, geography is distinctive in its spatial dimension and occupies a middle ground between social or human sciences and natural sciences. The Diploma Programme geography course integrates physical, environmental and human geography, and ensures that students acquire elements of both socio-economic and scientific methodologies. Geography takes advantage of its position to examine relevant concepts and ideas from a wide variety of disciplines. This helps students develop life skills and have an appreciation of, and a respect for, alternative approaches, viewpoints and ideas.

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

Approaches to teaching and learning in Geography

The approaches to teaching and learning in Geography focus around key geographical concepts. The opportunity to have concepts in the foreground of the curriculum topics and the focus for geographic inquiry allow for more discussion, application of thinking skills, and transparent assessments. Students are required to discuss or evaluate in a way that shows conceptual insight into the context of the expected knowledge and understanding. The application of geographic skills allow for the synthesis of knowledge and ideas, and bring understanding of concepts and contexts together through the study of specified or appropriate content.

The “**Geography concepts**” consists of six main concepts of the course, with the four key concepts of place, process, power, and possibility at the centre and the organizing concepts of scale and spatial interactions connecting them. Scale has both temporal and spatial perspectives.

Places can be identified at a variety of scales, from local territories or locations to the national or state level. Places can be compared according to their cultural or physical diversity, or disparities in wealth or resource endowment. The characteristics of a place may be real or perceived, and spatial interactions between places can be considered.

Processes are human or physical mechanisms of change, such as migration or weathering. They operate on varying timescales. Linear systems, circular systems, and complex systems are all outcomes of the way in which processes operate and interact.

Power is the ability to influence and affect change or equilibrium at different scales. Power is vested in citizens, governments, institutions and other players, and in physical processes in the natural world. Equity and security, both environmental and economic, can be gained or lost as a result of the interaction of powerful forces.

Possibilities are the alternative events, futures and outcomes that geographers can model, project or predict with varying degrees of certainty. Key contemporary questions include the degree to which human and environmental systems are sustainable and resilient, and can adapt or change.

Geography and the IB learner profile

The geography syllabus is closely linked to the IB learner profile, which strives to develop internationally minded people who recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, and who help create a better and more peaceful world. By following the geography syllabus, students will have fulfilled the attributes of the IB learner profile. For example, the requirements of the internal assessment provide opportunities for students to develop every aspect of the profile.

For each attribute of the learner profile, a number of examples selected from the skills and content of the geography syllabus are given below.

Learner profile attribute	Geography syllabus
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

- **Paper 1 – Geographical Themes**

(HL students study three of these whilst SL students study two)

1. Sports, Leisure and Tourism (SL & HL)
2. Urban Environments (SL & HL)
3. Food and Health (HL Only)

- **Paper 2 – Core Themes (HL and SL Students)**

1. Changing Population
2. Global Climate – Vulnerability & Resilience
3. Global Resource Consumption & Security

- **Paper 3 – Geographic Perspectives – Global Interactions (HL Only)**

1. Power, Places & Networks
2. Human Development & Diversity
3. Global Risks & Resilience

Geography in the timetable at SJIIM

Students at SL and HL in geography are presented with a syllabus that has optional geographic themes and a common SL and HL core. HL students also study the HL core extension. The syllabus requires the development of certain skills, attributes and knowledge as described in the assessment objectives, which are externally assessed. Although the skills and activity of studying geography are common to both SL and HL students, HL students are required to acquire a further body of knowledge, to demonstrate critical evaluation and to further synthesize the concepts in the HL extension.

In summary:

- SL students study two optional themes; HL students study three optional themes, providing further breadth.
- Both SL and HL students study the core geographic perspectives—global change.
- HL students study the HL extension geographic perspectives—global interactions, and further examine, evaluate and synthesize the prescribed concepts, which by their nature are complex, contestable, interlinked and require holistic treatment. This provides further depth at HL.
- Both SL and HL students complete a fieldwork study for the internal assessment.

Lesson structure

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.

All HL students are required to attend every SL lesson as those lessons cover Paper One and

Paper Two. HL students will then attend one additional double lesson per week to cover the content of Paper 3 (HL only) exam.

The IB Geography Internal Assessment

Internal Assessment

Internal assessment is an integral part of the course and is a compulsory component for both SL and HL students. It enables students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests, without the time limitations and other constraints that are associated with examination papers. The internal assessment should, as far as possible, be woven into normal practice and classroom teaching, and not be a separate activity conducted after a course has been taught.

The internal assessment requirements at SL and at HL are the same. The time allowed is 20 hours, and the weightings are 25% at SL and 20% at HL. Students are required to undertake fieldwork collecting primary information and produce one written report that is based on a fieldwork question.

