

January 2014

Title	Curriculum Relevance	Synopsis	Reference
Obesity soars to alarming levels in developing countries	Health; Development	This article discusses a recent report from the Overseas Development Institute highlighting that the number of overweight and obese individuals in developing countries is rising rapidly. It continues to explore reasons behind the growing rates in obesity, highlighting the role of rising incomes, urbanisation and globalisation. Importantly it discusses the paradox that under-consumption is a major problem for many people in developing countries, yet the rates of obesity are growing. This article could be used as a starting point to explore global patterns of obesity but also to discuss the influences of globalisation on food culture, and the impact this can have on health.	Guardian 03 January 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jan/03/obesity-soars-alarming-levels-developing-countries
Geologists identify trigger for apocalyptic super eruptions	Natural hazards	<p>Scientists have identified the triggers for volcanic super-eruptions. These kinds of eruptions are very rare happening every few hundred thousand to a million years, and tend to leave behind gigantic craters or calderas. The largest super-eruption is thought to have been La Garita in Colorado which, ejected 5,000km³ of material around 28 million years ago. It is thought eruptions of this type in today's world would bury cities under kilometres of ash and have the potential to drastically change global temperatures. Scientists have suggested that the lead up to a super-eruption is different from regular volcanic eruptions because of the way magma builds up slowly creating a gigantic magma chamber. These articles will be useful for those students considering the causes of volcanic hazards.</p> <p>READ MORE: The article from New Scientists explains the significance of buoyant magma for these super-eruptions.</p>	<p>New Scientist 05 January 2014 http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn24809-buoyant-magma-behind-calamitous-supervolcano-eruptions.html</p> <p>BBC News 06 January 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-25598050</p> <p>Guardian 06 January 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/jan/06/geologists-trigger-super-eruptions-volcanic</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>MINT countries: the next economic giants?</p>	<p>Development; Globalisation</p>	<p>In 2001 the economist Jim O'Neil coined the term BRICS to refer to the upcoming economic superpowers. Reflecting on developments of the BRICS and examining the new developing economic giants he has identified the MINTs (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) as four further countries which have the potential to have a strong influence in the global economy. This is a really useful article for students who are exploring economic development. You could use this article to introduce students to the MINTs and to consider comparisons with the BRICS. In particular students could explore factors that give countries the potential to be considered a rising economic giant.</p>	<p>BBC News 06 January 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-2554806</p>
<p>Severe weather warnings in the UK</p>	<p>Flooding; Hazard management</p>	<p>In early January 2014, at the same time that North America was experiencing heavy snow storms and sub-zero temperatures, the UK was also facing its own package of extreme weather. The heavy wind and rain arrived shortly after the New Year and by 05 January 2014 there were flood alerts in every region in England and Wales – as well as flood warnings in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Intense storms caused coastal surges and heavy rainfall which led to extensive flooding across the country, particularly in the south and south east.</p> <p>READ MORE: A Geography in the News article explores the effects of the flooding and discusses the use of sustainable drainage systems as a method of flood prevention:</p>	<p>Guardian 07 January 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jan/07/severe-weather-warnings-remain-uk-coast-storm</p> <p>Geography in the News: http://www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org/member/newscasestudies/article/?id=1944</p>
<p>'Polar vortex' disruption to cost US economy \$5bn</p>	<p>Climate; Weather</p>	<p>In early January 2014 North America experienced heavy snow storms and freezing weather. On 07 January 2014 all 50 US states had temperatures below freezing. The extreme snow storms and plummeting temperatures were largely blamed on a shift in the pattern of a phenomenon known as the polar vortex, sending colder air further south than usual. This article explores the financial implications of the extreme weather which could be used as a starting point for discussions around how people adapt to cold environments and the implications of extreme weather.</p> <p>READ MORE: A Geography in the News article explores the causes and effects of the shifting Polar vortex in the US.</p>	<p>Telegraph 08 January 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/10558607/Polar-vortex-disruption-to-cost-US-economy-5bn.html</p> <p>Geography in the News http://www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org/member/newscasestudies/article/default.aspx?id=1938</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Australians flee deadly wildfire so fierce it is creating its weather</p>	<p>Hazards</p>	<p>Wildfires have been wreaking havoc in several areas of the world this month. More than 100 fires started across South-East Australia with one fire became so fierce that it was thought to be creating its own weather. While in the USA the governor of California declared a state-wide drought as the largest reservoirs in the state were at lowest levels on record. These dry conditions have been blamed for the wildfires. In Southern California, 2,000 people had to be evacuated from their homes due to wildfires in the San Gabriel Mountains, about 25 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles. The plumes of smoke were even visible from space. These articles can be used as case study material for those studying wildfires as a natural hazard.</p>	<p>Huffington Post 16 January 2014 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/16/colby-fire-smoke-space-photo_n_4612500.html</p> <p>BBC News 18 January 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-25787938</p> <p>Telegraph 26 January 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/australia/10578969/Australians-flee-deadly-wildfire-so-fierce-it-is-creating-own-weather.html</p>
<p>Rise and fall of the mini-supermarket</p>	<p>Economic activity; Urbanisation</p>	<p>There are around 1,600 Tesco Express stores in the UK according to this article which explores the changing dynamics of retailing in the UK food and grocery markets. You could use this article to discuss the changing nature of convenience shopping in the UK, the impact of large supermarkets on smaller convenience stores and ultimately the impact of UK high streets.</p>	<p>BBC News 17 January 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-25762466</p>
<p>Scotland had glaciers until 1700s</p>	<p>Extreme environments</p>	<p>Glaciers are important indicators of climatic variations and this month research has indicated that there were indeed glaciers in Scotland as recently as in the last 400 years during the Little Ice Age. It was previously thought that Britain's glaciers had melted 11,500 years ago. The scientists involved have highlighted how important this finding is for reconstructing climate change over the last few centuries and have begun to generate simulations of the climate in the Cairngorms during the Little Ice Age. This could be used as a good starting point to discuss the importance of understanding past climate.</p>	<p>BBC News 21 January 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-25824673</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>No poor countries by 2035 Bill Gates annual letter says</p>	<p>Development; Health</p>	<p>The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is well known for its philanthropic efforts as one of the world largest private foundations. In their annual letter they dispel what they believe are the three myths about global development: that poor countries are doomed to stay poor; that foreign aid is a big waste; and that saving lives with lead to overpopulation. The article from the Independent provides a summary of the annual letter, but you can also access the original letter: http://annualletter.gatesfoundation.org/~media/Annual%20Letter%202014/PDFs/2014_GatesAnnualLetter_ENGLISH_1.pdf These are excellent resources to use with students when discussing global development. You could use the 'three myths' about global development as topics for a debate on the priorities for global development organisations.</p> <p>READ MORE: Time magazine has interviewed Bill Gates about the issues discussed in the Foundation's Annual letter.</p>	<p>Independent 21 January 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/no-poor-countries-by-2035-bill-gates-annual-letter-says-extreme-poverty-and-child-mortality-could-be-virtually-wiped-out-in-next-two-decades-9075149.html</p> <p>Time 21 January 2014 http://science.time.com/2014/01/21/bill-gates-talks-to-time-about-the-three-myths-of-global-aid/</p>
<p>Indonesia extends volcano danger zone after Mount Sinabung eruptions</p>	<p>Natural Hazards</p>	<p>A danger zone has been established around Mount Sinabung, in North Sumatra, Indonesia located in the Pacific Ring of Fire. The volcano has been erupting occasionally since September 2013. The most recent eruption began on 04 January 2014. With the volcano spewing massive clouds of gas and ash as high as 4,000m, over 20,000 people have been evacuated. This article provides a series of images of the eruptions and the effects they are having on the local area. These articles can be used to aid students using Mount Sinabung as a case study, or those exploring the effects of, and hazard mitigation for, volcanic eruptions more generally.</p> <p>READ MORE: Mount Sinabung wasn't the only volcano erupting in January. Mount Etna in Sicily also erupted as shown in video on the Guardian.</p>	<p>05 January 2014 Guardian http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/05/indonesia-volcano-mount-sinabung-erupts</p> <p>10 January 2014 The Atlantic http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2014/01/the-continued-eruptions-of-mount-sinabung/100660/</p> <p>27 January 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2014/jan/27/italy-mount-etna-volcano-erupts-video</p>
<p>In flight: see the planes in the sky right now</p>	<p>Globalisation; Transport</p>	<p>The Guardian has produced an excellent interactive animation which charts the history of aviation since 1914. A particularly fascinating feature is the ability to use live data to show every commercial plane that is in the air at the time the interactive is used. This is a useful visualisation for those studying globalisation and the impact of developments in transport.</p>	<p>Guardian 21 January 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2014/aviation-100-years</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>The Big Mac Index</p>	<p>Globalisation; Development</p>	<p>The Big Mac Index was first introduced in the Economist in 1986. It was based on the concept of purchasing power parity (PPP) and was designed to show how much a big Mac would cost in different places as an indicator of currency value. The economist has now produced an up to date interactive world map for the Big Mac Index as well as scatter diagram which displays the relationship between Big Mac Price and GDP per person. The article also includes a link to a downloadable data set which you could use with students to explore the patterns in greater depth.</p>	<p>Economist 23 January 2014 http://www.economist.com/content/big-mac-index</p>
<p>Cities: back from the brink</p>	<p>Urbanisation; Hazards</p>	<p>A series of reports have been published by the Guardian about cities that are recovering after experiencing natural disasters, and the efforts that cities are going to rebuild their cities. These articles would allow students to explore the global impact of natural hazards on cities and the varied responses.</p> <p>READ MORE: This is part of a new site launched by the Guardian focusing on issues related to cities including energy, culture, transport, construction and resilience. For any students considering issues around urban geography this is an excellent repository of articles.</p> <p>Many cities have skylines that are immediately identifiable. Why not try this quiz to see how many you can recognise?</p>	<p>Guardian 27 January 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/cities/series/cities-back-from-the-brink</p> <p>Guardian Cities www.theguardian.com/cities</p> <p>Guardian cities quiz http://www.theguardian.com/cities/quiz/2014/jan/20/spot-the-city-skyline-quiz?CMP=tw_t_gu</p>
<p>Global Hunger Index 2013 Interactive Map</p>	<p>Food; Development</p>	<p>The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has produced a very useful interactive global map which displays patterns according to the Global Hunger Index. The interactive map allows patterns to be displayed from 1990-2013. The data used for these maps and graphs are downloadable. You could use this as a starting point for students to explore patterns in world hunger.</p>	<p>International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) http://www.ifpri.org/tools/2013-ghi-map</p>

