

GEOGSPACE RESOURCES

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The Year 7-10 Geography curriculum contains two topics for each year level with one focussed on physical geography and the other on human geography. The following topic coverage is:

- Water in the world (7)
- Place and liveability (7)
- Landforms and landscapes (8)
- Changing nations (8)
- Biomes and food security (9)
- Geographies of interconnections(9)
- Environmental change and management (10)
- Geographies of human wellbeing (10)

Unlike the F-6, a curriculum narrative is much more difficult to articulate, though such a process is an interesting activity for faculties to undertake in an effort to deconstruct the curriculum and develop their own rationale for the curriculum progression.

GeogSpace on-line resources

Once the Geography curriculum was written, AGTA saw the need to develop resources to support it. In March 2012, AGTA was successful in tendering to undertake the development of the Geography on-line resources for the *Educational*

Services Australia (ESA) Supporting the Australian Curriculum On-line (SACOL) project. AGTA commenced developing the resource, to be known as GeogSpace, in July 2012 and employed 12 writers from across Australia to write innovative and comprehensive illustrations of practice linked to the Australian Curriculum: Geography. On 31 May 2013, the GeogSpace site went live at www.geogspace.edu.au and was met with great enthusiasm from geographers around Australia who saw the resource as much needed support to the successful implementation of the new curriculum. The illustrations of practice are not just activities for students but have also been designed to provide materials for quality professional learning. GeogSpace was developed with the following in mind. To:

- be a resource to support the teaching of the Australian Curriculum: Geography
- provide the framework, content pedagogical knowledge, teaching approaches and resources to support professional learning across Australia
- have the capacity to support the delivery of professional learning to "Geography" and "non-Geography" Geography teachers
- cater for primary and secondary school implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Geography

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- integrate ICTs throughout the curriculum relevant to the teaching of Geography
- reflect “world best practice” i.e. range of sources, in particular the UK Geography teaching resources have been purchased
- be a free website (open to all) containing over 60 illustrations of practice and professional learning objects
- be written and developed by Australian Geography teachers from every state of Australia – a first ever resource for Australian Geography teaching
- be a 21st Century Geography resource dedicated to the Australian Curriculum: Geography.

GeogSpace structure

The GeogSpace site comprises two major resource sections – Core units and Support units.

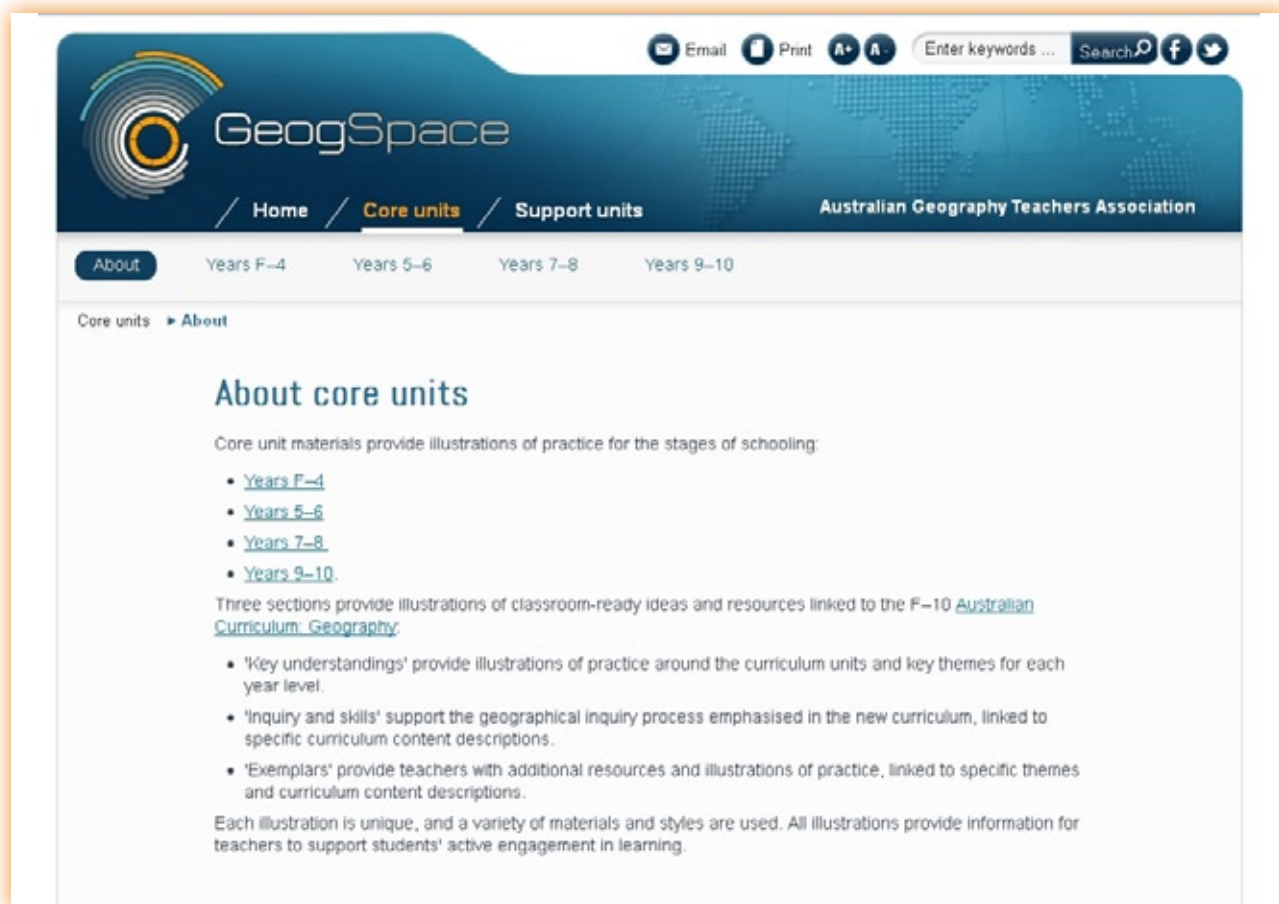
Core units comprise illustrations of practice for stages of schooling described in the Australian Curriculum: Geography.

