

Dear Parent

Geography is not only up-to-date and relevant, it is one of the most exciting, adventurous and valuable subjects to study today. So many of the world's current problems boil down to geography, and need the geographers of the future to help us understand them.

Global warming, sustainable food production, natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis, the spread of disease, the reasons for migration and the future of energy resources are just some of the great challenges facing the next generation of geographers.

A knowledge of geography, instilled into me by two excellent teachers, has enriched my life and encouraged me to take on long and sometimes difficult journeys. Geography has stimulated my mind and given me the attitude to go out and see for myself, rather than be told by others.

Choosing geography at school can open the doors to a university degree, either specifically in geography or by combining geography with other subjects to gain a place on a degree programme in another subject. A qualification in geography is recognised for its academic 'robustness' and, most importantly, it also helps young people into the world of work.

We know this is true because so many employers prize the knowledge and skills that studying geography can provide, be it knowing how the world works, planning research and report writing, working in a team, using new technologies and communication skills – and much more. You will find geographers working in a wide range of jobs, from the City to planning, working in the environment to travel and tourism, or in international charities or retail. Studying geography can help young people achieve careers that are professionally and financially rewarding and also enjoyable.

Last year I was delighted to hear that more than 20,000 Scottish students studied a National or Higher in geography. So, alongside the other subjects that your son or daughter might study, I would encourage them to choose a National or Higher in geography. It meant a lot to me and it could mean a lot to them.

With best wishes



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Now fifteen, going on sixteen, I'm preparing for my five Highers. Though geography can be daunting, with such a significant amount of varied information to assimilate, it explains the key processes and interactions occurring at our earth's core. What I like particularly about geography is that it helps you understand your surroundings – what's currently going on and how it came to be. You can link a classroom lesson to local landscapes and newspaper headlines, and you find yourself feeling involved in the world because you are learning how it works. In the Higher course, you can also take the chance to put your knowledge to the test and participate in some group fieldwork, which helps determine whether you are a human or physical geographer, and provides an insight into a few career paths that you may want to consider.

Hayley, Aberdeen

Study Geography

My decision to study Geography at university was an easy one. As a skier and climber it was as a result of my lifestyle choices that I first developed an interest in the formation of landscapes around me, and of the people inhabiting those spaces. I realised early on that studying Geography at this level would be an ideal way to gain transferable skills and a knowledge of the wider world which would provide a platform upon which I could reward myself personally and advance myself professionally. I've never looked back.

Jamie, Edinburgh

