

HSC GEOGRAPHY LECTURES 2017

Once again this year, GTANSW has organised lectures for HSC Geography students and teachers. The presenters are experienced educators and HSC markers. The sessions cover: Ecosystems at Risk, Urban Places, People and Economic Activity and Geography skills and exam advice.

DATES AND LOCATIONS*

Monday 5 June – Wollongong
University of Wollongong

(Room 20.3, Northfields Ave, Gwynneville)

Wednesday 7 June – Newcastle
Callaghan Secondary College, Newcastle
(Jesmond Campus, Janet St, Jesmond)

Tuesday 13 June – Sydney CBD
St Andrews Cathedral School, Sydney
(Ground Floor, 51 Druitt St, Sydney)

TIME

9.00am – 3.00pm, registration from 8.30pm

* Please check for updates on – www.gtansw.org.au

ONLINE REGISTRATION [CLICK HERE](#)

Supply a list of attendees with your school's registration

Registration closes one week prior to each event

Students are encouraged to bring writing equipment and paper or tablet devices to mind map key concepts and advice.

COST (inc GST)

\$30 per student for member schools/teacher

\$50 per student for non-member schools/teacher

Teacher attending with students admitted FREE.

Teachers attending with students will receive a link to lectures presented on the day for distribution to students after the event.

Teacher attending without students:

\$80 member and \$100 non-member

(This event contributes 5 hours self identified Professional Learning)

I wish to attend the HSC Geography Lectures 2017

to be held at on

(please specify locality and date of lecture you wish to attend)

There will be students attending from our school.

REGISTRATION – by attending teacher

FIRST & SURNAME

SCHOOL NAME

SCHOOL ADDRESS.....

SUBURB..... POSTCODE.....

PHONE (W)..... FAX (W)..... MOBILE

EMAIL MEMBER OF GTA YES / NO

Your email required to receive link to lecture notes If Yes provide member #

Please make cheques payable to: **Geography Teachers' Association of NSW Inc**

OR

Charge \$..... to my credit card: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Card Number: / / / Expiry date: /

Name on card:

Signature:.....

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR FORM – attach a list of student names AND name(s) of teacher attending to gta.admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au

ENQUIRIES: Phone: 02 9716 0378, Fax: 02 9564 2342 Email: gta.admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au

THIS FORM BECOMES A TAX INVOICE – ABN 59 246 850 128

GTA NSW respects your privacy. Any data collected is for the purpose of registration only.

BUSTING THE BANDS

Hints and tips for new teachers to maximise student performance in the Higher School Certificate (HSC)

Firstly, 'Busting the Bands' is the process of implementing techniques and strategies into our Geography lessons to move students up into the next Band. Personally, there is nothing more frustrating than seeing students score 79 or 89 in the HSC. This is a highly valuable method of boosting the profile of Geography in our schools whilst creating a dominant culture that will ultimately boost our subject numbers. If we can get this right, we can certainly attract talented students into our subject and work to target Band 4-6 in the HSC. I am certainly one who in my initial years of teaching had been guilty of measuring my success on the number of Band 5's or Band 6's in the HSC. I have slowly learnt that it's not always about Band 6's. Moving a student from a 60 to a 75 or from a 77 to an 85 is far more rewarding. So how do we hone in on our 79 and 88 kids who could so easily be a Band 5 and Band 6? Identifying what our top students are doing right and teaching the knowledge and skill to your cohort is imperative. One of the most effective starting points is to identify the subjects and the relevant subject teachers in your school that have scored or continue to score quality results in the HSC and ask to sit in on lessons where possible. Over the past 12 months our school has established a 'Bowerbirds' program in order to create meaningful whole staff discussions about the teaching techniques or methods being used within our school that maximise student performance in the HSC. As our HSC results continue to improve each year, we rarely stopped and shared meaningful classroom experiences and utilised the talent we had (both experiences and early career teachers).

Busting the Bands should be a focus from day one in Year 11 and could easily form the basis of key learning in numerous lessons throughout the week. It's really not about starting again from scratch, it's about making small changes to the way we sometimes deliver content and engage our students in collaborative tasks within and outside of the classroom in Geography.