The illustrations are provided for Years F–4, Years 5–6, Years 7–8 and Years 9–10.

The illustrations are designed to provide classroom-ready ideas and resources that reflect the dynamism of Geography. Each illustration is linked to the curriculum and provides opportunities for students to actively engage in learning, whether it be through undertaking class research, practical activities, field investigations or through taking local action.

The Core units have three sections for each of the stages of schooling:

1. Key understandings: the fundamental understandings are articulated and illustrations of practice are developed to model the understandings
2. Inquiry and skills: the key inquiry and skills for the stage are articulated and illustrations of practice are developed to model the skills
3. Exemplars: learning activities have been designed as illustrations of practice, directly linked into the content descriptions of the curriculum.



Support units provide illustrations of practice designed to support teachers' professional learning and provide guidance, information and resources in eight areas of geographical education:

1. Thinking geographically: illustrations to develop and enrich the geographical imagination and exploring vocabulary to adequately express the richness of geographical concepts
2. Why teach geography?: illustrations to explore how geographical studies help students to understand the uniqueness of their own place, the world they live in and their involvement within it
3. Professional practice: illustrations to explore how teachers can support students whose attitudes, abilities, cultural backgrounds and preferred learning styles vary greatly

4. Fieldwork: illustrations to support the use of fieldwork as a physical activity of “exploring Geography”.
5. ICTs in Geography: illustrations to promote the use of geospatial technologies to support spatial thinking and to make the acquisition of knowledge more efficient and engaging
6. Assessment in Geography: illustrations to support teachers in understanding the standards, and how to apply them in both planning and practice
7. Language of Geography: illustrations to explore how literacy learning practices that can be employed in the Geography classroom
8. Geographical inquiry: illustrations to show how

geographical inquiry can give students the opportunity to actively engage in understanding their own place and the world they live in.

It is anticipated GeogSpace will continue to grow and become even more interactive and comprehensive as it reflects the dynamism of geographical education in the 21st century. AGTA welcomes feedback about the GeogSpace site and resources and looks forward for the resource to be used across Australia, as it is intended, to support the implementation of the curriculum. Feel free to advertise in any way possible amongst your colleagues interested in teaching the Australian Curriculum: Geography and “learn” about modern Geography in schools (flyer below, available on the AGTA site at www.agta.asn.au).



Spatial technology

After years advocating for the use of spatial technology in schools, the Australian Curriculum: Geography overtly refers to the use of GIS and other spatial technologies as not only desirable but as an expectation.

“In Geography, students develop ICT capability when they locate, select, evaluate, communicate and share geographical information using digital technologies and learn to use spatial technologies.”

