# Young Geographer of the Year Competition 2025

**ROYAL Geographical Society**
with IBG
Advancing geography
and geographical learning

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**The theme for the Young Geographer of the Year competition 2025 is:**

# Understanding islands



**Let's take a closer look at the World's islands.**

It is estimated that our planet contains almost 670,000 islands, of which around 11,000 are permanently inhabited. Islands have a unique geography; their landscapes and coastlines vary massively – some are home to volcanoes; others are barely above sea level. Some are barren, deserts or rocky outcrops, others lush vegetation havens for a range of unique wildlife and plant species. There are islands seen by many as popular holiday destinations, and there are others that are inaccessible or many miles from civilisation. Every island is unique, and every island has its challenges.

The geography of islands is an interesting one. Some are threatened by climate change and issues such as sea level rise, and through this are embroiled in the geopolitics of the climate emergency and the mitigation strategies implemented through both international policies and local-level action. The people who live on islands face a range of socio-economic, cultural or historical challenges, from over-use of their towns and cities by tourists, to access to resources, clean water or adequate living conditions. The 'ownership' of some islands is contested; some are protected, others are fought over because of their geopolitical or strategic significance. In some places, islands are being created to meet the need for more space to satisfy our growing population. By exploring and understanding islands, including the island we live on, we can unlock a multitude of geographical themes and connections across people, places and environments.

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The Society invites you to create a poster (or Esri StoryMap for KS5) to explore islands and highlight the geographical themes, challenges and solutions that connect across both human and physical geography to make islands unique. We are looking for eye catching, creative and informative posters and StoryMaps that delve into the socio-economic, cultural, political and physical aspects of a range of islands, showcasing their features and exploring how islands can be connected through the challenges that they face and the solutions they use to address those challenges. Your posters and StoryMaps should think about geographical themes across people, places and environments.

**Entering the competition**

The competition has four categories.
- · Key Stage 2 (pupils aged 7-11)
- · Key Stage 3 (pupils aged 11-14)
- · Key Stage 4 or GCSE (pupils aged 14-16)
- · Key Stage 5 or A Level (pupils aged 16-18)

Students should enter the Key Stage category they are in on the day they submit their entry.

**Entries should be created individually by students – entries created by groups of students will not be accepted.**

Entries from all schools, UK and international, are being accepted.

There are two submission pathways. We will be asking participants to provide details of their school type when they submit their entry, and participants will need to fill in the correct online form that matches their school type and then upload their documents into the correct file area. Entries submitted into the wrong school type folder when uploading may be discounted. We will be selecting one winner and one highly commended entry for each age category from entries from state funded schools, and one winner and one highly commended entry for each age category from entries from independent and international schools. International schools that are not fee-paying should still enter via the international school route.

The deadline for receipt of all entries is **Friday 3 October 2025 at 5.00pm. Entries received after this time will not be accepted.** We recommend that you submit your entries in good time before the closing date, in case you have issues uploading the documents and need to contact us. We encourage schools to run an in-house competition and only send their top 10 entries into the national competition. Due to the volume of entries the Society cannot enter into correspondence about individual entries or provide feedback. We will contact you/your student if you/they are selected as a winner. All winners and highly commended students will be invited to an Awards Ceremony at the Society in London on Friday 5 December 2025.

All entries **must be made as an online submission via our website** https://www.rgs.org/ygoty2025**.**

Submissions can be made by individual students or teachers. Teacher and school contact details must be provided. The entry form should only be filled in and submitted when you are ready to upload your entries. You do not need to pre-register to take part in the competition.

Entries **must use the file name/type requirements** specified on the online application form, or they cannot be considered. **We cannot accept or judge any entries by post.** Entries must not show the students name or school name on them.

