

The Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Geography Substantive Concepts Overview (EYFS–Year 6)

Substantive Concepts in Geography:

- **Place** – What places are like and how they are different.
- **Location** – Where places are and how we find them.
- **Environment** – Natural and human features and how they interact.
- **Scale** – Local to global perspectives.
- **Interdependence** – How people and places are connected.
- **Physical Processes** – Natural changes (weather, rivers, etc.).
- **Human Processes** – How humans live, work and impact places.
- **Geographical Skills** – Maps, fieldwork, and data interpretation.

Unit 1: Mapping & Location							
Substantive Concept	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Place	Recognise familiar places (home, school)	Name local features (playground, shops)	Compare two UK locations using pictures/maps	Describe features of a UK region (e.g. Lake District)	Compare two regions using OS maps	Evaluate city vs countryside features	Analyse regional differences across the UK
Location	Understand basic positional language (next to, near)	Locate classroom, school on a simple map; intro compass directions	Name UK countries and capital cities; identify seas	Use 4-point compass and begin grid references	Use 4-figure grid references and OS map symbols	Use 8-point compass, compare regions within UK	Use 6-figure grid references; digital maps, GIS
Environment	Talk about outdoor weather/seasonal changes	Describe simple weather patterns	Identify key features: coast, forest, hill	Relate landforms to maps and aerial views	Identify land use types (urban/rural) using maps	Use environmental zones and data on maps	Evaluate environmental quality and land use

Scale	Explore classroom, playground, and home environments	Local scale (street and town maps)	UK and global map introduction	Explore national and regional scales	Understand regional and national mapping	Compare UK with global locations on different scales	Understand scale on digital and OS maps
Interdependence							
Physical Processes							
Human Processes	Spot human features (roads, buildings)	Identify homes, schools, shops, transport	Observe land use differences	Study settlement patterns	Evaluate changes in local area	Investigate planning and urban growth	Study regeneration and development issues
Geography skills	Follow a simple map around the classroom	Use picture maps and aerial photos	Use simple map keys and compass points	Use maps, atlases, basic grid references	Use OS maps and sketch maps	Interpret thematic and land use maps	Use digital tools, GIS, advanced mapping

Unit 2: Exploring Continents

Substantive Concept	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Place	Know that other places exist	Contrast UK with a non-European country	Identify continents and oceans	Compare European region with UK	Explore diverse human/physical features across continents	Analyse contrasting world biomes/regions	Evaluate life in contrasting world regions (e.g. Amazon vs UK)
Location	Begin understanding the world	Name and locate UK,	Recognise hemispheres, equator, poles	Locate major European	Use latitude, longitude, and global locations	Identify key global cities and trade links	Use coordinates to investigate global

	beyond local area	continents, and oceans		countries and capital cities			patterns (e.g. population, biomes)
Environment	Discuss hot/cold places & different climates	Recognise features of contrasting environments	Understand environments in continents (e.g. deserts, rainforests)	Study how physical geography affects human life (e.g. mountains, rivers)	Investigate how climate influences landscapes globally	Examine human impact on environments globally	Evaluate sustainability and environmental issues globally
Scale	Know that the world is made of different places	Understand local vs world scale	Continental comparisons	Regional/global comparisons across continents	Consider global distribution of physical features	Compare countries and continents using scale bars	Analyse global issues at multiple scales (e.g. climate change)
Interdependence		Begin to understand people live differently around the world	Consider needs and lifestyles globally	Explore climate and resource use in other countries	Understand trade and global connections	Study global food trade and resource use	Analyse how global systems (e.g. trade, migration) connect places
Physical Processes	Experience seasonal change	Recognise changes in environment (hot/cold)	Study climate zones (basic)	Learn about volcanoes, mountains, rivers	Study rivers and water cycles across regions	Investigate climate change and its effects	Evaluate physical processes (e.g. erosion, tectonics)
Human Processes	Discuss where people live around the world	Compare homes and lives globally	Recognise farming, housing, and industry differences	Study settlements and economic activity	Investigate city growth and land use	Analyse economic geography and globalisation	Evaluate the causes and effects of migration/urbanisation
Geography skills	Look at world maps and globes	Use globes to locate continents	Label maps and interpret simple globes	Use world maps and atlases to	Interpret thematic maps	Use population, trade and biome maps	Analyse global datasets using GIS and online tools