From the General capabilities section of the ACARA Rationale for geography at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/General-capabilities

Other important references to the use of spatial technology is to be found throughout the Inquiry and Skills strand, in the very geographical level of inquiry titled: **collecting, recording,**

evaluating and representing. For example from Year 6 onwards one of the content descriptions for this inquiry level is:

“Represent the spatial distribution of geographical phenomena by constructing special purpose maps that conform to cartographic conventions, using spatial technologies as appropriate.”

Foundation to Year 10 at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Curriculum/F-10

Such an overt reference to the use of spatial technology in the document is an important adjunct to our efforts to use the modern technology of Geography in geography classrooms. Whilst an opportunity, for this expectation to not be a risk to the teaching of the curriculum, considerable time and effort needs to put into building the capacity of teachers to meaningfully use spatial technology. What the curriculum has done is give a green light for such work!

Fieldwork

As have all GTAs across Australia, the GTNSW has been a strong advocate of fieldwork as an important and integral part of Geography. Whilst cautious in mandating fieldwork, the curriculum does make overt reference to fieldwork as an important activity if a school intends to conduct quality geographical education.

"They conduct fieldwork, map and interpret data and spatial distributions, and use spatial technologies."

From the Rationale of the curriculum at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Rationale

Although it is somewhat disappointing that fieldwork is not specifically mentioned in the content descriptions in the *Inquiry and Skills* strand, fieldwork is implied in year level Content Descriptions and Elaborations in most years. For example:

"Evaluate sources for their reliability, bias and usefulness, and represent multi-variable data in a range of appropriate forms, for example, scatter plots, tables, field sketches and annotated diagrams, with and without the use of digital and spatial technologies."

Year 9 content description

... "interpreting and creating maps such as flow and choropleth maps, or plans for specific purposes, for example, a bushfire management plan mapping geographical data using spatial technologies, the location of recent bushfires in Australia, or information they have collected through fieldwork."

Year 5 elaboration

It is also worth noting that fieldwork was implicit in the 2011 Shape Paper for the curriculum with statements such as:

"The Australian Curriculum: Geography will involve field work at all stages, as this is an essential core component of geographical learning. Field work is any study undertaken outside the classroom, and could be within the school grounds, around the neighbouring streets, or in more distant locations."

Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Geography January 2011, page 15
www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_Geography.pdf



Attention: All Geography, SOSE and HSIE teachers



GeogSpace
www.geogspace.edu.au

Free online – quality Australian resources for supporting the teaching of the recently published ACARA Australian Curriculum: Geography

- GeogSpace has been designed to provide materials to support primary and secondary teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum: Geography.
- GeogSpace has been developed by a team of geography teachers dedicated to produce a resource that reflects best practices in geographical education using current technology and pedagogies.
- GeogSpace offers quality primary and secondary geography resource materials for all teachers of geography, including those that are very experienced and those just commencing their involvement in geographical education.

Materials to support teachers to develop their knowledge, skills and pedagogical capacity to teach geography in the Australian Curriculum



Contact your local geography teacher association (GTA) for information on professional learning opportunities in your state.
The AGTA site at www.agta.asn.au provides contact details for your local GTA and other useful information relevant to the teaching of the Australian Curriculum: Geography.
Ring 0401 123 372 if you have any questions regarding the work of AGTA.
Contact the AGTA Chair, Malcolm McInerney (manning@chanot.net) for information on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: Geography.

A resource developed by the Australian Geography Teachers Association (AGTA) on behalf of Education Services Australia

Inquisitive inquiry

As geographers we are keen to nurture the inquisitiveness of students so that they can develop an understanding of the geographical world for themselves. Such inquisitiveness and questioning is an important component of the inquiry approach, an approach strongly embedded and enunciated in the curriculum through the structure and content of the Inquiry and Skills strand. As is stated in the curriculum:

"Geography uses an inquiry approach to assist students to make meaning of their world. It teaches them to respond to questions in a geographically distinctive way, plan an inquiry; collect, evaluate, analyse and interpret information; and suggest responses to what they have learned."

The Rationale at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Rationale

"Geography aims to ensure that students develop the capacity to be competent, critical and creative users of geographical inquiry methods and skills."

Aim number 4 of the curriculum at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Geography/Aims

Such an integrated focus on geographical inquiry as developed in the new curriculum lends great support to quality student centred geographical learning and should be a useful guide to the nature of the pedagogy employed in the teaching Geography.