February 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
Ghana struggling to translate oil money into development gains	Resources; Development	<p>The discovery of commercial quantities of oil off the coast of Ghana was hoped to contribute to rapid development in Ghana. After the oil discovery many companies flocked to the coast along with hotels, restaurants and shops. However, many of the road networks remain inadequate and many people are facing an increased cost of living. This article provides a useful starting point for a discussion around the role of natural resource driven development.</p> <p>READ MORE: In the Ivory Coast the government is keen for expansion beyond agriculture into the mining sector. In particular it is keen for the gold mining industry to take off. This article can be used as another example of a country exploring the potential financial benefits of exploring its natural resources as a key to development: http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/feb/10/ivory-coast-joins-africa-gold-rush-economy</p>	<p>Guardian 03 February 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/feb/03/ghana-oil-money-development-gains</p>
Firmly Firn	Glaciers; Climate Change	<p>Firn is the name given to compacted snow on the top of glaciers. This article explains how the absorptive capacity of firn is crucial to the stability of ice shelves and therefore has implications for global sea level change.</p> <p>READ MORE: To learn about Pine Island Glacier and research projects being carried out there see the Geography in the News article: Pine Island Glacier: http://www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fmember%2fnews-casestudies%2farticle%2fdefault.aspx%3fid%3d1950&id=1950</p> <p>READ EVEN MORE: To find out more about researching Antarctic glaciers see the Ask the Expert Interview with Bethan Davies: http://www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org/interviews/article/default.aspx?id=1949</p>	<p>Economist 01 February 2014 http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21595405-little-known-mixture-ice-and-water-may-have-big-effect-sea</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>The Slow Decline of American China towns</p>	<p>Urban change; Gentrification</p>	<p>A new report suggests that many Chinatowns in the US are undergoing gentrification with many local residents being pushed out by rising rents as more luxury shops and apartments appear. This article provides excellent material for a gentrification case study or could be used as a starting point to explore the effects of gentrification in a range of different cities. Students could explore if similar patterns are occurring in Chinatowns in the UK, for example in Liverpool or Manchester.</p> <p>READMORE: If students wish to explore this issue in depth the original report can be viewed at: http://aaldef.org/Chinatown%20Then%20and%20Now%20AALDEF.pdf</p>	<p>BBC News 05 February 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-25920980</p>
<p>Fracking is depleting water supplies in Americas driest areas</p>	<p>Energy; Water; Sustainable Development</p>	<p>Fracking is a controversial process not only because of the way it extracts gas from the earth but also because of the amount of water it requires. This article suggests that the fracking process is further depleting water supplies in some of the most drought prone areas of the USA. This could be used as part of a wider debate about the use of fracking.</p>	<p>Guardian 05 February 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/feb/05/fracking-water-america-drought-oil-gas</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Typhoon Haiyan sends coconut farming back to 'year zero'</p>	<p>Natural disasters; Development</p>	<p>Typhoon Haiyan which hit the Philippines in November 2013 caused widespread destruction. In particular, it caused devastation to two key sources of income for local people – fish and coconuts. This article explores the effects of the typhoon on fisherman and coconut farmers providing useful material for those considering the long term implications of damage caused by tropical storms.</p> <p>READ MORE: Further information about the typhoon in the Philippines can be found in a recent Geography in the News Article, Disaster in the Philippines: Typhoon Haiyan: http://www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fmember%2fnews%2fcasestudies%2farticle%2fdefault.aspx%3fid%3d1942&id=1942</p> <p>READ EVEN MORE: For those students considering the long term impacts of tropical storms; this article from the Guardian explores how people are still recovering from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/jan/27/new-orleans-houses-rebuilt-trust-government-hurricane-katrina</p>	<p>Guardian 06 February 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/feb/06/typhoon-haiyan-coconut-farming-year-zero?CMP=twf_fd</p>
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GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Why Delhi is losing its clean air war</p>	<p>Urban Pollution; Environmental Sustainability</p>	<p>In last month's news round-up there were links to articles highlighting the problem of urban smog in China. This month there were suggestions that air quality was worse in Delhi than in Beijing. Much of the pollution is blamed not only on traffic but brick kilns and the burning of agricultural waste. The material in this article would be useful for a case study on urban air pollution.</p> <p>EXPLORE FURTHER: The Environmental Performance Index produced as part of a collaborative project by Columbia and Yale university's that is mentioned in the previous article provides a ranking that indicate how countries manage their environmental issues. Countries are ranked according to over 20 variables and the website's Data Explorer allows users to investigate environmental performance across the globe. The 2014 Environmental Performance Index Data explorer can be found at: http://epi.yale.edu/epi/data-explorer</p>	<p>BBC News 04 February 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-26012671</p>
<p>Kiribati: A tiny islands' struggle with overpopulation</p>	<p>Population; Climate change</p>	<p>The islands of Kiribati are often mentioned when discussing the potential impacts of sea level rise because they are naturally low-lying (all below 2m above sea level). However some areas of Kiribati also have population densities similar to Hong Kong or Tokyo. This article explores some of the challenges of high population densities in these areas, in particular the strain this places on food and water supplies as well as sanitation.</p> <p>READ MORE: Kiribati is not the only place where population issues are causing problems. According to an article in the Guardian Egypt is experiencing a 'population explosion' which is making many of the social tensions in the country even worse. This article could be used to form a case study about the issues related to population pressures in a developing country: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/16/egypt-population-explosion-social-unrest</p>	<p>BBC News 03 February 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-26017336</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Vertical farming</p>	<p>Urbanisation; Sustainability</p>	<p>With cities expanding and population rising across the globe alternative ways of food production are being sought. One suggestion is vertical farming – using skyscrapers as indoor farms, particularly for crops such as wheat, maize and rice. This article responds to a series of questions about vertical farming and could be used as a starting point for a discussion about potential solutions to growing urban populations and food supply.</p> <p>READ MORE: Students who wish to explore the concept of vertical farms further should the Vertical Farms website to learn more about how they would work and to see a range of potential designs: http://www.verticalfarm.com/designs</p>	<p>BBC News 06 February 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/feb/06/vertical-farming-explained-erik-murchie</p>
<p>Tipping point: Striking the balance between urban and rural growth</p>	<p>Urbanisation</p>	<p>Urbanisation is occurring rapidly in many cities in developing countries as more people move from rural area to urban centres. According to UN estimates, Lagos in Nigeria is set to be the third largest megacity in the world by 2015, after Tokyo and Mumbai. This summary report explores some of the implications of urban growth in the developing world, including a useful infographic.</p> <p>READ MORE: The article above is related to a much larger research project by KPMG who have produced a new report which explores a series of ‘global megatrends’ related to demographics, the economy and the environment. The report can be accessed at: http://www.kpmg.com/Global/en/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/future-state-government/Documents/future-state-2030-v3.pdf</p>	<p>KPMG February 2014 http://www.kpmg.com/global/en/issuesandinsights/articlespublications/future-state-government/future-state-spotlight/pages/default.aspx?utm_medium=social%E2%80%90media&utm_campaign=2014-gov-future-state&utm_source=twitter&utm_content=gbl+2014+jan+27+future+state+spotlight+cities+tw</p>
<p>Valentine’s Day ethics: how green is your red rose?</p>	<p>Globalisation; Trade</p>	<p>According to the Kenya Flower Council around 70% of the roses being sold in the UK around Valentine’s day were from the Great Rift Valley. This article highlights some of the varied producers from across the globe which provide the gifts many people buy for Valentine’s day. This could be used to start a debate about the importance of ethical trade.</p>	<p>Guardian 13 February 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/feb/13/valentines-day-ethical-gifts-green-red-rose-chocolate</p>

<p>Climate change is here now and it could lead to global conflict</p>	<p>Climate Change; Conflict</p>	<p>This article from the Guardian discusses the occurrence of extreme weather events and the potential this has for increased conflict in the future.</p> <p>For the author of this article the record rainfall and storm surges that have brought flooding across the UK are a clear sign that we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last September pointed to a changing pattern of extreme weather since 1950, with more heat waves and downpours in many parts of the world. The article would make an excellent discussion piece to prompt a debate about climate change, its causes and potential effects based on current projections.</p>	<p>Guardian 14 February 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/feb/13/storm-s-floods-climate-change-upon-us-lord-stern?CMP=tw_t_gu</p>
<p>What are sinkholes, how do they form and why are we seeing so many?</p>	<p>Physical processes; Natural Hazards</p>	<p>In February 2014 the UK experienced the emergence of a series of sinkholes – one on the M2, one in High Wycombe and one in Hemel Hempstead. This article from the Independent provides an introduction to the phenomena to begin to explain why they have been occurring.</p> <p>READ MORE: To find out more about sinkholes see the Geography in the News article which includes a useful infographic about how sinkholes form: http://www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org/member/newscasestudies/article/?id=1883</p>	<p>Independent 18 February 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/sinkholes-what-are-they-how-do-they-form-and-why-are-we-seeing-so-many-9136235.html</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>What happens when the Olympics leaves town?</p>	<p>Urban change; Urban regeneration; Sport</p>	<p>Cities which host the Olympics are often under the media spotlight in the run up to the games as new buildings and facilities appear. This article from the Rockefeller Foundation begins to explore what happens to the cities after the Olympic games with vignettes from Beijing (2008), Los Angeles (1984) and Sydney (2008). This could be used to prompt a discussion about how Olympic cities can best make use of the developments that take place as part of preparations for the Olympics. Students could explore what is happening in London since 2012 around the Olympic site.</p> <p>READ MORE: More examples of developments in Olympic cities are discussed in this article from National Geographic: http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/02/140221-olympics-sochi-rio-de-janeiro-london-boris-johnson-montreal-athens-world/</p>	<p>Rockefeller Foundation 22 February 2014 http://100resilientcities.rockefellerfoundation.org/blog/entry/what-happens-after-the-olympics-leave-town?utm_medium=email&utm_source=RockefellerCentennial&utm_content=2+-+Take+a+look+at+how+three+host+cities+fro&utm_campaign=20140224olympics&source=20140224olympics</p>
<p>Drought package: \$320 million in funding for NSW and Queensland farmers</p>	<p>Natural Hazards; Climate</p>	<p>Australia has been experiencing high levels of drought and has been nicknamed the 'Millennium Drought'. This article discusses a new funding plan to try and help farmers affected the drought which would be useful material for a case study.</p> <p>READ MORE: ABC News have also produced a really useful interactive feature that shows rainfall patterns across Australia for the last 100 years: http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/specials/drought-timeline/#1</p> <p>READ MORE: There is also a useful timeline of drought policy in Australia from 1895-2014: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-26/100-years-of-drought/5282030</p>	<p>ABC News 26 February http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-02-26/300-million-drought-package-for-farmers/5284758</p>

March 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
<p>Growing reliance on fewer crops will increase risk of drought and disease</p>	<p>Food security; Health</p>	<p>The results of a 50 year study suggests that changing food patterns will lead to a rise in obesity and global food insecurity. The article discusses the study which suggests that the global population is becoming more dependent on a shrinking number of crops. This will be useful for students considering global food distribution and issues of food security.</p> <p>FIND OUT MORE: A Global Food Security Index is produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit: http://foodsecurityindex.eiu.com/ Here students can explore the different elements of food security including availability, affordability and quality while investigating the spatial distribution across the globe. The website includes interactive maps allowing comparison of different country profiles. It is also possible to download the data which could be used for a data analysis exercise to further investigate global food security issues.</p> <p>READ EVEN MORE: This article from the Guardian discusses further issues around global food security, particularly, highlighting that both consumers and restaurants have a role to play in reducing food waste. http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/mar/02/pizza-hut-2880-calorie-monstrosity-worlds-burgeoning-food-crisis</p>	<p>Guardian 04 March 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/mar/03/growing-reliance-fewer-crops-increase-drought-disease</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Shale gas estimate in the North West 'bigger' than previously thought</p>	<p>Energy; Hazards</p>	<p>It is estimated that there are 330 trillion cubic feet of gas in place in the North West of England, significantly more than originally thought. This article explains the higher figure and also shows the distribution of this gas across the region. This article could be useful to start a debate about the potential for fracking in the North West of England.</p> <p>READ MORE: If your students are exploring the debates around hydraulic fracturing then an article from the Independent which discusses recent events in a small town in Texas may be useful. Since November the area has experienced more than 30 small earthquakes which are being attributed by many people to the use of hydraulic fracturing nearby. The article explains how local people have been gathering to discuss the impact of the activities of oil and gas companies in the area.</p> <p>http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/shaken-and-stirred-how-azle-in-texas-decided-enough-was-enough-with-fracking-9179926.html</p>	<p>BBC News 05 March 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-26440101</p>
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GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>South African leaders fail to prioritise water and sanitation</p>	<p>Water; Development; Millennium Development Goals</p>	<p>Although the world met the Millennium Development Goal to halve the proportion of people without access to water sources ahead of schedule, according to a new report from WaterAid the majority of southern Africans are living with poor sanitation and experiencing water poverty. This article summarises some of the key figures from the report using case studies from across the region including Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia. The article provides useful materials to support students investigating the progress of the Millennium Development Goals but also for those who are exploring the issue of water access and sanitation.</p> <p>READ MORE: A further article from the Guardian discusses the role of businesses in addressing accessing to clean water and adequate sanitation. http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/role-business-water-sanitation-crisis?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487</p>	<p>Guardian 03 March 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/mar/03/south-ern-africa-leaders-failing-prioritise-water-sanitation</p>
<p>Frequency of severe flooding across Europe to double by 2050</p>	<p>Natural Hazards; Flooding</p>	<p>This article from the Independent explains how an analysis of rainfall patterns has suggested that the frequency of severe flooding in Europe is likely to double by 2050. The study estimates that by 2050 the economic costs of flooding to the EU will be about 23.5 billion. It argues that in the future European countries will need to work together to tackle the hazards and repair the damage that floods will bring.</p>	<p>Independent 02 March 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/frequency-of-severe-flooding-across-europe-to-double-by-2050-9163852.html</p>
<p>Cholera epidemic in Haiti poses threat to Latin America and Caribbean</p>	<p>Health; Development</p>	<p>According to the UN Assistant Secretary General, cholera in Haiti poses a major threat to the Caribbean and Latin America. This article from the Guardian explains how the cholera epidemic on the island developed, and the efforts being made to try and curb its growth. This would make a useful starting point for students considering issues in global health, particularly the spread of cholera.</p>	<p>Guardian 07 March 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/mar/07/haiti-cholera-epidemic-major-threat-latin-america-caribbean</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Bangladesh warns of rising climate change costs</p>	<p>Climate change; Hazard mitigation</p>	<p>It is estimated that Bangladesh needs £3 billion over the next five years to adapt to the effects of a changing climate. This article from the Guardian explores some of the financial implications of climate change to countries such as Bangladesh.</p> <p>READ MORE: If students are using flooding in Bangladesh as a case study then this article from the Guardian provides some useful details of the impacts of flooding around the Brahmaputra river http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/mar/26/india-brahmaputra-river-floods-land</p>	<p>Guardian 10 march 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/mar/10/climate-change-talks-bangladesh-donors</p>
<p>Digital technology means development is now</p>	<p>Development; ICTs</p>	<p>The spread of the internet and digital technologies have allowed people and organisations to contribute to development in a range of different ways. This article from the Guardian provides some examples of the way technologies have contributed to development, through the use of mobile phones, the internet and other technologies. Students could use this article as a starting point to explore the different roles technology has to play in developing countries.</p> <p>READ MORE: For those considering the role of ICTs in development, an interview with Chris Foster from the Oxford Internet Institute explores the growth of mobile technologies in Kenya may be useful. http://www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org/interviews/article/default.aspx?id=1956</p>	<p>Guardian 7 March 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2014/mar/07/digital-technology-global-development-social-entrepreneurs</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Do massive dams ever make sense?</p>	<p>River management; Renewable Energy</p>	<p>According to the International commission on large dams, 90% of the world's renewable electricity is generated via dams. However, a new report from researchers at the University of Oxford argues that large dams are a risky investment and that in many cases very large dams are not economically viable. This article from the BBC explores some of the details of the new report and provides some key facts and figures about a series of dams. This provides useful information for students investigating the use of dams, particularly if they are using the Three Gorges Dam in China as a case study.</p> <p>LEARN MORE: A further article from the BBC provides an interactive map of the Brahmaputra river which is currently being planned a site for further large dams.</p> <p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-26663820</p>	<p>BBC News 11 March 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-26512465</p>
<p>Women's rights country by country</p>	<p>Equality; Gender; Development</p>	<p>This interactive diagram from the Guardian uses UN and World Bank data to display the varying rights of women across the globe. There is also a link to download the data which could be useful for a data analysis exercise around gender and development.</p>	<p>Guardian 19 March 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/ng-interactive/2014/feb/04/womens-rights-country-by-country-interactive</p>
<p>Niger's black market pesticides backfire</p>	<p>Health; Food Security</p>	<p>This article explains how the use of black market pesticides in Niger is having severe health consequences including cancer and respiratory problems.</p>	<p>IRIN 14 March 2014 http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportID=99777</p>

