



European Schools

The Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools

Pedagogical Development Unit

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## **Geography syllabus - 2 hour course**

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APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON 24 AND 25 APRIL 2001 ALICANTE

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The programme 2010-D-411-en-2 annuls and replaces the programme 2001-D-75-en-2 for years 6 and 7

The programme 2001-D-75-en-2 is still being applied for years 4 and 5

# Geography Syllabus

## 1.0 Objectives

### 1.1 General objectives shared by all subjects.

The secondary section of the European Schools needs to perform the dual task of providing formal, subject-based education and of encouraging pupils' personal development in a wider social and cultural context. Formal education involves the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, concepts and skills within each subject area. Pupils should learn to describe, interpret, judge and apply their knowledge. Personal development of pupils is done in a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural contexts. It involves for pupils an awareness of appropriate behaviour, an understanding of the environment in which they work and live, and a development of individual identity. In practice these tasks are inseparable within the school.

These two major objectives are developed in the context of a highlighted awareness of European reality, the characteristic feature of which is the richness of European cultures. This awareness and the experience acquired as a result of shared European life should lead to the development in pupils of behaviour showing clear respect for the traditions of each individual country in Europe, while at the same time preserving their own identities.

### 1.2 Specific objectives for Geography

To help students:

- develop a sense of place.
- become aware of different environments, and to appreciate variations in human activities and ways of organizing space as well as the need to manage the earth's resources responsibly.
- understand the basic elements of physical and human geography, using systematic or thematic approaches, but necessarily illustrating these ideas through varied regional examples.
- understand regional differences and analyse their causes
- identify the fundamental ideas and concepts of geography.
- grasp the complexity of the world around him/her and accept its diversity, and in this way to become an informed, critical and active citizen.
- understand the interactions between the physical and human worlds and their consequences.
- analyse and interpret the characteristics of both the developed and developing world.
- evaluate the impact on countries/regions of various economic, social and political systems.
- analyse global links and interaction

## 2.0 Content

The programme for years 4 to 6 covers the main aspects of both physical and human geography. All the themes outlined below should be treated by the teacher, but he is free to emphasise those points he judges to be particularly important.

Teachers should include both regional and thematic approaches, but regional studies from outside Europe should be especially emphasised in year 6. They are also encouraged to look for opportunities to deal with man-environment issues throughout the programme.

Field studies should be an integral part of the programme.

### Years 4 and 5

1. The earth: presentation of its place in the universe, the seasons, day and night, (*specific skills: the use of longitude and latitude, and time zones.*)
2. The earth's relief and the forces of change: its internal structure and movement, plate tectonics, mountain building, erosion and deposition (river valleys, coasts, glaciation, Karst), weathering, vulcanicity,
3. Weather, Climate and Ecosystems: the hydrological cycle, meteorological processes, the climatic zones of the earth, climate issues (e.g. greenhouse effect, desertification, ozone), formation of soil, vegetation and its adaptation to climate, and the human impact on ecosystems (e.g. through deforestation ...) (*specific skills: working with weather maps and climate graphs.*)
4. The Oceans: their characteristics and exploitation, (e.g. ocean currents, fishing and overfishing, environmental concerns linked to their exploitation, pollution...)
5. World Population: demographic structure and change, its causes and consequences; demographic policies; distribution of the world's population, migration (characteristics and consequences); concepts of optimal, under- and over-population. (*specific skills: use of the demographic transition model; population pyramids.*)
6. Rural Geography in both the developed and less developed worlds: different forms of agriculture, characteristics and problems of peasant societies, environmental issues (e.g. soil erosion, water pollution...); water management.
7. Urban Geography in both the developed and less developed worlds: the growth of settlements, urban hierarchies, urban structure and functions, urban problems, the rural-urban fringe, city planning. (*specific skills :use of urban models and theories.*)

## Year 6

1. Economic Development: criteria and indicators of development, characteristics of the less developed world, the concept of development, contrasting development projects.
2. Industry and Services: study of the location and organisation of manufacturing industries past and present, development of the tertiary sector and its consequences, changes in employment structure, globalisation, a case study in the service sector.
3. Transport and Trade: means of transport, transport networks, organisation of world trade (e.g. trade blocs, trade routes, the study of a major commodity, north-south relations.)
4. Energy: the major sources and their exploitation, the oil crises, environmental issues, alternative sources, energy conservation.
5. Regional Studies: one developed world region and one less developed world region to show the contrasts in overall development.

## Year 7

The main emphasis should be on countries of the European Union, but teachers are encouraged to include studies of the rest of Europe wherever appropriate.