				locate key features	showing global patterns		
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Unit 3: UK Comparison and Fieldwork							
Substantive Concept	EYFS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Place	Compare Maidstone to another local area (e.g. park, town, or coast)	Compare Maidstone with New Zealand: homes, weather, environment	Contrast Maidstone with Kenya: schools, climate, housing	Compare Kent with Canada and Switzerland: landscape, settlements	Compare Kent with Germany and Argentina: physical and cultural features	Compare Kent with Italy and Chile: human and physical geography	Compare Kent with Spain and Peru: environment, lifestyle, land use
Location	Identify Maidstone and nearby areas using local maps	Locate Maidstone and New Zealand on world maps and globes	Identify Maidstone and Kenya, describing hemispheres and equator	Locate Kent, Canada and Switzerland using atlases and digital maps	Locate Kent, Germany and Argentina using coordinates and scales	Locate Kent, Italy and Chile using latitude, longitude and thematic maps	Use GIS to explore and compare Kent, Spain and Peru (location, features)
Environment	Observe environmental features of Maidstone and a	Compare climate and natural features of	Explore climate, land use and biodiversity in Maidstone vs Kenya	Compare physical environments (rivers, mountains) in Kent and Canada/Switzerland	Investigate environment and natural resources in Kent, Germany, Argentina	Study coasts, climate and volcanoes	Evaluate environmental issues and sustainability

	contrasting local area	Maidstone and New Zealand				(Kent, Italy, Chile)	(Kent, Spain, Peru)
Scale	Distinguish between 'here' and 'another local place'	Compare local and global (Maidstone and New Zealand)	Contrast Maidstone and Kenya using UK and world scale maps	Explore regional (Kent) vs international (Canada, Switzerland)	Understand national (Germany/Argentina) and regional (Kent) scale comparisons	Interpret data across multiple scales (Kent, Italy, Chile)	Compare Kent, Spain and Peru across local, national and global scales
Interdependence	Talk about reasons people go to local places (shops, family, school)	Explore daily life and activities in NZ vs Maidstone	Consider water, food, and housing needs in Kenya vs Maidstone	Study how Canada/Switzerland and Kent are connected via environment/trade	Explore economic and cultural connections (Kent, Germany, Argentina)	Study tourism, trade, and transport (Kent, Italy, Chile)	Evaluate global interdependence (Kent, Spain, Peru: imports, tourism, migration)
Physical Processes	Experience local weather and talk about seasonal changes	Fieldwork: explore weather and landscapes (Maidstone/NZ)	Investigate climate zones and rivers (Kenya vs Maidstone)	Fieldwork: study rivers in Kent and glaciation in Canada/Switzerland	Study erosion, water use, and environmental risk (Germany/Argentina)	Explore coasts, rivers, and volcanic regions (Italy/Chile)	Fieldwork: evaluate river features and natural change (Spain/Peru)
Human Processes	Describe how people use spaces in Maidstone and nearby areas	Compare daily life, transport, homes (NZ vs Maidstone)	Explore farming, school, buildings (Kenya vs Maidstone)	Compare economy, transport and land use (Kent vs Canada/Switzerland)	Study urbanisation and settlement (Kent, Germany, Argentina)	Explore economic activity and population changes (Italy/Chile)	Evaluate urban/rural change and planning (Kent, Spain, Peru)
Geography skills	Use simple sketch maps and observations	Fieldwork: compare Maidstone/NZ using photos,	Map and record observations for Maidstone/Kenya comparison	Fieldwork: investigate Kent river with links to Canada/Switzerland	Use data collection tools to compare Kent, Germany, Argentina	Apply mapping and digital skills to explore	Lead fieldwork investigation comparing Kent, Spain, Peru

	in local environment	maps, and surveys				Kent, Italy, Chile	
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