<p>Does Paris have worst air pollution than Beijing?</p>	<p>Air pollution; Urban environmental issues</p>	<p>Urban air pollution has now featured in several articles in the monthly news round ups. This month Paris has featured in the news after it placed restrictions on traffic, and made public transport free in the city for a limited time, to try and reduce the amount of traffic in the city as it was experiencing high levels of air pollution. A debate took place on the Guardian website exploring issues around urban air pollution comparing the situation in Paris to those experienced elsewhere in the world such as Beijing. You could use this to start a classroom debate about what strategies which should be used to reduce air pollution in cities.</p> <p>READ MORE: A recent Geography in the News article explores the issue of smog in China in more detail: http://www.geographyinthenews.rgs.org/member/newscasestudies/article/?id=1954</p>	<p>Guardian 17 March 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/mar/17/paris-worse-air-pollution-beijing</p>
<p>Atlanta food deserts</p>	<p>Food security; Health; Inequality</p>	<p>Atlanta is the ninth largest metropolis in the USA, yet thousands of people find it difficult to buy fresh food, creating what the Guardian have termed, food deserts. This article explores the reasons why there are people experiencing food poverty, and how it disproportionately affects groups of the population in the region. This could be useful as a case study for those investigating food security or inequality in developed countries.</p>	<p>Guardian 17 March 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/mar/17/atlanta-food-deserts-stranded-struggling-survive</p>

<p>The Steelhead Landslide in Oso, Washington State</p>	<p>Natural Hazards; Geomorphology</p>	<p>On 22nd March a large mudslide occurred in north west Washington. The debris covered around 30 houses and even blocked part of a nearby river. Dave Petley, Professor of Hazard and Risk in the Department of geography at Durham University has written a blog post exploring some of the background to the landslide, as well as images showing how it has affected the landscape.</p> <p>SEE MORE: You can view a series of images related to the landslide and its effects in this article from the Boston Globe: http://www.boston.com/bigpicture/2014/03/mudslide_in_washington_more_survivors_doubtfu.html</p> <p>LEARN MORE: The United States Geological Survey has a landslides hazard programme and any students investigating this type of hazard should explore the materials on this website further as its provides up to date information on landslides and the monitoring of areas thought to be at risk. http://landslides.usgs.gov/</p>	<p>AGU Blogosphere 25 March 2014 http://blogs.agu.org/landslideblog/2014/03/25/the-steelhead-landslide-1/</p> <p>http://www.usgs.gov/blogs/features/usgs_top_story/landslide-in-washington-state/?from=title</p>
<p>The Great Barrier Reef: An Obituary</p>	<p>Ecosystems; Environmental Change</p>	<p>An interactive story from the Guardian this month explores the value of the Great Barrier reef. The interactive moves through information and imagery which charts the formation of the reef, early exploration, how it has been used and exploited, and how it is it is being damaged. This would provide an excellent visual introduction to students exploring coral reefs as an ecosystem.</p>	<p>Guardian 26 March 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2014/mar/great-barrier-reef-obituary</p>

April 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
Chile Earthquake	Natural Hazards; Disaster Preparedness	<p>On 02 April 2014 Chile was struck by an earthquake with a magnitude of 8.2, killing six people, and triggering a 2m tsunami. Over 900,000 people evacuated the coastline, but more than 2,600 homes were damaged. This would provide good information for a case study based on an earthquake in a developing country, particularly if you contrasted it with another earthquake with much higher destruction levels.</p> <p>READ MORE: This article from National Geographic explains more about the physical processes behind the earthquake http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/04/140402-earthquakes-usgs-chile-faults-science/</p> <p>Read even more: An article from the Atlantic provides a range of images from the area affected by the earthquake which could be used as a visual starter to a lesson on earthquake effects. http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2014/04/the-aftermath-of-chiles-earthquake/100709/</p>	<p>BBC News 02 April 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-26847827</p>

<p>Social media explosion powered by dirt energy</p>	<p>Energy; Technology</p>	<p>This article from the Guardian discusses the environmental impacts of the rise of social media. In particular is discusses a new report 'Clicking Clean' from Greenpeace which highlights good and poor practices of large companies in relation to data centres and energy use. While many companies are ensuring they are using renewable energy sources, there are many which are not. The information in this article could be used to form case studies about corporate energy use, and efforts to become renewable or more generally to inform discussions around the environmental impacts of technology.</p> <p>Read more: This article from the Guardian explains how Apple has claimed that 94% of its corporate facilities and 100% of its data centres are now powered by renewable energy sources such as solar power. The steps have been taken in order to reduce its carbon footprint which in 2013 was about the same as 5% of the whole of the UK. This would be a useful article to start a discussion about the role of individual companies in carbon footprint reductions and in raising awareness of climate change.</p> <p>http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/22/apple-climate-change-is-real-and-its-a-real-problem</p>	<p>The Guardian 02 April 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/02/social-media-explosion-powered-dirty-coal-greenpeace-report</p>
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<p>Climate Change in the balance</p>	<p>Climate Change; Environment; Development</p>	<p>An important information source of information for studying climate change are the IPCC reports. Following on from September's instalment of the most recent tranche of reports, this second part of the report questions how the climate is affecting ecosystems, economies and livelihoods across the globe. It argues that climate change is having an impact on every ecosystem in the world, and that the effects will get worse. This article discusses some of the key issues and debates raised in the reports and would be useful to start a class discussion about the spatially varied impacts of climate change.</p> <p>READ MORE: The most recent part of the 5th IPCC report can be accessed: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/index.shtml</p> <p>READ EVEN MORE: A further article from the Guardian highlights how the report places importance on the use of carbon targets, but also why issues around climate change are so important for the UK. http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/01/ipcc-report-carbon-targets</p>	<p>The Economist 05 April 2014 http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21600080-new-report-ipcc-implies-climate-exceptionalism-notion</p>
<p>Is Japan playing hunger games with climate change?</p>	<p>Climate change; Food Security</p>	<p>This article is part of a wider analysis from the BBC on the recent IPCC report instalment. It focuses on the impact of rising temperatures on world food supplies, and in particular the situation for Japan. It also includes a useful map of what the potential effects of a 3^{oC} rise on global crop production and would be useful as a starter for a wider discussion about the potential impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>BBC News 06 April 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-26756005</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>The Green future of the city: glow in the dark trees and high rise farming</p>	<p>Urban sustainability</p>	<p>Bioluminescent foliage and vertical farms are just some of the ideas that have been devised to make cities more sustainable. This article from the Independent highlights a new report, 'Cities Alive' from the consultancy firm ARUP which discusses strategies to implement more 'green infrastructure' in urban areas. From the dedicated website it is possible to download the full report but also a summary booklet which has a lot of useful material about the potential ways that cities could be made more sustainable. The full report provides a wealth of information which would be useful for any students considering urban sustainability.</p> <p>http://www.arup.com/Homepage_Cities_Alive.aspx</p> <p>LEARN MORE: This article from the BBC identifies how people are making use of space in Hong Kong including vertical fish farms, urban gardens and beehives on top of skyscrapers.</p> <p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-26627408</p>	<p>Guardian 07 April 2014</p> <p>http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/green-cities-of-the-future-have-a-way-to-glow-for-lower-emissions-9224689.html</p>
<p>Three new garden cities to be built</p>	<p>Urban development; Economic development; Urban planning</p>	<p>The concept of the garden city was developed by Ebenezer Howard in the early 20th century leading to the development of settlements such as Letchworth and Welwyn Garden cities in the UK (and influencing many settlements across the world). This article from the BBC explores why there is a need for new settlements and how these might be developed. You could use this topic as a starter to explore the topic of urban development and particularly the garden city movement.</p> <p>READ MORE: This additional article from the BBC explains the plans to create the a new garden city in Ebbsfleet:</p> <p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26600689</p>	<p>BBC News 14 April 2014</p> <p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-27020578</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

Brazil a Role Model for Development	Economic Development; BRICS	In the last 10 years, Brazil has been able to use consistent economic growth to lift around 40 million out of poverty, but more recently economic growth has slowed. This article from the Guardian explores some of the dynamics of development in Brazil and could be used as a starter to begin to explore Brazil's progress.	The Guardian 17 April 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/apr/17/brazil-role-model-development-africa?CMP=new_1194
Which country should you live in?	Development indicators	This interactive from the Guardian uses the Social Progress Index examines the social and environmental performance of countries on key indicators such as health and personal safety as measured by recognised source such as the UN, World Bank and other NGOs. This would be useful for a comparative exercise examining difference social indicators of development.	The Guardian http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/ng-interactive/2014/apr/07/which-country-should-you-live-in-interactive?CMP=new_1194
Mexico hit by 7.2 magnitude earthquake	Natural Hazards	<p>On 18 April 2014 Mexico experienced an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale not far from Mexico City. This article from the Independent could be used to form a case study of an earthquake in a developing country.</p> <p>LEARN MORE: To complement this article students might want to explore the information on the USGS Website on earthquakes in Mexico. http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/world/index.php?region=Mexico</p> <p>LEARN MORE: The USGS have a map which plots recent earthquake activity. This would make a useful starter to discuss the distribution of tectonic activity. http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/map/</p>	The Independent 18 April 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/mexico-hit-by-72-magnitude-earthquake-9270207.html
Avalanches kills 12 in single deadliest accident on Mount Everest	Natural Hazards	An avalanche which occurred at high altitude on Mount Everest killed 12 Sherpa guides and seriously wounded three others make this the deadliest avalanche in Everest's history. This article provides details about the avalanches including some accompanying videos.	CNN 21 April 2014 http://edition.cnn.com/2014/04/18/world/asia/nepal-everest-avalanche/index.html

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>El Nino forecast by Australia as models predict onset</p>	<p>Natural hazards; Climate Change; Food security</p>	<p>The Bureau of Meteorology in Australia has forecast an El Nino event which is likely to start in July. This article from Bloomberg discusses some of the potential implications on Australia but also other regions of the world. This provides useful contemporary information about El Nino events but also links the issues to other areas such as food security.</p>	<p>Bloomberg 22 April 2014 http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-04-22/el-nino-may-start-as-early-as-july-as-pacific-ocean-warms-up.html</p>
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May 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
World Bank proposes change to poverty line	Measuring development	<p>The rise of the global middle class is an important phenomenon, recently reported on as part of the RGS's 21st Century Challenge lecture series. Increasing numbers of people have escaped poverty in Asia, South America and now Africa. So just how many people are still classed as living in poverty, globally? Experts are divided on the answer. According to a recent newspaper report, only 600 million people are still thought to make do on less than US\$1.25 per day, the officially recognised poverty line, following a number of recalculations made by the World Bank. The data readjustment is related to a new way of estimating purchasing power parity (PPP) data (which corrects for exchange rate distortions to calculate the amount in goods and services that money buys in each country). But, as another result of its statistical adjustments, the World Bank believes that the poverty line should now be re-drawn at US\$1.78 – which would mean over one billion people would still be categorised as living below the poverty line! This is a fascinating idea for students of all ages to debate and discuss in class. It will help focus their thinking on the difficulties in defining and measuring economic development.</p>	<p>Financial Times 09 May 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/091808e0-d6da-11e3-b95e-00144feabdc0.html#ixzz33q7f5Jqp</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Power industry braced for US carbon rules</p>	<p>Energy; climate change mitigation</p>	<p>For many years, powerful forces in US society have been resistant to the kinds of carbon footprint reduction initiatives introduced by European governments. This is now set to change. The Obama administration has imminent plans to introduce reduction targets for all US states, setting a goal of a cut of up to 30 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030. The USA's recent large-scale shift towards use of shale gas helps make this achievable, on account of the significantly lower emissions of burning shale gas compared with burning coal. However, the new legislation is controversial because it is certain to accelerate further the shift from coal to gas use, resulting in widespread coal mine closures and job losses. Badly-affected areas may include West Virginia, one of the three poorest US states by household income. "It sits at the heart of coal country, gets 95 per cent of its power from the black rocks, and is braced for the worst."</p>	<p>Financial Times 28 May 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/610ed5b6-e665-11e3-9a20-00144feabdc0.html#axzz33q5mKh QR May 28</p>
<p>U.S. charges Chinese government officials with cyber-espionage</p>	<p>Superpowers (Edexcel); global interactions (IB); conflict (AQA); geography of technology / shrinking world</p>	<p>The geography of technology is an exciting, synoptic area of study. For instance, one very interesting curriculum area is the growth of geopolitical tensions connected with cyberspace security. For several years, the USA has accused China of internet espionage and spying. Both private actors and state entities, like the People's Liberation Army, have reportedly been behind attacks in the past. Now, the USA has actually named and charged five Chinese government officials with allegedly orchestrating cyber-attacks against six major American companies. "It marks the first time the U.S. has formally charged foreign government officials for explicitly acting at the behest of a foreign government in cyber-crimes." The US companies targeted for internet espionage are alleged to have been Alcoa World Alumina, Westinghouse Electric Co., Allegheny Technologies, U.S. Steel Corp., United Steelworkers Union, and SolarWorld. All of these are strategically important manufacturing and technology industries.</p>	<p>Time magazine 19 May 2014 http://time.com/#104508/u-s-charges-chinese-government-officials-with-cyber-espionage/ See also: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-27475324#TWEET1133088</p>