1. The concept of Europe (a general geographical overview of Europe, definitions of Europe, cultural variety and identity.)
2. The physical background of Europe (structure and landscape, climate, soils and vegetation.)
3. The origins and development of the European Union (brief study of its history and institutions - N.B. treated also within history and economics syllabuses.)
4. Population changes, internal and external migrations, and urbanization (demographic transition, population problems, e.g. separatism, regional identity.)
5. Agriculture (types, distribution, problems e.g. GMOs, environmental issues, rural change and policies.)
6. Industry: regions, policies, energy and environmental issues (changing location factors, E.U. and national objectives, aid, globalisation)
7. Transport and tourism (regions and types of tourism, economic and environmental consequences, transport networks, E.U. policies, transport changes and issues.)

8. Regional disparities (measuring variations, characteristics, development and policies)
9. Issues facing Europe (enlargement, relations with the rest of the world, trade, aid, cooperation, environmental policy....)

**In order to pursue these themes meaningfully, a number of skills should be developed.**

This includes the use of:

- sketches, including field-sketches;
- maps of many kinds (relief, climate, land use, population density, town plans, transport networks...);
- diagrams (such as temperature graphs, hydrographs, population charts, triangular graphs, block diagrams and cross-sections...);
- statistical tables (land use, environmental risks ...);
- models and theories (e.g. related to urban structure, land use and/or development)
- photographs and other visual material (e.g. satellite images, aerial photographs and videos)
- information technology (including use of the Internet)
- texts

and the ability to

- observe and describe geographical phenomena in the field,
- measure and evaluate them,
- record, interpret and elaborate upon the results.

### 3.0 Teaching and learning organisation

#### 3.1 Principles of learning organisation

The teaching lesson is marked by a constant interaction between teacher and pupils. The teaching process covers the following basic points:

- definition of objectives;
- transmission of skills and content;
- development of social values;
- development of understanding through example and discovery.

Successful teaching is dependent on whether the content and teaching strategies are consistent with the level of development, learning requirements and needs of the pupils.

Geography teaching has an important contribution to make in developing the pupils' study skills and potential. The teaching of geography also has an important role to play in the development of the pupils' competence in, and use of, their working language.

#### 3.2 Teaching strategies

The application of different working methods needs to be adapted to the changing classroom situation. The strategies should include:

- teacher exposition,
- dialogue between teacher and pupils, and
- open class discussion and enquiry.

The teaching content and the use of resource materials (including Internet, interactive CDs) in geography lessons make increasingly possible a more pupil centred approach, such as work in pairs, groups, role-playing games and simulations.

It is important to realise that both in working life and in society in general key qualities of social competence and creativity are increasingly in demand. This cannot be achieved only through the traditional passive recipient learning methods, but requires increasing emphasis on teaching strategies with greater pupil involvement.

Practice and review are of fundamental importance in the consolidation of knowledge, skills, geographical techniques and the application of basic ideas learned (e.g. geographical terminology, topography...)

#### Homework

Homework can be used to complement the practice and review exercises done in class. It can also help to prepare the pupil for new work about to be covered or may involve research and project work. Homework can be both preparation for oral work in class, and/or of a written nature. Homework plays an important role in furthering technical

competence (e.g. the drawing of diagrams, with or without computer support, interpretation of maps and diagrams.) In setting homework, however, one should be aware of the overall workload of the students.

### Inter-disciplinary work

As a result of the position of geography between the natural sciences and the social sciences, there are many appropriate links for inter-disciplinary work. Biology, history, economics and information technology are of particular importance in this respect. Therefore it is desirable that close contacts with the teachers of these subject areas be established.

Co-operation with language teachers is also to be recommended, since it is helpful with regard to improving the pupils' language level as well as their performance in geography. Teachers should be aware of the need for:-

- the development of basic terminology and vocabulary support
- practice and repetition of basic vocabulary
- clear, well organised worksheets and written presentations
- the development of structured note-taking and oral skills
- clear instructions regarding homework and its careful correction, in terms of both content and language
- setting tasks which are suitable for students with different levels of language competence
- stimulating and varied material to encourage the use of the second language

### Resources and activities

Learning activities away from school (e.g. visits or excursions) and sources of information from outside the classroom are of particular importance in geography.

Newspapers and magazines, radio and television programmes, sources of information using modern techniques (e.g. CD ROMs, Internet, G.I.S.), as well as personal experiences in the pupil's own surroundings (e.g. at home, on a journey) should be used, but require critical analysis by both teacher and pupil. These resources must be placed in their geographical context to maximise the pupils' motivation.