The following hints and tips are designed for those teachers who are teaching HSC Geography for the first time or who are simply looking for some inspiration on revitalising your approach to the HSC. These

Matt Carroll, Engadine High School

are techniques and activities that should build the foundations of your lessons to 'Bust the Bands' for our Geography students.

1. Know the syllabus and how to scaffold student study notes that mirror HSC questions

When I first picked up the **syllabus** and began planning for my first Geography class, it's safe to say I had no idea about what some of the dot points actually meant! I learnt this the hard way, when marking the HSC for the first time. I marked for two weeks on a question I had almost taught completely wrong. The lesson here is always seeking professional advice from HSC teachers either by email or through social media. It does take a complete mastery of the syllabus to feel confident that your students know their content and are able to successfully respond to questions in assessment tasks and in the HSC exam. It is absolutely essential that teachers explicitly teach the syllabus, have their students scaffold their study notes under the relevant headings and subheadings and deconstruct each syllabus dot point to develop a deeper understanding of the key concepts. Try teaching strategies such as syllabus jigsaw or even 'speed dating' with the syllabus and consider prediction games to breakdown the syllabus dot point. Ask the students to take notes firstly on 'what does this syllabus dot point actually mean' and 'how do you successfully demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of these concepts'. Before the TRIAL and HSC students should be able to rewrite the syllabus word for word and be shown HSC style questions and immediately match up the correct syllabus dot point and relevant content. All too often, good quality students are completely misinterpreting questions in the HSC and is the best way to 'bust the bands'.

2. Teach students to decode questions and consolidate their knowledge using 'dirt, grass and sky' concepts

Many of you may already be familiar with ALARM and actively utilise the tools and resources to maximise student marks in extended responses. This method simply breaks down questions into 'dirt' (identify,

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outline), 'grass' (explain, describe) or 'sky' (analyse, evaluate, justify). Teach students how to flag the higher order questions in exams and understand that questions like these will firstly require some dirt, then some grass and finish with the sky. Many students simply go to the sky, without building upon the necessary content to form their argument, or fail to 'evaluate' at all, restricting their marks to a C range response. In addition to this, I have found it useful to provide students with a practice exam (this could be a HSC exam or TRIAL paper). Students then read the entire exam and flag the Band 5 and Band 6 questions. Let's face it; every exam has at least one question that throws our students. The more experience they have decoding questions and identifying where they will need to take more time and care could prove effective in maximising student performance in Geography.

3. 'Speak Geography to Geographers'

This has been the single best advice as a new HSC teacher. It's what makes our subject unique to all others and it is imperative that students speak the language of Geography in their responses. Terminology, statistics, fieldwork and media are what I feel are the four biggest contributors to moving our students into the next band. Each syllabus dot point should have its own unique set of notes on these four aspects of Geography and it is these students responses that really do stand out in the marking process, where they are not simply regurgitating content from class or from the textbook, instead they are demonstrating higher order concepts that are contemporary. Consider playing games in class with terminology and forming micro-groups of students that work with key terms from the three core topics.

4. Use contemporary content to engage your students and to push the high achievers

Geography is a dynamic subject and it is vital that we teach students using contemporary examples such as Brexit and its potential impact on the European subsystem or London as one of the 'Big 4', or even its impact on viticulture and the tourism industry. Additionally concepts such as 'Connectography' (see TED talk Parag Khanna) are contemporary ways of understanding the changing nature and character of both world cities and megacities, in addition to the creation of dominant clusters of innovation and decision-making through cities growing 'spheres of influence'. For those studying the Great Barrier Reef, showing students the new science on 'pulsed inflation' (ABC Catalyst) or the Outlook Report

would also develop a deeper understanding of the contemporary impacts on the reef and could enable students to 'bust the bands' in an essay response. If this seems all too much, maybe even consider a media journal where students could be finding and analysing these additional sources and adding them to their study notes themselves.