<p>No shale gas potential in Weald basin, concludes British Geological Survey</p>	<p>Energy mix; fracking</p>	<p>Faced with dwindling North Sea oil and gas supplies, and a reluctance to become over-reliant on imports from Russia, it is easy to see why the UK government is keen to promote a British 'shale gas revolution'. Moreover, shale gas's lower carbon footprint compared with coal could make it easier for ambitious carbon reduction targets to be made. However, the evidence for how much shale gas the UK potentially possesses has been disputed. In recent newspaper reports, the British Geological Survey has concluded there is "no potential" in fracking for gas in the Weald region of southern England. The BGS conclusion is reported by the <i>Guardian</i> as being "a major blow to government hopes that shale could be found throughout the country". The UK government has, however, started a consultation on new legislation "that would bypass the law of trespass for underground work that is 300 metres or more below the surface and for voluntary community payments of £20,000 for each lateral well drilled".</p>	<p>Guardian 23 May 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/23/no-shale-gas-potential-weald-british-geological-survey-oil</p>
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<p>Brazil's 'flash favelas'</p>	<p>Urbanisation; geography of sport; regional development policies; growth poles</p>	<p>Brazil's hosting of the World Cup provides teachers with all kinds of topical curriculum links, and this story provides plenty of them. Rural-urban migration has led to the rapid growth of a new squatter settlement near São Paulo's new Itaquera World Cup football stadium. Makeshift tents and shacks now cover a 150,000 square metre piece of hillside that was the property of a bankrupt construction company. The new favela, called Copa do Povo, is the result of an "invasion" organised "with near military precision by the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto, the homeless workers' movement, a leftist group that tries to find houses for the poor. Its aim is to use the World Cup to pressure the government to build housing on this piece of land for the 4,000 homeless people the organisers claim have moved here". The homeless workers' movement has 17 "invasions", as these illegal occupations are known, under way in greater São Paulo. "It is blaming the latest one on the World Cup for allegedly increasing rents in Itaquera, the suburb in which the stadium is located, making accommodation unaffordable for the poor." With football's World Cup due to kick off at the Itaquera stadium, the Copa do Povo initiative is "designed to bring maximum pressure on the Brazilian government at a time when it is most vulnerable".</p>	<p>Financial Times 13 May 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/09b734e2-d9cd-11e3-b3e3-00144feabdc0.html#ixzz33qAf26lv</p>
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<p>Immigration: Number of Romanians and Bulgarians working in Britain falls</p>	<p>International migration; European Union</p>	<p>How many Romanians and Bulgarians have migrated to the UK since restrictions were lifted at the start of 2014? The Office for National Statistics has reported that 140,000 people born in either Romania or Bulgaria were working here during the first three months of 2014. This is actually a decrease of 4,000 from December 2013, when a limit was still in place on the number who were allowed to migrate to the UK. This has come as a surprise to many people, who expected more Romanians and Bulgarians to arrive. However, total net migration from the EU shows a recent rise due to an increase in the number of East Europeans from the eight countries, including Poland, which joined the EU in 2004. 74,000 new workers have arrived from these nations since the start of 2014, suggesting the UK's economic recovery is making it an attractive destination once more. "That takes the current total of people from the eight countries working here to 802,000 — a 17 per cent rise in the past year. The overall number of foreign workers in the country now stands at 2.77 million, equivalent to 9.1 per cent of the workforce. That compares with a total of 928,000 foreign workers in 1997."</p>	<p>London Evening Standard 14 May 2014 http://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/number-of-romanians-working-in-britain-is-less-than-expected-9365858.html</p>
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<p>China poised to overtake USA</p>	<p>Globalisation; development studies; superpowers (Edexcel)</p>	<p>The World Bank has changed how it calculates the real cost of living and purchasing power in countries around the world. As a result, China's GDP is now larger than previously thought, meaning that it is projected to overtake the USA later this year! "The size of the Chinese economy in 2011 was 87% of the US economy, up from 43% in 2005 when the last comparison was made. The United States remained the world's largest economy, but it was closely followed by China when measured using purchasing power parity," the latest reporting tells us.</p> <p>Economists previously thought the USA would not be knocked off the top spot until 2019. As a result of the same methodological changes, India has overtaken Japan to become the world's third largest economy with 6.4% of global GDP. The UK is now ranked the ninth largest economy, with 2.4% of global GDP.</p> <p>So what does all of this tell us about the shifting balance of global power? GDP size it is only one indicator of wealth or influence: there are many more, and China does not always score so highly. The USA remains the world's largest market, for instance, while China's GDP per capita is just one fifth the size of that of the USA. There are many interesting comments on this story online, and they generally agree that, for now, the USA, remains the number one global superpower.</p>	<p>Guardian 01 May 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/apr/30/china-overtake-us-worlds-largest-economy</p>
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<p>Russian pipelines</p>	<p>Energy pathways; conflict (AQA)</p>	<p>Students interested in finding out more about how energy issues are linked synoptically with geopolitics could find this an interesting article to read. It gives some background on how Russia has, in recent years, used gas prices as a means of gaining political leverage with Ukraine and the EU. The writer concludes:</p> <p>“Europe accounts for around a third of Gazprom's total gas sales, and around half of Russia's total budget revenue comes from oil and gas. Moscow needs that source of revenue, and whatever Vladimir Putin's geo-political ambitions, most energy analysts seem to agree he will think twice about jeopardizing it. Short of an actual war, the consensus appears to be, Europe's gas supplies are unlikely to be seriously threatened.”</p>	<p>Guardian 03 May 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/03/europes-gas-supply-ukraine-crisis-russia-pipelines</p>
<p>Bring back our girls: global protests over abduction of Nigerian schoolgirls</p>	<p>Development studies; conflict (AQA)</p>	<p>Mid-way through May, the abduction of 200 Nigerian schoolgirls by the Boko Haram militant group finally gained front-page coverage of newspapers, weeks after the event. The story is troubling, but of clear relevance to the geography curriculum in many ways. At A-level and diploma level, there are clear links with development to be explored Equal education for girls and boys (which is now under threat in parts of Nigeria) is an important aspect of social development and is enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals too. There are syllabus links with the concept of cultural imperialism: “boko harem” translates loosely as “western education is a sin”. For younger GCSE and KS3 students (in both geography and citizenship studies), there are important geographical connections to be made with globalisation, technology and the shrinking world. The story came to light gradually, through mainstream media, before diffusing through social networks using the #bringbackourgirls tag. Students can personally help by pledging support for such causes, or by raising awareness in their own school.</p>	<p>Guardian 07 May 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/07/bring-back-our-girls-global-protests-abduction-nigerian-schoolgirls</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

Biomass power under attack	Renewable energy	Some of the most distinguished scientists in the US have written to UK energy secretary Ed Davey, urging him to abandon the government's "misguided" subsidies for companies burning wood pellets to generate electricity, such as the Drax plant in Yorkshire.	Financial Times 04 May 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/6f242a06-d388-11e3-b0be-00144feabdc0.html
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June 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
Northern powerhouse pledge	Uneven development; regional development policies	<p>The UK has an extremely unbalanced national economy. London is a primate city, home to close on 10 million people. No other city comes close in terms of the contribution it makes to the UK's GDP. The result? London continues to attract the lion's share of national and international investment (the value of its housing stock has increased by between 30 and 70 per cent since 2009, while prices have barely risen or have fallen elsewhere in the UK). To tackle this imbalance, the chancellor, George Osborne, hopes to engineer the growth of a northern 'mega-region' that can compete on an equal footing with London for new investment. To help with this, Mr Osborne envisages a high speed railway link between Manchester and Leeds, creating a corridor of growth that will also encompass Liverpool and Leeds. This urban corridor is comparable with London: it has 9 million inhabitants and a £154 billion economy. It is also of a similar size: London Underground's Central Line covers the same distance from west to east as the distance between Leeds and Manchester. The UK's north-south divide has provided a research focus for generations of economic geographers and it is exciting to see this theme in the news again.</p>	<p>BBC News 27 June 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-28057529</p> <p>Also see: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01yqz86</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Isis and Iraq's oil</p>	<p>Conflict (AQA); migration; energy; cultural geography (Edexcel)</p>	<p>The ISIS insurgency is a major international new story that touches on many areas of geography. The conflicts in Syria and Iraq have become even more interlinked now that the ISIS militia group (made up of extremist Sunni militants) has claimed control of a new caliphate, or territory, which is party in Syria (a Sunni-majority state) and Iraq (which has a Shia-led government). The on-going conflict in this region is now responsible for millions of displaced people (both internally and internationally). For students, there are curriculum links with energy: the ISIS group is well-organised and well-funded, in a large part by petrodollars, raised through the sale of plundered oil supplies in occupied areas. Water plays a key role too in the conflict (ISIS fighters have sought to gain control of the Haditha dam, an important Iraqi water source). Students of conflict (AQA) or culture (Edexcel) may be interested to learn more about the roots of the region's territorial problems, namely the way in which state boundaries were drawn in the past by colonising powers.</p>	<p>BBC News 18 June 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-27907133</p>
<p>Kenya's tourism industry faces renewed threat</p>	<p>Tourism and leisure; global interactions (IB)</p>	<p>Tourism is Kenya's second highest foreign exchange. But the entire sector's success is threatened by a terrorist uprising that has said it will target tourists. In an attempt to reduce global interactions between Kenya and other places, al-Shabaab terrorists, who are linked with al-Qaeda, have carried out a series of massacres in coastal districts, such as the Lamu Island area. They also issued a warning: 'Kenya is now officially a war zone and any tourists visiting the country do so at their own peril.' With US\$1 billion earnings at stake, the Kenyan government has a lot to lose. However, it is still unclear how politicians intend to react. The threat has been growing rapidly since 2013, when 67 people were killed by the same terrorist group in Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall.</p>	<p>Financial Times 17 June 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f51cc380-f5fb-11e3-83d3-00144feabdc0.html#axzz36nXYuhOd</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Russian spy plot to stop fracking in the UK</p>	<p>Energy futures; geopolitics; superpowers (Edexcel)</p>	<p>This possibly far-fetched story has all the makings of an interesting starter lesson. It has relevance for A-level energy studies, especially given its inherent synopticity. The UK has experienced several major protests against shale gas exploration, notably in Blackpool and Boscombe. In this newspaper article, it is suggested that Russian spies may have played a role in stirring up anti-shale sentiment in Europe. Russia has a lot to lose financially if its EU gas customers can find alternative domestic supplies of cheap fuel instead of Russian imports.</p>	<p>Daily Mail 14 June 2014 http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2663075/Putin-plotting-halt-UK-fracking-warns-Nato-chief-Secretary-General-claims-agents-working-campaigners-make-sure-Europe-continues-reliance-Russian-energy-exports.html</p>
<p>China's rising elderly care costs</p>	<p>China's one-child rule; ageing population</p>	<p>A new report has outlined the likely severity of China's ageing population problem by mid-century. 18 per cent of the population is expected to be aged 65 and over by 2030 (compared with 9 per cent today). Worse yet, by 2050 there will be 500 million Chinese aged 60 and over. The projected rise in the <i>number</i> of elderly is not a product of the one-child rule (without which there would be even more people predicted to reach old age!). Instead it reflects rising wealth and improved health care for those born back in the 1970s. However, the growing <i>percentage</i> of elderly is a symptom of the reduced birth rate combined with increasing longevity. China's rising dependency ratio is a major challenge for its government and people.</p>	<p>Financial Times 29 June 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8852259a-e58b-11e3-a7f5-00144feabdc0.html</p>
<p>Cleanest rivers in two decades</p>	<p>River ecosystems; climate change impacts (indirect)</p>	<p>New research shows that Britain's rivers are the cleanest they have been in recent decades. Also, river ecosystems are healthier, which comes as a surprise to the researchers from Cardiff university who had expected to see falling numbers of organisms on account of warmer water temperatures. Rivers across the UK are, on average, 1 to 2 degrees Celsius warmer than in 1990 which is believed to be a result of climate change. When water warms, oxygen declines, explains this article. In theory, we should be seeing a fall in species and population sizes. Instead, 40 of the 78 species studied by the researchers have become more widespread.</p>	<p>BBC Wales 02 June 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-27656357</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Imperial Goggle Box</p>	<p>TNCs (media corporations); glocalisation; cultural imperialism; soft power</p>	<p>This essay provides an in-depth look at the varied ways in which different UK TV programmes and formats are exported around the world. Some are dubbed into a foreign language (especially when the original version is valued by foreign audiences as an authentic 'British' product). Others are re-filmed with a new cast of actors or presenters (this is glocalisation). Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock Holmes is one highly successful case of the former (in China, it is very popular in a subtitled version called 'Curly Fu and Peanut'). X Factor provides an example of the latter, having been completely re-filmed in 45 countries. This article is full of interesting facts that support teaching of how major media TNCs, such as BBC Worldwide, have built their global business employing a wide range of strategies that help gain access to the maximum number of new markets. There is also an analysis of how the UK's media exports surpasses the importance of the recent London Olympics in terms of its contribution to British 'soft power'.</p>	<p>New Statesman 20 June 2014 http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2014/06/imperial-gogglebox-tv-one-britain-s-most-successful-exports</p>
<p>Newcastle's kittiwake colony</p>	<p>Urban ecosystems; species distribution; climate change impacts (indirect)</p>	<p>This is a useful update of a case study that supports teaching of urban ecosystems (AQA). For over 60 years, kittiwakes have been nesting in urban areas of northeast England. The first seagull colony was spotted on a building in North Shields in 1949. Since then, they have colonised old industrial buildings on Gateshead quayside and Newcastle's Tyne Bridge, where there are now 250 pairs, which represents around one-third of their total urban presence in the northeast. Normally they nest on sea cliffs in northerly parts of the UK and the Arctic Circle. Scientists think that warmer sea temperatures have resulted in fewer sand eels, the gulls' main food source, in some areas. This is having knock-on effects on the global distribution pattern of kittiwakes.</p>	<p>Financial Times 07 June 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/91df4a6e-f8a2-11e3-befc-00144feabdc0.html#axzz36nxhAkbr</p>