## **4.0 Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

### **4.1 Functions and principles of assessment of learning outcomes**

Assessment is both a formative and a summative process. Formative assessment of learning outcomes is an ongoing process. Its purpose is to provide information about pupils' learning. It should also be a basis for pupils' further achievement and plays an important role for pupils, parents or guardians and School in the provision of educational guidance for pupils. Assessment of learning outcomes need not involve the award of a mark reflecting performance in every case and it should not be punitive, but it should evaluate performance. For teachers, the assessment of learning outcomes provides an opportunity to review the objectives, methods and results of their teaching.

Summative assessment provides a clear statement of the knowledge and skills possessed by a pupil at a particular point in time.

The following general principles of assessment of learning outcomes should be observed:

- Performance against all the objectives as defined in the syllabus should be assessed. This will be done through the knowledge and skills set out in the syllabus.
- Assessment must relate to work which has been covered in the course.
- All types of work done by the pupil on the course should be a part of the assessment process – e.g. oral and written contributions, class tests, practical work.
- Pupils should be aware of the work to be done and the standards to be achieved in order to attain each level in the assessment scale.
- Pupils should know how their performance compares with other pupils, in the same or other sections. This requires co-ordination between the teachers of the same and different sections to ensure comparability.

### **4.2 Participation in class**

Participation in class is an important element in the assessment of students for the A-mark. This assessment should be based on quality, consistency and enthusiasm; and include consideration of: -



- The willingness of the student to contribute freely and regularly to discussions, or to volunteer answers to questions;
- The effort made by the student in more formal oral presentations (e.g. speeches and debates);
- The responses given by the student to questions directed to him/her specifically by the teacher;
- The student's participation in group work and involvement in discussions between students.

Language competence should not be a factor in the assessment, unless it creates a serious barrier to effective communication.

Geography as a subject lends itself to active student oral participation, and teachers are encouraged to seek creative ways of involving students in lessons. This might include debates, simulations, role-play and oral /multimedia presentations of personal research or group projects.

#### **4.3 Written work and tests**

##### **A mark**

Written work and short tests undertaken during lessons may contribute to the student's A mark. Students should be clear about the objectives of each piece of written work, and some indication should be given of the expected length and level of detail. Teachers should be aware of the need to judge the subject content of the work, rather than making it an assessment of the student's ability in the working language.

Homework and written group projects may be included in the assessment of the student.

##### **B mark**

B tests should cover one part of the syllabus, and students should be informed of the topics to be revised well in advance. The tests should be clearly laid-out and structured, and must include the mark allocation for each question. Questions and material used should be carefully selected to try to ensure that students who are weaker linguistically can understand them. The opportunity should be taken where possible to include questions which involve students in describing and analysing maps, graphs, statistics or other documents. These should be clearly presented and contain up to date information. Students may also be required to present information themselves in a simple graphical form.

The following rules apply for tests in Years 4-7:

Class	Number per year	Length	Regulations
4	4	1 period	2 per semester
5	2	2 periods	1 per semester, harmonised between language sections in the second semester
6	4	1 period	2 per semester
7	4	1 period	2 per semester

Corrections and comments should be written on the test papers, and major language mistakes could be noted, but only to assist the student. Students should be encouraged to present their work clearly.

#### 4.4 The Baccalaureate Examination

##### 4.4.1. Written examination

There is no written examination in the basic (2 hour) course. Separate regulations exist for the option (4 hour) course in Geography – please see the relevant documents.

##### 4.4.2. Oral examination

###### 1) *Duration of the examination*

The examination will last 20 minutes, including the time necessary for the examiners to consider their marks. After having chosen a question, each candidate will have 20 minutes' preparation time before the examination.

###### 2) *The Questions*

- The examinations will normally cover the year 7 syllabus, but will also test knowledge gained in previous years, especially year 6.
- All candidates will choose from the same number of questions (i.e. all questions remain in the stock throughout the course of the examinations.)
- The total number of questions shall be equal to the number of candidates plus 5, but only up to a maximum of 20 questions in all for larger groups.
- The examination will be based on the question, with its attached documents, drawn at random by the candidate.

- All questions and supporting documents must be typewritten, or at least clearly legible photocopies of typed originals. Particular care should be taken with the presentation of maps, diagrams and photographs.

