Geography Long Term Plan 2026-2027 (Cycle B)

Geography is taught in the second half of each term.

Teaching group	Autumn 2	Spring 2	Summer 2
Mars **Reception and Year 1**	Exploring Maps (EY) What is it like here? (Y1)	Outdoor Adventures (EY) What is the weather like in the UK? (Y1)	Around the World (EY) What is it like to live in Shanghai? (Y1)
Venus **Years 2 and 3**	What is it like to live in Shanghai?	Would you prefer to live in a hot or cold place?	Why do people live near volcanoes?
Year 4	Who lives in Antarctica?	Are all settlements the same?	What are rivers and how are they used?
Year 5	What is life like in the Alps?	Why do oceans matter?	Would you like to live in the desert?
Year 6	Why does population change?	Where does our energy come from?	Can I carry out an independent fieldwork enquiry?

Notes

Mars and Venus each share teacher input within their class, with age appropriate outcomes. EYFS themes are integrated into the Mars topic. Years 4, 5 and 6 follow separate topics.

Geography knowledge and skills progression

Cycle B 2026 to 2027

EYFS to Year 6

Children learn increasingly connected knowledge of the world and become more confident in using evidence to explain it. This guide shows what they learn in Cycle B, how expectations develop from Reception to Year 6, and what teachers can look for when checking understanding.

Teaching group	Shared or separate curriculum	Progression within the group
Mars Reception and Year 1	One shared geography topic each term	Reception foundations through play, talk and practical experiences; Year 1 sequences, describes and uses simple evidence.
Venus Years 2 and 3	One shared geography topic each term	Year 2 secures KS1 knowledge and skills; Year 3 uses the same context for early KS2 explanation, comparison and enquiry.
Years 4, 5, 6	Three separate year groups with their own topics	Year 4 selects evidence and explains links; Year 5 connects several factors; Year 6 evaluates and justifies with increasing independence.

Geography locational knowledge

Children build a mental map from familiar places to countries, regions and global patterns. Revisit locations through every topic rather than treating atlas work as a separate recall exercise.

Year group	Knowledge children build	What children learn to do	Useful vocabulary
Reception	Know the school and local place names. Land and water can be represented on a map or globe.	Point to familiar places in pictures and maps; notice land and water and talk about local features.	place, land, water, map, globe
Year 1	Know the four UK countries, the country they live in and its capital. Locate Europe and Asia, and the Atlantic and Pacific; meet other continents through maps.	Locate the UK and studied places with support; connect the school locality with its country and continent.	country, capital, continent, ocean, UK
Year 2	Know seven continents, five oceans, four UK countries and capitals, and surrounding seas. Know the Equator and the North and South Poles.	Locate and name these on maps and a globe; describe a studied place in relation to them and locate the school locality.	Equator, pole, north, south, location
Year 3	Secure KS1 locations and begin locating studied countries, cities, the local county and nearby cities. Understand hemispheres and introductory latitude and longitude.	Use atlas contents and index, compare local and world maps and begin identifying distribution patterns, such as volcanic areas.	county, hemisphere, latitude, longitude
Year 4	Know selected countries and major cities in Europe including Russia and in North and South America. Know the tropics, polar circles and significant rivers and mountain ranges studied.	Locate features and environmental regions, connect location with climate and identify changes in local land use.	region, tropic, polar circle, distribution
Year 5	Extend UK counties, cities and regions; connect countries, biomes, vegetation and resources. Know the Greenwich Meridian and the relationship between longitude and time zones.	Use maps at different scales and latitude and longitude to describe location; explain broad spatial patterns.	meridian, time zone, vegetation belt, pattern
Year 6	Connect UK, European and American place knowledge with global patterns. Understand that political, statistical and physical regions use different boundaries.	Select and compare maps, explain distributions and exceptions, and apply coordinates and time zone understanding accurately.	boundary, spatial, global, scale

Core locations: Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Europe, North America, South America and Oceania; Arctic, Atlantic, Indian, Pacific and Southern Oceans. UK countries and capitals: England and London, Scotland and Edinburgh, Wales and Cardiff, Northern Ireland and Belfast. Locate the Atlantic, North Sea, Irish Sea and English Channel around the UK. Explain atlas conventions using Australia or Oceania consistently.

Geography place knowledge and comparison

Knowing a place means understanding its features, people, connections and variation. Compare defined areas and use several sources so that one image or experience does not stand for an entire city or country.