Obama carbon plan	Climate change mitigation	President Obama's plan to cut power plant carbon emissions has finally been introduced. Varying emissions reduction targets are being set for different US states, based on the energy mix that each already has. States which are heavily dependent on coal are being given a softer target. For instance, North Dakota is being asked to make the lowest reduction in percentage terms – just 11 per cent. Whereas Washington state has been told to aim for a 72 per cent cut, despite the fact its emissions are already just one third of North Dakota's! It will be interesting to see how the new strategy works in practice over the months and years ahead. The news that the current USA administration is adopting climate change mitigation strategies coincides with a worrying report that shows southern US states at extreme financial risk of climate change, the 'Risky Business' report (see below).	Guardian 02 June 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jun/02/barack-obama-carbon-cuts-plan-us
Climate change: Australia and US are moving in different directions	Climate change impacts; climate change governance	The 'Risky Business' report, backed by three former US Treasury secretaries, provides a worrying analysis of the predicted costs of extreme weather. The writers argue that there has been a failure thus far to manage the risk, and that the USA should now lead by example in being seen to be doing something about it.	Guardian 30 June 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/business/grogonomics/2014/jun/30/-sp-climate-change-australia-and-us-are-moving-in-opposite-directions

<p>World Cup</p>	<p>Geography of sport; tourism; regional development; globalisation; superpowers (BRICs)</p>	<p>There are many ways in which the hosting of the World Cup in Brazil can be made relevant to the geography curriculum. The costs and benefits for Brazil can be investigated. Many Brazilians have voiced opposition, saying that there are more urgent priorities for public spending, such as housing. In terms of benefits, interesting links can be established with regional development theory. Brazil's government has built ten stadiums all around Brazil in the hope that each can operate as a growth pole, through the stimulation of multiplier effects. The goal? To encourage a trickle-down of financial benefits to peripheral regions, rather than to only allow the established economic core of Rio and Sao Paulo to benefit. Also, there are aspects of globalisation at play, as Brazil further cements its role as a hub for global culture. The competition has attracted flows of spectators and journalists from all around the world. Edexcel candidates can also explore how hosting the World Cup helps Brazil to increase its soft power by exerting greater influence globally. Finally, news reports have shown Amazonian tribes joining in the excitement, challenging the view that they are 'disconnected' from the world.</p>	
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July 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
Ebola outbreak in Africa: the key questions answered	Geography of health; tourism; migration; globalisation	A-level and IB students may be interested in using the latest Ebola crisis as a case study for their disease diffusion studies. Others may view the disease's recent transmission from place to place as a negative consequence of global interactions and migration flows. The <i>Guardian</i> article is a good starting place to research the disease and issues. It explains that Ebola is a severe viral illness with a sudden onset that comes from direct contact with infected living or dead rainforest animals, including chimpanzees, gorillas, monkeys, fruit bats, forest antelope and porcupines. 'It kills up to 90% of those who are infected. There is no cure and little treatment for the deadly virus, which has killed at least 660 people in several African countries.'	Guardian 29 July 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/jul/28/ebola-outbreak-africa-key-questions
Airlines avoid Ukrainian airspace	Shrinking world; global interactions (IB); conflict (AQA)	The recent downing of flight MH17 by a missile over Ukraine introduces complexity to the 'shrinking world' concept that most students will be familiar with. Conflict affects global interactions and places limits on the way global flows such as air travel can operate. Many of the world's best-known airlines – including British Airways, Qantas and Cathay Pacific – had been avoiding Ukrainian airspace due to safety fears for months before the missile attack. 'As air traffic control authorities banned all aircraft from flying through eastern Ukrainian airspace – which is likely to increase flight costs and journey times – it has emerged that several airlines had already chosen to avoid the area.'	Guardian 18 July 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/18/airlines-avoid-ukraine-airspace-mh17
Birmingham chosen as high speed construction hub	Rebranding urban areas; urban redevelopment	Teachers who use Birmingham as an urban case study will no doubt want to stay informed of this latest development: the headquarters for construction of the High Speed 2 (HS2) rail line is to be based in Birmingham. 'HS2 Ltd, the company responsible for the project, said its new premises would house up to 1,500 staff. It is expected to include engineers and designers responsible for track, signalling and station plans, as well as support staff. While some jobs would move from London, the company said, many would be new roles.'	BBC News 21 July 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-28374184

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

The BRICs development bank	Globalisation; emerging economies / BRICs	The changing power balance between the BRIC economies is of particular interest to Edexcel candidates, while all boards require some teaching of the global financial flows that impact on development processes. It should therefore be of interest to all geographers that a new global development bank has been established by the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. At their sixth annual summit, they announced the creation of two financial institutions: 'the New Development Bank (NDB) to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects, with \$50 billion in capital to start with, and the \$100 billion Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), to tide over members in financial difficulties.'	Economist 19 July 2014 http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21607851-setting-up-rivals-imf-and-world-bank-easier-running-them-acronym
Nestle warns on water shortages	Water security; transnational corporations (TNCs)	A major TNC, Nestle, has issued a warning about global water security, saying that world leaders must make water scarcity a bigger priority than climate change because the problem is far more urgent than global warming. The chairman of one of the world's biggest food companies has warned: 'We have a water crisis because we make wrong water management decisions.' The <i>Financial Times</i> notes that while wastage and overuse of water is one reason for growing scarcity, climate change may be playing a role. 'Energy company EDF spent €20m shifting a water intake tunnel for a hydropower project in the French Alps because the glacier feeding the plant's meltwater had retreated so much the old tunnel no longer worked.' This in-depth report is well worth reading.	Financial Times 14 July 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c8d19bc6-0b49-11e4-ae6b-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3AIW1NBAJ
Has GDP outlived its use?	Measuring development; quantitative methods	This is a fascinating article that offers a biting critique of GDP as an indicator of development and economic success. 'Countries are judged by how much they have of it... Yet what exactly does it mean? Outside a few experts, most people have only a shaky understanding. In fact, the more you delve into the whole concept of GDP – one of the most centrally important ideas in modern life – the more slippery it becomes. In the words of Diane Coyle, an economist who recently wrote an entire book on the subject, GDP is a made-up entity.'	Financial Times 04 July 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/dd2ec158-023d-11e4-ab5b-00144feab7de.html#axzz3AIW1NBAJ See our previous feature: 'Has GDP outlived its use?'

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

Tour de Yorkshire	Geography of sport and leisure; tourism	<p>In July, parts of the UK hosted stages of the Tour de France. Students of tourism, sports and leisure might want to use this as a new case study: there is plenty of analysis and data available online. For instance, the BBC News website provides an interview with Gary Verity, chief executive of organisers Welcome to Yorkshire. He is quoted as saying that hosting the world's most famous cycling race may bring in excess of £100m in economic benefit to the Yorkshire region.</p> <p>'It's a great boost to the economy. At this stage in the economic cycle, it will be very welcome indeed.'</p>	<p>BBC News 23 July 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23260441</p> <p>Pictures at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-28176036</p>
'Flee or die': violence drives Central America's child migrants to US border	International migration	<p>Migration into the USA has been in the news again. This time, the focus is child migrants from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. They are all escaping high levels of violence, according to the <i>Guardian</i> newspaper. 'Honduras has a murder rate of around 90 per 100,000 inhabitants. The rate in Mexico hovers around 20. In the US it is under five. Heavily armed street gangs such as the Mara Salvatrucha and Calle 18 impose a reign of terror on entire neighbourhoods across the region, which is also a key route for Mexican and Colombian cartels shipping narcotics north. Drug-fuelled corruption, political instability, and – in the case of Honduras, a rightwing coup – have all contributed to a situation of institutional collapse. As their states fall apart around them, many Central Americans feel that justice and security can only be found elsewhere. "For many people the choice is to flee or to die," says Carlos Paz, director of the San Pedro Sula office of the church organisation Cáritas.'</p>	<p>Guardian 09 July 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/09/central-america-child-migrants-us-border-crisis</p>
LEGO case study	Transnational corporations (TNCs); globalisation; glocalisation	<p>Teachers looking for an interesting new TNC case study could take a look at Lego, using this <i>Financial Times</i> article. Flush with success after 'The Lego Movie', the Danish toymaker is now the most profitable company in the global toy sector. 'The Lego formula appears simple: take plastic costing less than \$1 per kilogramme and transform it into sets based on Star Wars, Legends of Chima or The Hobbit retailing for about \$75 per kg.' However, it is interesting to note that it has achieved this success with a global, rather than glocal, formula. The chairman of Lego told the <i>Financial Times</i>: 'Kids in Afghanistan and Jordan, kids in Boston, Beijing and Berlin, they have the same perception of the product. So what we're dealing with here is one of these few companies in the world that are a bit like Airbus or Boeing or Coke or Pepsi or Apple or Samsung [and] have a global product assortment.'</p>	<p>Financial Times 10 July 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/ee8941f8-01c5-11e4-ab5b-00144feab7de.html#axzz3AIW1NBAJ</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

Iraqi Christians flee after Isis issue ultimatum	Forced migration	The recent forced migrations in Iraq have featured prominently in news reports and students may want to talk about what has been happening, especially in the context of forced migration. For instance, hundreds of Christian families were forced to leave Mosul in northern Iraq, after Isis Sunni militants gave them an ultimatum, convert to Islam or face death. Hundreds chose to leave the city. This BBC report includes a video clip.	BBC News 21 July 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28397528
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August 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
The sanctions fight with Russia could make Britain go hungry	Trade; Conflict; Globalisation; Superpowers; Food Production	This article looks at the increasing pressures on the UK's food security and how science can try to mitigate against these pressures. Focussing on wheat production, the article highlights how the crop is under threat due to western sanctions on Russian banks putting Russian farmers under financial strain. With nearly forty per cent of the UK's food needs being met by imports, the author suggests that greater scientific innovation is needed to improve our domestic food security. While recognising the potential environmental problems that are inherent with increased production, there is advocacy towards precision agriculture which sees greater use of the 4Rs (right input; right time; right place and right amount).	The Telegraph 11 August 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11025555/The-sanctions-fight-with-Russia-could-make-Britain-go-hungry.html
Tilbury Docks: Man dies after 35 found in container	Migration; Conflict; Transport; Culture	This report focusses on the discovery of thirty five people illegally migrating into the UK in the back of a container lorry that was transporting goods from Zeebrugge in Belgium to Tilbury in Essex. The article highlights the 'Europe wide' nature of trying to advise, protect and deal with people who try to enter a country illegally or who are trafficked by gangs operating internationally. It then goes on to examine the extreme measures migrants may go to in order to start a better life overseas and how the dreams of a promised land are often at odds with the reality of the journey towards it. An increasing number of people are being found trying to migrate illegally (to the UK an increase of more than sixty per cent in the last twelve months) and this means more people are risking their health and indeed their lives in the process.	BBC News 16 August 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-28817688