5. Sample responses

Most of our students are visual learners and need to constantly look at benchmark responses so they can see how they can constantly improve their writing. Once you have a HSC class up and running, keep samples of every task from a range of students and build your portfolio. If this is not possible, or you are starting from scratch, use the ARC website, write them yourself or ask for help from other HSC teachers online. One useful example could be

'Know Your Grade Ranges'. As a means of applying what they've learnt/revised, student's work in groups to construct responses that fit into different grade ranges (A–E). One group could be in charge of the A-range, another the B-range, and so on. The teacher works with groups to ensure that they are accurate, and then the class discusses each grade sample (what makes it a certain grade, how to 'bust the next band', etc.). The C and B-grade sample could be collectively improved if needed, then shared as a class resource. Sometimes you could literally start a dot point by showing students the end result in the form of an essay or short answer, and then unpack the key components of a quality response. They could then mind map the key aspects of the dot point before they have even learnt the content.

6. Peer marking

I admit, this does take some time to establish with a HSC class, especially for those that are not open to sharing responses. This is the best way of sharing better response with the class and providing students with the opportunity of seeing what their peers are writing. I have found that setting an occasional task for homework or under exam conditions in class and then allowing students to move around the room, spending a few minutes at each student's response, highlighting key terms, statistics and leaving feedback is a powerful way of students reading multiple samples to broaden their skill set. This is one way of building an unstoppable classroom culture of collaboration, which is the driving force of a quality cohort.

7. Gamification

This is a great way to consolidate student learning in HSC Geography. Using Kahoot, Quizlet, prediction bingo and speed dating are just some strategies you could utilize to 'bust the bands' in Geography. For example, with speed dating, students are allocated topic areas, ideas, or syllabus dot points to revise in depth and detail, possibly with a set of questions. The class 'speed dates' through these topics/dot points so that they revise content *through* a peer – a good way to refresh, move around, and get talking. Students could then summarise their speed dating talk and add to a class set of study notes (perhaps a Google Doc).

8. Pick good case studies and master your knowledge of the subject content

It seems pretty simply, but so many teachers simply choose the safest option, or run with what they have notes on. Chose a case study that you, first and foremost are absolutely passionate about and are highly skilled. This will give your students the best opportunity to feed off your enthusiasm and this will transfer into quality assessment. Ask online for alternative case studies and even swap notes with another teacher. This seems fairly obvious, but ensuring your students have the best possible access to the top bands is imperative. Making sure your case study successfully applies to all the syllabus dot points is really important. Be careful when choosing a 'local case study' of an Economic Activity, ensuring that it does not operate in complete isolation and is affected in some ways by global changes. Another key point would be to ensure two ecosystems have 'traditional' management associated with it and that they are different biomes. I always feel that good case studies should also have a wide range of reading online for students to seek additional sources. This will challenge the higher achievers and ensure that students are able to extend themselves above your classroom content and the textbook.

9. Visual learning and fieldwork

Teachers need to invest time into establishing fieldwork where possible. Fieldwork allows students to ground source their classroom content and is a method not being utilised to its full potential in the

HSC. Teach students explicitly how to write about fieldwork in written responses, which go well beyond just having 'fieldwork, 2017' in brackets. Consider using an observation or measurement from fieldwork such as a cross-section or transect in paragraph form and how it demonstrates 'human impacts' or a 'rapid rate of change' in an ecosystem such as a coastal dune. You could even get creative and use virtual fieldwork if your case study is a global example such as the Amazon Rainforest or the Everglades. If we invest so much time planning fieldwork, we really need to utilise it to its potential in the HSC exam. It is a sign of 'good geography' for HSC markers and can 'bust the bands' for our students.

10. Networking

Sharing resources, ideas and teaching strategies is essential to building teacher confidence in preparing students for the HSC. Joining professional associations such as GTA, attending conferences or workshops, sharing on social media forums such as Twitter and Facebook and HSC marking provide the best networking opportunities. Students can also be given opportunities to network with teachers and other students at events such as HSC student lectures and other revision forums.

Editor's note: In 2016 Matt presented at the GTANSW HSC Student Lectures on Ecosystems at Risk. His specific advice on how to "Bust the Bands" for this topic were extremely well received.

OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

Top 10 Tips from HSC markers to master Ecosystems at Risk

Understanding the syllabus

HSC Exam Check (MC, SA and Essay responses)

Using Fieldwork, Statistics, the Stimulus Booklet, Terminology and Media to **BUST THE BANDS** in the HSC!

Study Techniques for Ecosystems

Ecosystems and their management

CASE STUDIES

A PPT slide from Matt Carroll's HSC lecture on Ecosystems at Risk