Year	Knowledge children build	What they learn to do	Cycle B application
Reception	Know familiar places and notice differences in stories and images.	Talk about a familiar feature and a feature elsewhere.	Mars local exploration and Shanghai images.
Year 1	Know that people share needs but surroundings can differ.	Name similarities and differences with a small area outside Europe.	Mars school locality and a defined Shanghai neighbourhood.
Year 2	Know human and physical features of two defined small areas.	Describe and begin explaining comparisons using maps and observations.	Venus revisits Shanghai with new evidence and greater precision.
Year 3	Know that environment and resources influence settlement and everyday life.	Explain a supported relationship and recognise variation within places.	Shanghai land use, hot and cold localities, volcanic settlements.
Year 4	Know how climate, physical setting and services shape places.	Compare features and explain how people adapt or use an environment.	Antarctica, a UK locality and a New Delhi neighbourhood; river uses.
Year 5	Know how relief, climate, resources and economic activity interact.	Explain several factors affecting regional differences and compare perspectives.	Tyrol around Innsbruck, the Mojave and the local UK region.
Year 6	Know that places change and contain competing needs and experiences.	Evaluate explanations and evidence, including boundary and data limitations.	Local population and services; UK and USA energy examples; independent enquiry.

Geography human and physical knowledge

Physical geography concerns natural features and processes. Human geography concerns people, settlement, resources and economic activity. Children move from naming and describing to explaining interactions and weighing responses.

Year group	Knowledge children build	What children learn to explain
Reception	Know names and observable characteristics of UK seasons and familiar places, including land and water features.	Describe what they notice outside and how a place or the weather changes.
Year 1	Know weather at a particular time, seasonal patterns and familiar human and physical features.	Describe daily weather and distinguish a natural feature from something built or substantially shaped by people.
Year 2	Know hot and cold locations relative to the Equator and poles; basic coastal features, settlements and changing human features.	Describe how surroundings affect life and give simple reasons for differences, without treating all places near the Equator as identical.
Year 3	Begin understanding physical processes, climatic differences, settlement choices and environmental effects.	Use a model or diagram and evidence to explain a simple process or a reason people use a place in a particular way.
Year 4	Know taught processes in the water cycle, rivers, tectonics and climate; understand settlement, trade and resource use.	Describe linked stages of a process and explain a supported relationship between people and the environment.
Year 5	Connect climate zones, biomes, vegetation, economic activity and resource distribution. Understand human causes and effects of climate change.	Explain several factors affecting land use, population, trade or environmental change and compare possible responses.
Year 6	Understand interacting physical and human systems, uneven impacts and competing interests.	Use evidence to weigh explanations, distinguish a pattern from a proven cause and justify a response while acknowledging limitations.

Cycle B develops these ideas through weather and local features in Mars; climate, Shanghai and volcanoes in Venus; Antarctic adaptation, settlements, rivers and the water cycle in Year 4; mountains, oceans and deserts in Year 5; population, energy and a local enquiry in Year 6.

Use accurate explanations: latitude affects average sunlight; Earth's axial tilt helps explain seasons. Migration includes movement within countries. Population growth and local redistribution are different. Teach climate as a long term pattern, distinct from a day's weather.

Geography mapping and tools

Children progress from picture routes and simple maps to symbols, scale, grid references, contours and digital layers. Practise and assess these tools annually within the topics.

Year group	Knowledge of maps and tools	Practical skill progression	Useful vocabulary
Reception	A place can be represented by a picture or map. Direction words help describe where something is.	Explore real and imaginary maps, recognise a familiar feature and represent a route through drawing or play.	near, far, beside, behind, route
Year 1	Know a map, globe, atlas and aerial photograph have different uses. Maps can have titles, labels and symbols.	Follow a simple route; draw a labelled sketch map; recognise landmarks from above and begin using north, south, east and west.	aerial view, symbol, label, atlas
Year 2	Know four compass points and that a key explains symbols. Maps show relative positions.	Use a prepared route, aerial view and simple key; locate continents, oceans and UK capitals and recognise a supported OS symbol.	compass, key, plan, landmark
Year 3	Know scale represents reduced distance and OS maps use standard symbols and a grid.	Use atlas indexes, digital zoom and scale bars with support; introduce four figure grid references and eight compass points.	scale, grid reference, easting, northing
Year 4	Know four figure references identify grid squares; eight compass directions are more precise than four.	Use four figure references and OS keys accurately in taught contexts, estimate distance and connect an aerial image with a map.	north east, south west, OS map
Year 5	Know six figure references give a more precise location; contours represent height and slope. Thematic maps show a selected topic.	Develop accurate six figure references, calculate distance using scale and compare map types; use digital layers and contours.	contour, thematic map, coordinate, GIS
Year 6	Know the strengths and limitations of map types, scales and data layers. Latitude and longitude differ from OS grid references.	Select and justify maps and scale; apply four and six figure references, eight points and digital mapping to analyse distributions.	resolution, layer, orientation, precision

GIS means geographical information system: a digital tool linking information with locations and allowing layers to be compared. On usual OS kilometre grids, four figure references identify 1 km squares and six figure references identify 100 m squares. Read eastings before northings. Latitude and longitude use a different system.