<p>Amazon tribe makes first contact with outside world</p>	<p>Culture; Indigenous peoples; Territoriality; Health</p>	<p>The article gives further details to the news of indigenous tribespeople from the Mashco-Piro clan in Tambopata region crossing from Peru to Brazil and in doing so making first contact with the world outside their rainforest habitats. While the tribe's reasons for this trip lie behind the encroachment of their land by logging and oil exploration companies, the article raises wider concerns that this and other 'first contacts' raise. It highlights the danger of new infections to previously 'hidden' peoples and asks questions concerning how medically they should be treated. The article gives a broad consideration to the conflict of interests this creates: the plight of the Mashco-Piro in their homelands needs external help but there is also the need to protect them from infections for which they have no immunity.</p>	<p>The Guardian 1 August 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/01/amazon-tribe-makes-first-contact-with-outside-world</p>
<p>No sex please we're British now – first fall in births to migrants in a decade</p>	<p>Demography; Migration; Birth rates; Census data</p>	<p>It has long been recognised that natural change in the UK has been in decline with British born people choosing to have fewer and fewer children. This article examines how a low fertility rate is now being found amongst foreign born women – the lowest ever recorded for UK migrants. The migration observatory at Oxford University recognise a crucial difference in today's migrant women compared to those of yesteryear – they now come to the UK for the purpose of work rather than more simply as a supporter of their husbands' work, modelling the behaviour of British born women who increasingly remain in the work place long term after education. The piece predicts that if this trend continues, British politicians may have to rethink their stance on migration policies.</p>	<p>The Telegraph 28 August 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/11061508/No-sex-please-were-British-now-first-fall-in-births-to-migrants-in-a-decade.html</p>
<p>Mystery of the Siberian holes at the end of the world 'solved'</p>	<p>Sink holes; Mass movement; Permafrost; Energy security</p>	<p>This piece expands upon the discovery of three giant craters found on the Yamal Peninsula in Northern Siberia last month. New scientific evidence has pointed researchers towards considering them as sinkholes but also acknowledges that they have not been formed by the normal processes. Scientists have uncovered indications that the holes, one of which is seventy metres deep and eighty metres wide, were caused by the melting of underlying permafrost, destabilising the rock strata beneath the surface. While such hazards normally suck material into the holes, scientists have been puzzled by the large amount of ejected material found on the surface rim of these examples. Early indications are that this material was forced out by the sudden release of pressure from a natural underground store of methane, making scientists re-examine how they understand these natural hazards.</p>	<p>The Independent 1 August 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/mystery-of-the-siberian-holes-at-the-end-of-the-world-solved-scientists-offer-explanation-9642988.html</p>

<p>Extinct mega penguin was tallest and heaviest ever</p>	<p>Climate change; Antarctic; Mega fauna; Mass extinctions</p>	<p>This article focuses on the discovery of new fossil fragments on Seymour Island, Antarctica. The fossils reveal a new species of mega fauna: a giant two metre tall and eighteen stone penguin which dwarfs the largest living species, the Emperor penguin by a metre. <i>Palaeudyptes klekowskii</i> lived 37 to 40 million years ago and scientists are now looking at what would have caused this huge sea bird to become extinct. The front running theory is that prehistoric climate change saw a greater than normal melting of the <i>P.klekowskii's</i> coastal Antarctic habitat and a warming of the surrounding seas saw a reduction in the stock of the niche fish diet that were found at the lower depths of the ocean; depths that only the <i>P.klekowskii</i> could reach with its forty metre diving capability.</p>	<p>New Scientist 1 August 2014 http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25990-extinct-mega-penguin-was-tallest-and-heaviest-ever.html#.VA8PLbdwZ9B</p>
<p>Australia's Great Barrier Reef is still under threat, says first major report in five years</p>	<p>Coral Reef; Climate change; Ecosystems; Protected areas; Pollution</p>	<p>According to the <i>Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority</i>, little has changed the plight of the 2600km long reef off the Queensland coast, despite widespread conservation efforts by the Australian authorities. Climate change, marine pollution and industrial development in sensitive coastal areas are to blame for a further deterioration of the hugely diverse ecosystem. While local authorities have made good progress in tackling local water pollution issues, the article highlights the need for a wider, global recognition of the causes of the degradation and an acceptance that there is no quick and easy fix to the problem. The <i>GBRMPA</i> is asking that people recognise the global importance of the reef as well as seeing the responsibility for its care as lying beyond the shores of Australia alone.</p>	<p>The Independent 14 August 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/australias-great-barrier-reef-is-still-under-threat-says-first-major-report-in-5-years-9668637.html</p>
<p>State of emergency declared as Toledo tells residents: don't drink the water</p>	<p>Water security; Pollution; Health</p>	<p>Residents in Toledo, Ohio's fourth largest city have been told not to drink tap water as it contains dangerously high levels of toxins. These levels have been caused by an algal bloom on Lake Erie which supplies eleven million people with water in Ohio. This is not the first time that Ohio's water security has been called into question: phosphorus fertiliser runoff from the state's competitive farms and out flow from sewage treatment plants have created an increasing frequency of blooms over the lake. While few attempts have been made to reduce the polluting of Lake Erie, Toledo spends US\$ 4 million on chemicals to treat the toxins the bloom creates. Bottled water has been brought into police controlled distribution centres as shops and supermarkets have had their shelves stripped by panic buying.</p>	<p>The Guardian 2 August 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/02/toledo-residents-told-dont-drink-water-pollution-toxin</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Cuadrilla fracking protest camp set up in Little Plumpton</p>	<p>Fracking; Energy security; Community action</p>	<p>Little Plumpton, a village near Blackpool in Lancashire, has become the site of a protest camp set up to show resistance to proposed fracking by UK oil and gas exploration company, Cuadrilla. If the company are successful in their bid, they will seek to hydraulically fracture for shale gas worth an estimated £10 billion. The protestors, who come from anti climate change movements as well as campaigns to protect the English countryside, are attempting to halt any such drilling and want to draw more attention to renewable energy alternatives. Cuadrilla on the other hand highlight the boom the shale gas could bring to the UK economy as well as improvements to the UK's domestic energy security.</p>	<p>BBC New 14 August 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-28789444</p>
<p>Gay Ugandans hail ruling on homosexuality</p>	<p>Society and culture; Development; Aid; World Bank</p>	<p>Despite the recent law on homosexuality being nullified, anti-gay feelings still run deep through everyday culture in Uganda. A Pew Global Attitudes survey found that 96% of Ugandans found homosexuality unacceptable and many erroneously blame the LGBT community for the spread of HIV and AIDS through the country. Previously under the Department for Ethics and Integrity, homosexual Ugandans had few rights and had the law been enacted, they could have faced jail sentences for a variety of termed 'crimes against the Ugandan state'. The article highlights that while Ugandans appear to be taking a particularly homophobic stance on the nullification, some western aid partners, including the World Bank, have suspended donations until they have reassurances that the law will remain benign.</p>	<p>Al Jazeera News 5 August 2014 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/08/gay-ugandans-hail-ruling-homosexuality-201483134626421775.html</p>

September 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
Stowaway immigrants besiege Calais port	Immigration; Transportation; Cultural differences; International cooperation	This article highlights the desperation felt by some immigrants as they try to start new lives in other countries. Focussing on the route between Dover and Calais, the story reports on how two groups, each of around one hundred people and largely of African origin tried to board cross Channel ferries at Calais by force. The ferry companies and port authorities reacted with equal force; using water hoses against the crowds and closing the large ferry ramps prematurely as car passengers tried to board legally. The article also raises questions about who is responsible for these migrants – the UK, France, the migrants’ home nations or Italy – one of the main stopping points for African migrants heading for western Europe.	The Telegraph 4 September 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11078578/Stowaway-immigrants-beseige-Calais-port.html
Did Kashmir abandon its flood-hit people?	Flooding; Hazard management	Following the devastating floods and landslides that hit northern India, parts of eastern Pakistan and Kashmir, this article asks what more the Indian government could have done to help the disputed area. The floods that killed more than 320 people, left 400,000 stranded and saw the evacuation of half a million Kashmiris from their rooftops came after six days of heavy rainfall, the worst to hit the region in decades. Despite accurate meteorological forecasts showing that the area was going to be hard hit by rain, the government was said to be ‘caught off guard’ and had few measures in place to help the nearly 2 million people affected.	BBC News 12 September 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-29170087
The Earth’s vertebrate wildlife population has halved in forty years	Ecosystems; Wildlife; Conservation; Habitat loss; Population growth	The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has released their ‘Living Planet Report’ which has measured the ‘state of play’ for the world’s animals. Since 1974 wildlife globally has declined by 52 per cent with some groups of animals experiencing even greater losses at up to 76 per cent. WWF put most of this loss down to unsustainable human consumption coupled with climate change which together have caused the widespread loss and degradation of animals’ habitats. While most of the loss is occurring in developing nations, the study recognises that this is largely because the developed world had already lost the majority of their biodiversity prior to the commencement of this study.	The Independent 29 September 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/the-earths-vertebrate-wildlife-population-has-halved-in-40-years-says-conservation-group-wwf-9763098.html

<p>Britain's first floating solar panel project installed</p>	<p>Renewable energy; Climate change; Agriculture; Aquatic ecology</p>	<p>This article look at the efforts of a farmer in Berkshire to create energy on his 300 acre fruit farm without taking up valuable crop producing land. His solution was a floating island made up of eight hundred solar panels on the farm's reservoir with a combined capacity to produce 200KW of energy at any one time. While the technology is already being used in Japan, farmer Mark Bennett's solar farm is the first of its kind and scale in the UK and the article suggests that there are hundreds of other sites across the UK that could follow his lead. Though the £250,000 project is likely to pay for itself within six years, the Campaign to Protect Rural England questions to what extent the ecological quality of the water under the panels can be maintained.</p>	<p>The Telegraph 29 September 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/energy/solarpower/11110547/Britains-first-floating-solar-panel-project-installed.html</p>
<p>Sowing the seeds of a food revolution</p>	<p>Food; GM crops; Development; Education</p>	<p>This article raises questions about the sustainability of the world's food supply by examining who owns the world's seeds. Currently just ten companies own patents that control the use of 73 per cent of the world's seeds – something researchers at the University of Wisconsin feel is a dangerous degree of monopolisation. With many global farmers trying to tackle the impacts of climate change and the needs of an ever-increasing population, it is important to expand the global gene pool of food plants – something the seed TNCs restrict. Through the University's 'Open Sourced Seed Initiative', seeds for free use are being distributed to farmers who in turn will pass their second generation seeds onto others.</p>	<p>Al Jazeera News 16 September 2014 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2014/09/sewing-seeds-dissent-2014915233823331623.html</p>
<p>How to make the world's poor \$500 billion richer</p>	<p>Development; Aid; Inequality; Debt; Technology</p>	<p>Written by the director of the Copenhagen Consensus, a think tank of the world's leading economists, this article looks ahead to the intended foci of the Sustainable Development Goals, the replacement for the Millennium Development Goals which end in 2015. The think tank's suggestion is that there should be a greater examination of the role of technology in developing countries as it will provide a much greater foothold for future growth in these nations than ever in their history. The Copenhagen Consensus propose a target of 0.5 per cent of a developing country's GDP being spent on research and development projects as well as allowing people greater freedom to migrate to places where they can be more productive with that technology.</p>	<p>Time Magazine 17 September 2014 http://time.com/3387764/how-to-make-the-worlds-poor-500-billion-richer/</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Scotland vote a blow to Europe's separatists</p>	<p>Territoriality; Independence; Culture; Minority states; Europe</p>	<p>Widespread reporting of the Scottish Independence Referendum and its subsequent 'No' result was covered across all the main news outlets through many pages of print. For a different take on the issue of minority nations seeking independence, this infographic looks at how small regions across western Europe have been spurred on by the momentum of the 'Yes' campaign and see the independence debate as the start of a turning tide for minority and sometimes silenced nations. Focussing on Catalonia and the Basque country in Spain, Flanders in Belgium and Veneto in Italy, the graphic explains how there are possibly many more independence struggles to be heard in the aftermath of the Scottish Referendum.</p>	<p>Al Jazeera News 19 September 2014 http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2014/09/scotland-vote-blow-europe-separatists-20149211350132160.html</p>
<p>Fashion retailers agree to raise minimum wage in Cambodia</p>	<p>TNCs; Trade and industry; Development; Inequality</p>	<p>Citing the poor working conditions that caused the collapse of a Bangladeshi garment factory and the death of 1,130 of its workers in 2013, this article describes a positive movement on the streets of Phnom Penh, Cambodia for textile workers. Their protests for a US\$177 minimum wage have been heard by eight high street clothing brands who have agreed to pay much more for the production of their goods. Though these companies have also agreed to create closer ties to trade unions, the article highlights that the actual workers' wages are still in the hands of factory owners and in some cases the Cambodian government. The piece explains that until the actions of these middle men are targeted, little progress will be made by the half a million Cambodians employed in this way.</p>	<p>The Guardian 21 September 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/sep/21/fashion-retailers-offer-raise-minimum-wage-cambodia</p>
<p>Crazy weather traced to Arctic's impact on jet stream</p>	<p>Weather; Climate change; Polar conditions</p>	<p>Highlighting research undertaken by the University of New Brunswick, this piece looks at the link between the retreat of Arctic sea ice and prolonged periods of extreme weather that are coming with increased frequency. The article examines how as the temperature difference between the Equator and the Poles reduces (due to climate change and the melting of Arctic regions) the speed of the jet stream slows down. This slow down means that when 'bad weather' systems settle in a place, there is little strength in the jet stream to move them on, as would normally be the case. The result is that extreme events such as intense rainfall and cold snaps last a lot longer than they have in previous comparable seasons.</p>	<p>New Scientist 26 September 2014 http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn26278-crazy-weather-traced-to-arctics-impact-on-jet-stream.html#.VCkgimddVyw</p>