### 3) *The Conduct of the Examination*

- The candidate will choose one envelope by lot from a stock of envelopes, each of which contains a question number. The envelopes must have no distinguishing marks on the outside. The candidate will then be given the question which corresponds to this number. The envelope is to be replaced in the stock of envelopes before the next candidate makes a choice.
- A candidate may refuse the first question drawn, in which case a second question is drawn from the remaining stock of questions. However, in this case he/she will lose 20% of the marks awarded. This refusal must be noted by the examiners on their marking slip – the deduction will be calculated by the school's administration.
- In both the preparation room and the examination room the candidate may have access to an atlas approved by the teacher.
- During the examination a candidate should make full use of the documents provided with the question, and may refer to any notes made in the preparation period. Students are expected to attempt to answer all parts of the question.
- The first part of the examination should give the candidate the chance to present his or her answer to the question set without interruption. Ideally, this should not just consist of a simple reading-out of what has been written in the preparation period. This initial presentation should generally last for about ten minutes to allow adequate time for supplementary questions and discussion. Follow-up questions from the examiners may either serve to stretch better candidates or to prompt weaker ones. If a candidate is unable to take any initiative whatsoever, the examiners may begin to help by asking further questions.

### 4) *Marking*

- The examination should give the candidate the chance to demonstrate a knowledge of geographical ideas and the use of geographical methodology. Accordingly, the marks should reflect these two aspects of the subject
- Examiners are reminded of the general regulations concerning subjects taken in a language other than Language I (See Doc 2000-D-19 *Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations for the European Baccalaureate* 6.4.5.2.) – “For candidates for whom the oral examination is conducted in a language other than their L.1, the criteria for assessment (except for examinations in modern languages) are the subject-related content of the candidates’ performance, and the marking should not be influenced by possible deficiencies in the language of the candidates, unless communication with the examiner is impaired by such deficiencies.”

In awarding their marks, examiners should bear in mind the following principles:

- Marks should not be allocated to specific sub-questions, as the overall impression is also important
- Flexibility is required to allow for students who focus more on one sub-question than another

#### Marking criteria

- 0 in cases of non-excused absence or fraud.
- 1 the candidate says nothing at all of any relevance.
- 2 - 5,5 the candidate who fails will show a combination of the following deficiencies:  
*insufficient facts,*  
*factual errors;*  
*wrong or missing geographical terminology;*  
*unjustified and/or incorrect arguments*
- 6 - 6,5 the candidate has done enough to pass – a sufficient but not substantial knowledge of the facts, the ability to describe and explain in simple terms the geographical relationships or distributions demanded by the question, and the correct use of geographical terminology. However, the candidate will have had some difficulty in taking the arguments further, in dealing with supplementary questions, or in putting the questions in a broader context.
- 7 - 10 Here the candidate will demonstrate an increasingly impressive combination of the following:  
*comprehensive factual knowledge;*  
*the ability to explain and analyse as well as simply describe;*  
*an ability to marshal arguments and support them with relevant evidence;*  
*an awareness of the background or context to the questions set;*  
*familiarity with geographical ideas or methods;*  
*a sound appreciation of the physical and human factors which affect geographical relationships;*  
*the ability to deal with supplementary questions with confidence.*  
**A 10 should be awarded to any candidate who demonstrates outstanding ability with regard to all these criteria.**

Each examiner will award a mark out of 10, with half marks permitted, bearing in mind not only the performance of the candidate according to the criteria cited above, but also after discussion with the other examiner. A full range of marks should be used where appropriate.

It is strongly recommended that definitive marks are not given immediately to the first candidates, but examiners should wait until at least three candidates have been tested.

The final mark will be the mathematical average of the two examiners' marks (which, perhaps, may therefore be expressed finally to two decimal places.)

[Appended is a guideline document to help with the preparation of  
Baccalaureate oral questions.]

## Appendix 1

### **SUMMARY GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING BACCALAUREATE ORAL QUESTIONS**

#### **DOCUMENTS**

- There should be no more than two documents per question.
- A wide range of document types should be used in the package of questions (e.g. tables, graphs, maps and texts.)
- The student must need to use the document(s) in the answer.
- The document(s) should be clearly related to the question as a whole.
- The document(s) should be seen as a departure point or way into the rest of the question.
- Material should be as recent as possible, unless the question has a "historical" element (e.g. CAP surpluses.)
- Material should not be over-complicated.
- Sources should be identified and their date given.
- Where text is used, it should not be over-long (a maximum of approximately 250 words.)
- Good quality reproduction is essential. Colour could be used more if school facilities make this realistic.

#### **QUESTION STRUCTURE**

- Each question should focus on one theme or part of the syllabus.
- There should be 3 or 4 sub-questions.
- These should be structured logically. .
- In general terms the question should start with description (of the document) and move through knowledge and understanding (e.g. putting the document into context) to a more open final question (involving discussion and use of the student's own judgement.)
- Very short "closed" questions should be avoided.

#### **LANGUAGE**

- The level of language should be appropriate.
- Questions should be phrased in a clear and direct way.
- Students need to be familiar with the task words used (e.g. describe, explain, analyse and discuss.)
- Brief definitions of difficult words (e.g. in a text) should be provided if necessary.