



MAHARISHI SCHOOL

CONSCIOUSNESS - BASED EDUCATION

11 January 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

Starting GCSE GEOGRAPHY in year 9

As I mentioned to parents at parents' evening in December, this year's year 9s are the second group who will do the new Geography Specification, which came out this year. It is a much more complex and content rich specification than the previous one and comes with quite a few changes.

- It is a linear not modular specification - which means all the work done will be examined at the end of year 11. We have always done this, so it this is not a big change for us. Provided adequate time is available for revision, this is not a problem.
- We lost the controlled assessment (previously known as coursework) which used to be 25% of the total mark at the end of GCSE. Instead we will be required to do two field works in two different locations (one physical and one human geography) which will be assessed as an exam paper (Paper 3 - Geographical Applications) during the final examination. This paper which includes another new element (in the next bullet point) makes up 30% of the total mark.
- An Issue Evaluation. This is completely new. Materials to prepare for this part of the Geographical Applications paper (which also includes field work and other geographical skills) will be sent to the school 12 weeks before the exam for pupils to study and prepare.
- The remaining 70% of the marks is taken up by the usual two papers - one on Physical and one on Human Geography topics. The major difference here is that there will no longer be Foundation Tier papers available. All pupils will sit the same paper with questions provided through a variety of easier to more challenging types.
- The content has changed quite dramatically as well, to more accurately reflect our current world. Some of the topics (like weather and climate) are quite challenging but also fascinating and I hope pupils will find them worth studying.

With all of the above in mind and also observing the challenge of the new specification for the current year 10 GCSE group, it has been decided that year 9 should start studying the new GCSE from the start of the spring term. This will enable us to complete the specification over the two years they will have available to them, without

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having to resort to after school sessions except for revision sessions as needed in year 11.

Your child will therefore be starting this specification from Wednesday 11 January. They will be using the GCSE Kerboodle online textbook rather than the GEOG.3 one we used last term. Please ask your child to show this to you on their Chromebook or computer you use at home. This new textbook is written at much more challenging language level and your child might need your help - at least at first - to become used to this.

If you would like to know more about this specification, please feel free to contact me on mingram@maharishischool.com in the first instance. Or you could visit the AQA website for a complete overview at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035/specification-at-a-glance>

I would appreciate it if you could keep a close eye on your child's Geography homework for the next term to ensure that they understand what is required of them and that they manage to work productively at home. If there are any issues at all, please don't hesitate to let me know as soon as possible.

This will be a big leap for many pupils in year 9, but in my experience they are a motivated, interested and eager group of young people and I am looking forward to covering some very interesting topics about our wonderful world with them.

Thank you for your continued support.

With best wishes
Mareanna Ingram
Geography Teacher