

Top Ten Ideas for an Exciting Start to Year 7 Geography

To accompany this list there is a PowerPoint produced by Alan Parkinson, called 'The first six weeks' on <http://www.geography.org.uk/resources/toptenideas/>

1. Start with **earthquakes and volcanoes**, some exciting geography! If you are using the dartboard model of curriculum planning for your KS3, as featured in GA magazine Autumn 2009 everyone could be starting with the Hazardous world, for example; Year 7 on earthquakes and volcanoes, year 8 on flooding and hurricanes and year 9 on crime.

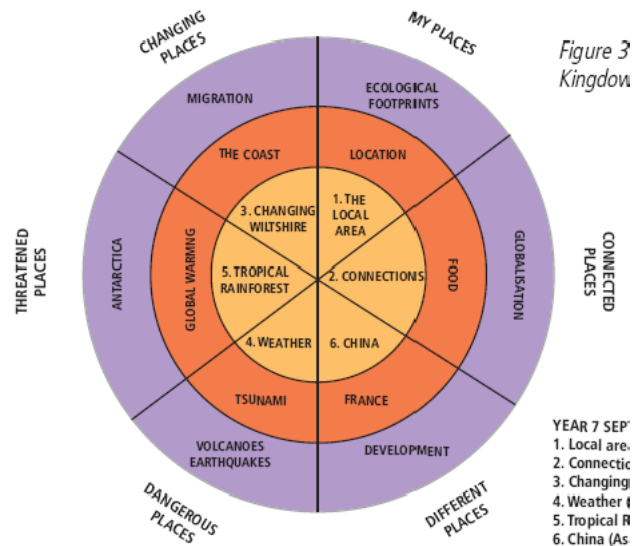
2. It's important to have Year 7 classes gelling together as soon as possible so human bingo type activities that encourage them to talk to new people are essential. Try '**Globingo**' with questions like 'Find someone who has travelled outside Europe', 'Find someone who was born outside this country' 'Find someone who has eaten a fair trade product in the last day'.

3. **My global connections** With a world map and an atlas get students to mark onto the map all the places you are connected to, for example where they have been, where their family or friends live, where their favourite possessions were made, where their favourite food is grown or produced, where their favourite film was set, where their favourite international football team or player is from. Students should soon see how they are connected to the rest of the world and how Geography is an important subject to study.

4. **A view from the window** Take the class outside to do a field sketch from the school grounds and label all the geography, human and physical. For homework the students can draw the view from their bedroom window and label all the geography they can see.

5. **Scavenger hunts** This can be done around the school grounds, include questions and odd/obscure photos that help the new students get to know their school. Points can be converted into merits/commendations/house points etc. It can also include a risk assessment before they go out, and a peer assessment with answers when they return.

6. **A Different view images** Go to <http://www.geography.org.uk/resources/adifferentview/imagesactivities> there are lots of activities that get students started on their geographical thinking skills using the manifesto images as a stimulus.



7. **Emotional Mapping** Give students a school map and ask them to visit their classrooms and other key locations. Create their own class key (happy places, scared places etc.) and get them to label their maps with how they feel in each location. Discussion of how places make us feel and how we can change those places/feelings can then be pursued.
8. **GPS-art activity.** The students plan out an interesting design/image/map symbol on a paper copy of the school fields, then go out with a GPS handset and try to recreate it on the field by walking around. The data is then downloaded onto Google Earth. The winner gets their 'geograffiti' displayed in the department. Even though the 'geography' value may seem tenuous the students soon learn how inaccurate GPS tracks and waypoints can actually be... and it is great fun! It may be a better activity to trial with a geography club
9. Don't forget to order your **free OS maps** on <http://freemaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/freemapsfor11yearolds/>. This year your maps will be accompanied by the **Language of landscape**, which suggests how you may use the maps and contains lesson ideas and resources which can be found on www.naturalengland.org.uk/gettinginvolved
10. **Two ideas for next year**
 - **Flat Stanley** At the Y6 induction day make a 'Flat Stanley', a paper person. The students have to take photos of Stanley during the summer holiday in different places.
 - **Postcards** At the Y6 induction day give every student a sticker with the school address on. Ask the students to send a postcard from their holidays to school. Locate these on a world map for an instant wall display.

This document was prepared by the GA's **Secondary Phase Committee**
For more 'Top Ideas', and information about who we are and what we do:
<http://www.geography.org.uk/aboutus/committeesworkinggroups/secondary/>