Internal assessment criteria—SL/HL

The purpose of this assessment, which is common to SL and HL, is to assess students' ability to demonstrate the following in relation to the fieldwork research question.

Knowledge and understanding (assessment objective 1)—criteria A and D

Application and analysis (assessment objective 2)—criteria A and D

Synthesis and evaluation (assessment objective 3)—criteria D, E and F

Select, use and apply a variety of appropriate skills and techniques (assessment objective 4)—criteria B and C

There are six internal assessment criteria for the fieldwork written report.

The criteria should be applied systematically against the relevant parts of the written report using a best-fit approach. Verbs in bold in the criteria refer to the command terms. For the full definition, please refer to the "Glossary of command terms" section.

Report section	Criterion	Marks allocated out of 25	Suggested word limit within 2,500 words
Fieldwork question and geographic context	A	3	300
Method(s) of investigation	B	3	300
Quality and treatment of information collected	C	6	500
Written analysis	D	8	850
Conclusion	E	2	200
Evaluation	F	3	300
Total		25	~2,450

The suggested breakdown of the word limit is offered as **guidance** and is not prescriptive. Students will not be penalized if they write more or less for each section provided the work remains within the total word limit of 2,500 words.

Assessment criteria for Geography

Paper 1 SL weight 35%

Two options are studied at SL, and three at HL out of the following topics:

- Freshwater—drainage basins
- Oceans and coastal margins
- Extreme environments
- Geophysical hazards
- Leisure, tourism and sport
- Food and health
- Urban environments

45 minutes per option question
 Total 1 hour 30 minutes
 Total 40 marks

Each option has a structured question and one extended answer question from a choice of two.
 20 (10 + 10) marks per option

Paper 1 HL weight 35%

45 minutes per option question
 Total 2 hours 15 minutes
 Total 60 marks

Each option has a structured question and one extended answer question from a choice of two.
20 (10 + 10) marks per option

Paper 2 SL weight 40% / HL weight 25%

Topics covered in Paper 2 Exam:

- Population distribution— changing population
- Global climate— vulnerability and resilience
- Global resource consumption and security

Exam paper - Total 1 hour 15 minutes

Paper 2 Section A: Three structured questions, based on each SL/HL core unit 30 marks

Paper 2 Section B: Infographic or visual stimulus, with structured questions 10 marks

Paper 2 Section C: One extended answer question from a choice of two 10 marks

Total 50 marks

Paper 3 HL Only weight 20%

Topics covered in Paper 3:

- Global risks and resilience
- Power, places and networks
- Human development and diversity

Exam Paper - Total 1 hour

Choice of three extended answer questions, with two parts, based on each HL core unit
28 marks

Part A—12 marks

Part B—16 marks

Total examination time: SL: 2 hours 45

HL: 4 hours 30

There are four assessment objectives (AOs) for the SL and HL Diploma Programme geography course. Having followed the course at SL or HL, students will be expected to do the following.

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified content

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the core theme—global change
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of two optional themes at SL and three optional themes at HL
- At HL only, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the HL extension—global interactions
- In internal assessment, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a specific geographic research topic

2. Demonstrate application and analysis of knowledge and understanding

- Apply and analyse geographic concepts and theories
- Identify and interpret geographic patterns and processes in unfamiliar information, data and cartographic material
- Demonstrate the extent to which theories and concepts are recognized and understood in particular contexts

3. Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation

- Examine and evaluate geographic concepts, theories and perceptions
- Use geographic concepts and examples to formulate and present an argument
- Evaluate materials using methodology appropriate for geographic fieldwork
- At HL only, demonstrate synthesis and evaluation of the HL extension—global interactions

4. Select, use and apply a variety of appropriate skills and techniques

- Select, use and apply the prescribed geographic skills in appropriate contexts
- Produce well-structured written material, using appropriate terminology
- Select, use and apply techniques and skills appropriate to a geographic research question

Resources/Reading List

Textbook Resources

Our Dynamic Planet by Stephen Codrington (Planet Geography Series) - SL/HL
Our Changing Planet by Stephen Codrington (Planet Geography Series) - SL/HL
Our Connected Planet by Stephen Codrington (Planet Geography Series) - HL Only

Optional Revision Guides

Geography - Global Change Study and Revision Guide by Simon Oakes - SL/HL
Geography - Global Interactions Study and Revision Guide by Simon Oakes - HL Only
Geography Oxford IB Prepared by Garrett Nagle and Antony Gillett - SL/HL