<p>Obesity: Africa's new crisis</p>	<p>Health; Development; Food; Aid; Culture and Identity</p>	<p>This article examines statistics from the Overseas Development Institute in London that suggest that almost two thirds of the world's overweight people are now found in low and middle income countries. Focusing on South Africa, the piece tries to find the reasons for this, quoting well cited ideas such as increases in fast food outlets, increased use of cars and more indoor play by children. More interestingly is the evidence that suggests that obesity is a cultural problem as well as a societal one. Fast food restaurants are seen as more sophisticated than traditional street food, even though they occupy the same price bracket. One's size is also associated with one's social standing: thin black men are too often assumed to be HIV positive, encouraging their peers to gain more weight to avoid the same stigma.</p>	<p>The Observer 21 September 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/sep/21/obesity-africas-new-crisis</p>
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October 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
UK to build world's biggest weather super computer	Weather forecasting; climate change; weather observations; weather hazards	This article explores the news of the Meteorological Office investing £97 million in what has been dubbed a 'weather supercomputer'. The 140 tonne machine, which will be housed at Exeter Science Park, will be the biggest and most powerful device for monitoring and forecasting weather as well as for making more accurate observations about hazardous weather events. The 'Cray XC40' which will be working from a new software platform 'ENDGame' will be ten to fifteen times faster than the current set up which is due to reach the end of its life in 2015. Highly accurate six day forecasts and predictions to within three hundred metres are just two of its expected outputs.	New Scientist 28 October 2014 http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn26458-uk-to-build-worlds-biggest-weather-supercomputer.html
Anthropocene: is this the new epoch of humans?	Geological time; epochs; sustainability; ecology; climate change	Despite the term's already widespread use, a team of thirty seven climate scientists, ecologists and geologists have met to try to decide on whether we have reached a new stage of geological time to be known as the 'Anthropocene'. Held at the <i>Haus der Kulturen der Welt</i> in Berlin the group will decide on the definition of the Anthropocene and whether it is simply a subdivision of our current Holocene era or a separate, official unit in the International Geological Timescale. If the term is successfully adopted at the International Geological Congress in 2016 it will have recognised the significant impact of human beings have had on the Earth.	The Guardian 16 October 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/oct/16/-sp-scientists-gather-talks-rename-human-age-anthropocene-holocene
How times have changed with Australia's immigration policy	Migration; asylum seeking, immigration policies; multicultural societies	This article highlights a new poster campaign in Australia that is being used to focus on illegal immigration and increased asylum applications. The piece starts by comparing the 2014 poster, which depicts a fishing boat trying to negotiate a stormy sea crossing against a black sky and the message "You will not make Australia home", with the 1948 poster from the 'Assisted Passage' scheme showing a colourful farming scene and the words "Land of Tomorrow". Translated into seventeen languages, the new poster targets people smuggling and comes at a turbulent time for the issue, as Australian key asylum seeker policies are being challenged in state courts.	The Independent 14 October 2014 http://i100.independent.co.uk/article/how-times-have-changed-with-australias-immigration-policy--x1szcBmMlg

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Avalanches in Nepal kill 25 including 9 foreigners</p>	<p>Avalanche; blizzard; mountain tourism; sustainable tourism; managing tourism</p>	<p>This story reports the recent fatalities to occur in the Mustang and Manang districts of Nepal caused by bad weather and four separate avalanches. Forty one bodies were recovered from the mountains after 518 people were rescued by helicopter and plane, leaving many more still unaccounted for. The trekkers, guides and herders who lost their lives were caught out by the aftermath of Cyclone Hudhud which turned the normally favourable October weather into blizzards and snow storms. New rules have now been introduced to the mountain tourism industry, on which the Nepalese economy relies, including mandatory use of trained guides and carriage of a registered GPS device.</p>	<p>The Telegraph 15 October 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/nepal/11165113/Avalanches-in-Nepal-kill-25-including-9-foreigners.html</p>
<p>168 million children worldwide were laborers in 2013</p>	<p>Informal work; child labour; trade sanctions; exploitation; slavery</p>	<p>The thirteenth annual review 'Findings on the worst forms of child labour' has produced some shocking (albeit lowering) levels of child labour. Of the 168 million known children employed in labour, over fifty one per cent are thought to be working in jobs that are hazardous to their health. The report highlights the range of work in which young people are employed such as domestic help, dangerous tool use and chemical processing as well as sexual exploitation and it goes on to estimate that six million children worldwide are working in slavery. Since 2000 the USA has denied trade benefits to those countries with poor management of this issue yet this report shows that there is a lot more work still to be done.</p>	<p>Time Magazine 7 October 2014 http://time.com/3479472/child-labor/</p>
<p>EU agrees target to cut gas emissions</p>	<p>European Union; carbon dioxide emissions; greenhouse gases; trade blocs</p>	<p>Despite resistance from eastern bloc members the EU has agreed a new set of gas emission targets: a forty per cent decrease on 1990 levels by 2030. Some environmental campaigners, such as Greenpeace, who were hoping for a fifty five per cent cut, see this as a somewhat nominal gesture, but supporters of the decision see this as the toughest set of targets possible given the diverse economies of the different EU member states. The target may be quite hard to achieve for some countries within the EU; namely those who exceeded the previous twenty per cent target easily and who will struggle to cut emissions further without making economic sacrifices.</p>	<p>Financial Times 24 October 2014 http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/490885ec-5b14-11e4-8625-00144feab7de.html</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Saharan sun could provide energy for UK homes in £8bn plan</p>	<p>Renewable energy; CSP technology; solar farms; energy security</p>	<p>This article follows a proposal by Nur Energie to build a one-hundred square kilometre solar farm in Kebili state, Tunisia. The farm would use Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) technology, where computer controlled mirrors reflect sunlight onto a central photovoltaic tower, to produce enough energy to power 2.5 million UK homes. The £8 billion project would include using submarine cables to ship electricity to substations in Rome from where it would be fed into the European electricity network. The project would see completion by 2018 if Nur Energie successfully win a subsidies contract from the UK Government; a move that would also see the UK receive this electricity at a guaranteed price.</p>	<p>The Independent 20 October 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/saharan-sun-could-power-uk-homes-in-8bn-plan-to-build-100-sq-km-solar-farm-9807292.html</p>
<p>High fliers can afford more babies study says</p>	<p>Population; fertility rates; gender empowerment; education</p>	<p>With the exception of baby boom eras, women's fertility rate has been declining since the start of the twentieth century as more females have stayed in education and pursued higher level careers, creating an inverse relationship between fertility and level of education. However a new study from Tel Aviv University has found that more educated women are now more able to afford child care and help running the family home, encouraging them to have more children. Research has shown that the fertility rates of those with advanced degrees have seen an increase of fifty percent. This article also cites the possibility that companies are becoming more amenable to the needs of working mothers as another reason for the increase.</p>	<p>The Telegraph 26 October 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/11188858/High-fliers-can-afford-more-babies-study-says.html</p>
<p>More than 400 missing in Sri Lanka mudslide</p>	<p>Mass movement; mudslides; hazard management</p>	<p>This article reports on the death of at least one hundred people after heavy monsoon rains created large scale mudslides that wiped out tea estates and the villages that housed their workers in Badulla, central Sri Lanka. Despite warnings two years earlier that the hillsides were not safe and were susceptible to land shifts in the monsoon, many hundred people are still missing in the area which saw 150 homes wash away. The army was deployed to head the search efforts but rescues were hampered by continuing bad weather and poor access, with major roads and part of a railway line to the region now lying under earth mounds.</p>	<p>Al Jazeera 29 October 2014 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/10/more-than-250-missing-sri-lanka-mudslide-201410298154538389.html</p>

<p>Remembering Ethiopia's famine 30 years on</p>	<p>Famine; aid; international development; development indicators;</p>	<p>Thirty years after harrowing pictures of the Ethiopian famine were on our television screens, this video asks Tesfatsion Dallellew, who at the time headed World Vision's aid programme in the country, for his memories and his thoughts looking forward. He describes the horrors of trying to choose who could access the feeding camps but says that in the new Ethiopia, there would be far better management and lower impacts if famine were to strike again. Improved infrastructure, greater awareness and stronger communication lines have turned Ethiopia into an economic miracle while poor interpretations of democracy and low human rights records still remain and need to be tackled.</p>	<p>BBC 23 October 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-29727220</p>
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November 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
Global report says 36 million people enslaved	Labour forces; Migration; Informal economy	This article explores a new revised report called the 'Global Slavery Index' published by the Walk Free Foundation. It uncovers the statistic that worldwide 35.8 million people are thought to be working in slavery. Despite strong anti-slavery laws, Mauritania tops the list by percentage of population while India has the highest numbers of slaves. Profits from forced labour in jobs such as cotton picking (primarily in Uzbekistan), diamond mining , textile production are estimated to top US\$150 billion while slaved prostitution remains prevalent in almost all of the 122 countries surveyed. The piece asks us to consider forced labour more carefully and to remember that it is not something consigned to history: instead one should see it as a global modern day phenomenon.	Al Jazeera 18 November 2014 http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/11/report-358-million-people-enslaved-2014111823142426706.html
See the Philippine city of Tacloban one year after super-typhoon Haiyan	Typhoon; Recovery; Hazard management	This photo commentary looks at how far Tacloban, which was all but destroyed a year ago by typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, has recovered from the storm damage. The 195mph winds created enormous levels of debris in the city which has been cleared creating a 'sense of normality' on the surface. However 2.5 million people there are still housed in temporary camps and typhoon shelters have not been repaired in preparation for the new storm season. While people, for the most part, have been getting on with their lives there are also high levels of untreated poor mental health, especially in the more remote and vulnerable areas where some families are still searching for their missing loved ones. With no money to invest in industry, few people are able to rid themselves of the debts they accrued as a result of the storm and many estimate it will be at least another five years before the economy returns to its pre-Haiyan state.	Time Magazine 7 November 2014 http://time.com/3562602/haiyan-yolanda-philippines-typhoon-storm-tacloban/

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>US and China agree 'historic' climate change deal to cut greenhouse gas emissions</p>	<p>Climate change; emissions; geopolitics; IGOs</p>	<p>A historic meeting between Presidents Obama and Jinping following the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Corporation) summit is reported with regards to the milestone greenhouse gas emission targets to which the two men agreed. The USA and China, which collectively produce forty five percent of the world's carbon dioxide, will seek to cut emissions by twenty six percent (by 2025) and cap emissions at a peak level in 2030 respectively. China also agreed to increase by twenty percent its use of energy from zero emission sources, but this has done little to pacify critics of the nation who say this is not enough given the country's pace of growth. US Republicans on the other hand criticise the plans as over ambitious and detrimental to US economic policy.</p>	<p>The Independent 12 November 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/us-and-china-agree-historic-climate-change-deal-to-cut-greenhouse-gas-emissions-9855019.html</p>
<p>Catalonia's independence vote: Yes and no</p>	<p>Independence; Democracy; Geopolitics; Territoriality; Culture</p>	<p>Riding on the coattails of the Scottish Independence Referendum, Catalonia has held a similar, though non-legally binding, vote on their own independence. While Madrid cannot sanction the referendum under the Spanish constitution, the decision for a future, legally binding vote is in the hands of the constitutional court and Esquerra, the pro-independence party say that the results of this vote show that the need for a full referendum is justified. Eighty one percent of Catalans who voted wanted a separate and independent state of Catalonia, putting pressure on Madrid to give a stronger voice to this group. The opposing 'Popular Party' on the other hand cites the thirty seven percent voter turnout as a sign of Catalans' fears over their future in a weakened Eurozone and the inherent problems associated with economic independence.</p>	<p>The Economist 10 November 2014 http://www.economist.com/blogs/charlemagne/2014/11/catalonia-s-independence-vote</p>