**General entry criteria**

**KS2, KS3 and KS4** students should produce an **A3 size poster** entry. This can be handmade (then submitted electronically using a scanned copy or photograph) or using PowerPoint, Word, Publisher or PDF, etc. **KS5** students should produce an **Esri Story Map** <u>or</u> **produce an A3 size poster.**

Students across Key Stage Two to Key Stage Four categories should produce an **A3 size** poster entry. This can be handmade (then submitted electronically using a scanned copy or photograph (JPG) or made electronically using PowerPoint, Word, Publisher or PDF, etc. Please ensure that the poster is readable and that if submitting a photograph, the full poster is shown. Entries will be discounted if we cannot see the entire poster, if we cannot read the text or if we cannot open the file.

For Key Stage Five students wishing to submit an ArcGIS StoryMap, entries should be provided as a hyperlink in a PDF, with your unique file name on the document (see below). You must test that the link to the StoryMap opens for anyone (is not private), without being signed in, before it is submitted. If we cannot open your StoryMap, your entry will be discounted.

**Key Stage 2 criteria:** A poster exploring at least one island, exploring its location and unique geography across people, places and environments.

**Key Stage 3 criteria:** A poster exploring at least two islands, exploring their locations and unique geography across people, places and environments and demonstrating the ways in which these islands are connected via geographical themes, challenges and solutions.

**Key Stage 4 criteria:** A poster exploring at least three islands, exploring geographical themes they have in common, showcasing their unique differences and demonstrating geographical knowledge and understanding of connections through the consideration of similarities and differences between these places.

**Key Stage 5 criteria:** A poster or Esri StoryMap exploring multiple islands, exploring geographical themes they have in common, showcasing their unique differences and demonstrating geographical knowledge and understanding of connections through the consideration of similarities and differences between these places.

We are looking for eye-catching, innovative, informative and accurate submissions which address this year's theme and must meet the following criteria:

· A well-written and informative piece that demonstrates geographical knowledge and uses accurate geographical terminology.
· **IMPORTANT:** <u>Any images used must be copyright free</u> – we recommend using sites such as Unsplash and Pixabay. All images must be credited.
· Excellent attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar.
· Original and independently produced - class sets of identical entries or entries which have copied information from other sources, such as the internet or AI, will not be accepted.
· Entries must be produced by single pupils – no group entries allowed.
· If produced electronically, please use a minimum font size of point 10.
· Entries must not be 3D or have tabs or hidden information.

Please ensure that you:

• Use the correct submission form for your school type
• Upload your files into the correct folder
• Do not submit your details into the online submission form until you are ready to also upload your entries into our file system (ie there is no need to pre-register to take part).

We request that entries are submitted in good time and not left until the final submission day to be uploaded.

**File names and submission codes**

All entry files must be clearly named as follows before submission:
Submission code* - Student's initials (use middle name initial too if there are any duplicates) - Key Stage   e.g. 2AR-14-03-GM-HS-KS4

*Submission code: Last three (3) characters of your school postcode - Submission day - Submission month - Teacher's initials, e.g. 2AR-14-03-GM

Failure to label files clearly may result in submissions not being considered. Entries should be uploaded in one batch per school. Up to 10 entries can be submitted at one time. File names must not show the child or teacher's full name.

**Important notice**
By taking part in the Young Geographer of the Year competition and submitting your entry to the RGS-IBG, you are providing agreement that the RGS-IBG may use your poster on social media. Posters produced by the winners and highly commended entries will be published on the RGS-IBG website for schools to view (and therefore all images used must be copyright free). Posters from entries that have not been awarded prizes may also be used this way. Where a poster is published online, the Society will ensure that the poster is credited with the child's name only.

**Use of AI**
AI checks may be used to determine whether the work is the student's own and presented 'in the spirit of the competition'. Students applying to university are given the following guidance by UCAS about the use of AI for personal statements. A guide to using AI and ChatGPT with your personal statement | UCAS. Students may follow the same guidance when entering this competition. For example, they must not use an AI system to generate all or a large part of the text submitted as their own. Teachers can also consult DfE guidance Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education - GOV.UK. There are age limits associated with the use of AI tools.

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