<p>Geo-engineering: Climate fixes 'could harm billions'</p>	<p>Climate change; geoengineering ; solar radiation; carbon dioxide</p>	<p>This article highlights how scientists are increasingly looking towards large scale interventions (geoengineering) to manage rising global temperatures. Ideas such as giant reflectors, sulphur released high in the atmosphere and using artificial trees to 'absorb' carbon dioxide were once thought to be firmly in the realms of science fiction but combined research projects from the Universities of Leeds, Bristol and Oxford are possibly going to change that. The research has however raised a variety of concerns about secondary effects such as the cease of the Indian monsoon and the drying of the Sahel as well as the recognition that the economic cost of the projects will have to be met not once, but over a long period of time by future generations. Conservative estimates of the numbers of people who would be negatively affected by such geoengineering plans are quoted as two to four billion.</p>	<p>BBC 26 November http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-30197085</p>
<p>Chinese demand for ivory is devastating Tanzania's elephant population</p>	<p>Ecosystems; wildlife; International crime; poaching</p>	<p>This report highlights the shocking decrease in the number of elephants now in Tanzania as a result of what is thought to be the wholesale shipment of poached ivory to China. Selous reserve in Southern Tanzania has been worst hit by the poaching with only eighteen percent of the 2006 level of elephant numbers remaining. While trade links between China and Tanzania are becoming more common, the Environmental Investigation Agency has unveiled the underground trade in illegal ivory, with bribery and corruption amongst park and government officials feeding the crime further. Chinese embassy staff, park rangers and the Tanzanian army have all been discovered to be part of the trade which sees short term profits being favoured over long term investment in wildlife tourism. The investigation comes at a time when funds for protection of Tanzania's wildlife areas have been cut to unmanageable levels.</p>	<p>The Guardian 6 November 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/nov/06/chinese-demand-for-ivory-is-devastating-tanzanias-elephant-population</p>

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Keystone XL bill fails to advance</p>	<p>Oil pipelines; Energy security; Climate change</p>	<p>Plans for the Keystone XL oil pipeline that was to stretch almost directly from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico has been temporarily shelved by its failure to gain approval in a crucial vote in the US senate. The pipeline, which has proven to create huge controversy in the USA, was estimated to produce revenue of around US\$2 billion as well as thousands of jobs and increased energy security for the oil thirsty nation. Critics however are exasperated that the USA are looking to fund further infrastructure for a fossil fuel economy, while ignoring the environmental consequences of extraction from the Canadian tar sands and the destruction of native American homelands.</p>	<p>Al Jazeera 18 November 2014 http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/11/18/keystone-xl-billgoesdownindefeat59to41.html</p>
<p>Grockles: The second-home-owning out-of-towners ruining the West Country</p>	<p>Second home ownership; Coasts; Tourism; Settlements</p>	<p>'Grockles', the name given to absent second homes owners in south west England, are facing increased hostility as new figures show that a quarter of St Ives residential buildings lie empty for most of the year and new families in the town are finding it increasingly hard to get onto the housing ladder given local wages are quite a bit lower than the national average. The town that was once famous for its artist's studios is blighted by empty streets in the winter months and many areas report feeling a loss of community spirit. Local authorities are now examining plans to put an upper limit on property prices in the area and ban new developments which specifically target the second home ownership market. With tourism remaining as St Ives' only real industry, some local people see the change as inevitable and fear that restrictions may worsen the economy.</p>	<p>The Guardian 9 November 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/society/shortcuts/2014/nov/09/grockles-second-homes-ruining-west-country</p>
<p>World on brink of oil price war as OPEC set to keep pumping</p>	<p>OPEC; oil prices; Saudi Arabia;</p>	<p>Oil traders and observers have been left somewhat unsure of OPEC's centralised decision to maintain the oil price at a lower level than previously seen by the cartel. Despite a drop in demand (brought in part by the mild autumn and winter felt in the US and Europe), OPEC have kept their thirty million barrels a day production ceiling in place, flooding the market, and creating a price war between the cartel and other oil producing nations. With oil prices fluctuating closer to US\$75 a barrel rather than the OPEC 'minimum' of US\$100 a barrel, speculators have recognised that OPEC is losing its dominance, with its hold of the market share dropping from fifty to thirty percent since 1995. This drop means it has had to take measures to become more competitive with the USA and Russia, sacrificing its profits in the process.</p>	<p>The Telegraph 26 November 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/oilprices/11256183/World-on-brink-of-oil-price-war-as-Opec-set-to-keep-pumping.html</p>

<p>What's behind the snowmageddon that hit the US?</p>	<p>Extreme weather; Snow storm; Polar vortex; Hazards</p>	<p>With some US states experiencing temperatures of -22°C and two metre deep snow fall in Buffalo, New York state, this article examines the causes of the latest American cold snap. Termed the 'lake effect', the cold air that is normally held close to the Arctic by polar vortex winds has descended much further south as a knock on effect of typhoon Nuri at the end of October. With this wind sweeping over the comparatively warm Great Lakes, moisture has been picked up and dumped as heavy snow fall. The resulting extreme weather killed thirteen people, largely due to exposure and put transport networks on shutdown. In the subsequent days, fears over further snowfall turned into fears of roof collapse under the weight of snow and following these came flood warnings as blocked storm drains and the possibility of a sudden thaw threatened properties again.</p>	<p>New Scientist 21 November 2014 http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn26600-whats-behind-the-snowmageddon-that-hit-the-us.html#.VHx--tKsWNQ</p>
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December 2014

Title	Curriculum relevance	Synopsis	Reference
Band Aid 30 is 'cringeworthy' says British Ebola nurse	Aid; Development; Health; Culture; Africa	A British nurse who contracted the Ebola virus and through treatment survived has criticised the Band Aid 30 charity single for the manner in which it portrays Africa. Aid worker William Pooley, who has continued to work in a Freetown isolation unit in Sierra Leone since recovering from the disease, believes that the lyrics of the song show gross cultural ignorance of the continent and demonstrates that our perception of Africa has moved on little from when Band Aid first released a song in 1984. According to Pooley, depicting Sierra Leone as a place that is nothing but disease and poverty plays up to an ill formed opinion of the country and its residents as the 'other' and he asks people to recognise the similarities between the two countries rather than the differences.	The Independent 9 December 2014 http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/ebola-nurse-william-pooley-calls-band-aid-single-culturally-ignorant-9911054.html
Deal salvaged at UN climate talks in Peru	Climate change; Diplomacy; Kyoto;	The decisions reached by the UN climate talks in Lima, Peru have met a mixed response from environmentalists and politicians. 190 countries took part in the talks which overran by thirty hours as nations struggled to agree on who was responsible for the different elements of tackling climate change. Under great pressure from their own citizens agreements were reached on some key areas such as the proposal that each country should submit plans for achieving their carbon emission limits as well as the proposal that the wealthiest nations will help poorer ones financially in achieving their carbon targets. However the wording for such agreements in the 'Lima Call for Climate Action' document is believed to be too vague to be practically usable and so leaves a lot of further work to be done in the Paris talks in 2015.	Time Magazine 14 December 2014 http://time.com/3633025/deal-salvaged-at-u-n-climate-talks-in-peru/

GEOGRAPHY IN THE NEWS

<p>Falling oil prices threaten to transform the industry</p>	<p>Oil; Energy security; OPEC; Shale oil</p>	<p>The shocking drops in oil prices, in large part caused by the US shale oil revolution in Texas, is starting to have a wide impact on industry and the oil producing nations. OPEC, the cartel responsible to keeping the oil price high for its member producers has witnessed the value of a barrel of crude oil drop from \$115 to \$60, with market analysts predicting that it may drop further to \$43 a barrel by the early summer of 2015. The oil industry is suffering for it, with job losses and a halt on investment in areas that require new drilling infrastructure such as the Arctic. Countries such as Libya, who rely on a high oil price to sustain their GDP, face future economic uncertainty and some analysts predict that as OPEC become effectively obsolete, oil companies large and small may need to merge to stay profitable.</p>	<p>BBC 10 December 2014 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-30393690</p>
<p>£2.3bn for flood defences in pre-election spending commitments</p>	<p>Flooding; Tidal power; Settlements; Thames estuary</p>	<p>As part of the Chancellor's £460 billion Autumn statement, £2.3 billion has been earmarked for 1400 defence projects targeting the UK's most flood prone areas. These defences, which include £15.5 million of works in the Somerset levels, could potentially protect 300,000 homes and prevent an estimated £30 billion worth of damage. The plans, which cover a six year spend have been welcomed but many local authorities claim that they are needing to find too much funding from within their own budgets to meet the financial short fall. Other potential commitments under the National Infrastructure Plan include a tidal power lagoon in Swansea Bay and a redesign of the Thames Barrier as well as the designation of Bicester as a new garden city.</p>	<p>The Guardian 2 December 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/dec/02/flood-defences-social-housing-pre-election-spending-commitments-infrastructure-plan</p>
<p>Philippines learned from Haiyan to cut typhoon deaths</p>	<p>Philippines; Typhoon; Mitigation; Management; Resilience</p>	<p>Despite winds of up to 230km/hr buffeting its coast, the Philippines have endured their latest typhoon, Hagupit with relative preparedness. This article suggests that the low death toll of just forty two, mostly from the Eastern Samar region, compared to the estimated 7300 who lost their lives in Typhoon Haiyan can be put down to the Philippines government insisting on higher levels of safety management and a more coordinated response to the hazard before it struck. 1.7 million people were evacuated and an extra thousand evacuation shelters came into use compared to 2013, pre-stocked with bottled water, dry goods, blankets and tarpaulins. An awareness of what to do in typhoon season has certainly come into the general Filipino consciousness since Haiyan: within three days of the storm, normal life had resumed.</p>	<p>New Scientist 10 December 2014 http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22429993.700-philippines-learned-from-haiyan-to-cut-typhoon-deaths.html</p>

<p>Bangladesh losing battle against malaria</p>	<p>Health; Disease; Aid; World Health Organisation</p>	<p>The World Health Organisation (WHO) have reported a forty seven percent decline in malaria caused deaths since the millennium, bringing down the number of people infected from 173 million to 128 million. This positive news which is in large part due to the prolific rise in the use of mosquito nets as well as diagnostic and pharmaceutical advancement, is not felt everywhere. In Bangladesh the use of traditional slash and burn farming methods is raising the pH of the soil and making it more susceptible to mosquito breeding. This is most commonly a problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Eastern Bangladesh, an isolated area where infected people often reside too far from medical help. The WHO estimates that they still need to spend a further US\$2.5 billion in order to reach their own malaria targets.</p>	<p>Al Jazeera 9 December 2014 http://www.aljazeera.com/video/asia/2014/12/bangladesh-losing-battle-against-malaria-2014129182059204795.html</p>
<p>At last, a thaw: The United States and Cuba</p>	<p>Diplomacy; Trade; Embargoes; Tourism; Culture change</p>	<p>After fifty four years of frosty relations and a trade embargo that crippled the Cuban economy, President Obama and Cuban president Raul Castro announced plans to 'normalise relations' between the two countries. Cuba has been out of bounds to US tourism and industry since 1960, costing the island's economy an estimated US\$1.1 trillion in that time. While the US trade embargo has not yet been lifted, trade commentators have predicted that by the end of 2015 US corporations will be flooding onto the Caribbean island, signalling a tourism boom in the meantime, with visitors from Europe keen to experience the island before its independent culture changes. Though critics have recognised that Obama's motives may lie in the securing of the Cuban vote in Florida, the move has been welcomed by world leaders as a large step forward in better diplomacy between the nations.</p>	<p>The Economist 17 December 2014 http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21636886-historic-steps-towards-ending-anachronistic-embargo-last-thaw</p>

<p>Full scale of plastic in the world's oceans revealed for first time</p>	<p>Pollution; Plastics; Oceans; Recycling; Waste</p>	<p>An international group of marine researchers have released their estimates of the amount of plastic to be found in the world's oceans. They predict that over five trillion individual pieces of plastic have found their way into the sea, weighing in at a total of 269,000 tonnes. The plastics, which are mostly the remnants of food and drink packaging, are spread throughout the oceans but congregate in five main gyres: areas of the sea where due to the particular currents in that area, plastics tend to pool. They are keen to stress that their figures should be seen as very conservative as undoubtedly some plastic will have sunk to depths where it is less detectable. This article highlights the danger this plastic can have to marine life, as well as human life as it so easily enters the food chain of fish and molluscs that we eat.</p>	<p>The Guardian 10 December 2014 http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/10/full-scale-plastic-worlds-oceans-revealed-first-time-pollution</p>
<p>Lack of snow delays ski resort openings</p>	<p>Tourism; Weather and Climate; Alps</p>	<p>A number of Alpine skiing resorts have been forced to delay their winter opening as such a high number of the pistes they rely on are closed due to a lack of snow. Webcam shots of many areas show bare soil and rock dominating the views and many ski schools are resorting to using snow cannons to artificially create the conditions needed by the tourists. Tourists that are already booked into a closed resort are being offered transfers to other areas, concentrating their impact there, while some tourists are receiving full refunds, costing the industry hundreds of thousands of Euros in lost revenue. The pistes that are open are displaying dangerous levels of ice as the snow there has been compacted and has not been replenished by fresh falls.</p>	<p>The Telegraph 3 December 2014 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/snowandski/skiing-news/11270467/Lack-of-snow-delays-ski-resort-openings.html</p>
<p>New type of cloud formation discovered</p>	<p>Weather and Climate; Clouds; Meteorology;</p>	<p>Gavin Pretor-Pinney, a British amateur cloud enthusiast, author of <i>'The Cloud Spotter's Guide'</i> and founder of the Cloud Appreciation Society, believes he has found a new type of cloud formation – the <i>Undulatus asperatus</i>. This would mark the first new cloud formation to be formally identified in sixty three years. The new formation, which looks like a rolling dark sea with many layers of horizontal curves, will now need to be considered by the World Meteorological Organisation; a United Nations body based in Geneva, before it can be granted entry into the International Cloud Atlas.</p>	<p>The Times 10 December 2014 http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/science/article4292822.ece</p>