Geography fieldwork and data

Fieldwork is first hand investigation of real places. The same enquiry process develops from guided observation to independently justified methods and conclusions. Local fieldwork can support distant place studies, but it does not become first hand evidence about the distant place.

Year group	Question and method	Collect and present evidence	Explain and evaluate
Reception	Ask about a familiar place and answer a simple adult guided question.	Notice features, talk, draw and represent what they find. Express a preference with a reason.	Say what they noticed and begin to explain a like or dislike.
Year 1	Ask and answer a simple question about the school or grounds.	Observe a route or feature, draw a sketch map and use a simple agreed record of observations or preferences.	Describe what was found and give a simple reason for a suggested improvement.
Year 2	Recognise that there can be more than one way to investigate a question.	Use a small survey, tally, pictogram or labelled photograph; classify human and physical features with support.	Answer a question using the findings, rather than only personal preference.
Year 3	Make a supported plan and begin choosing a useful method and sample.	Use annotated sketches, a land use survey, simple measurements or questions; organise results in tables and graphs.	Describe a pattern and suggest a reason; recognise that the sample may not represent the whole place.
Year 4	Plan steps with guidance and explain why the selected method helps answer the question.	Use an agreed sampling approach, questionnaire, rating scale, photographs and numerical records appropriately.	Use results to support a conclusion, identify an exception and suggest an improvement to the enquiry.
Year 5	Develop an enquiry question and choose methods with increasing independence.	Compare numerical and descriptive data; use sampling, GIS layers and dated or live records, then select suitable charts.	Explain patterns, consider alternative explanations and identify how timing, sample or method affects results.
Year 6	Independently refine a manageable question and justify methods and sampling.	Collect and analyse a justified range of evidence; use digital tools and choose tables, maps or graphs for a purpose.	Reach a supported conclusion, explain reliability and bias, and propose a practical improvement or further investigation.

Quantitative data are numbers such as counts and measurements; qualitative data describe qualities, features and experiences, including observations and opinions. A numerical rating can still be a judgement. Choose maps, tables and graphs to answer the question; consider dates, sampling, timing and missing evidence.

The 5 strands mapped to the Cycle B topics in teaching order

Geography in Mars Class (Reception and Year 1)

Cycle B 2026 to 2027 | Geography in the second half of each term

Term and enquiry	Essential knowledge and connections	Age related application and evidence	Vocabulary
Autumn 2 **Exploring Maps (EY)** **What is it like here? (Y1)**	The school and grounds contain human and physical features. A map represents a place and can use symbols. Locate the school and recognise features on aerial photographs.	Reception: follow and represent a familiar route; talk about a feature. Year 1: draw a labelled sketch map and use observations to suggest a playground improvement. Fieldwork: a grounds walk and a simple feature record.	map, route, symbol, near, far, human, physical
Spring 2 **Outdoor Adventures (EY)** **What is the weather like in the UK? (Y1)**	Weather is conditions at a particular time; the UK has seasonal patterns but daily weather varies. Name UK countries and locate capitals with support. Record weather across seasons, beyond this block.	Reception: describe today's weather and notice seasonal changes. Year 1: keep an agreed weather record and compare observations; locate taught UK places. Fieldwork: repeated local observations.	weather, season, temperature, forecast, country, capital
Summer 2 **Around the World (EY)** **What is it like to live in Shanghai? (Y1)**	Shanghai is a city in China in Asia. Compare a defined small area there with the school locality, considering shared needs as well as different surroundings. Locate Europe, Asia, Atlantic and Pacific.	Reception: discuss features seen in images and familiar places. Year 1: name similarities and differences, locate the places and use a sketch map or photograph to support a comparison. Fieldwork: local walk linked with mapped images of Shanghai.	city, country, continent, local, similarity, difference

EYFS Exploring Maps, Outdoor Adventures and Around the World are integrated with the shared enquiries and provision. Maintain seasonal observations throughout the year and revisit maps, countries and features in each block.

Geography in Venus Class (Years 2 and 3)

Cycle B 2026 to 2027 | Geography in the second half of each term

Term and enquiry	Essential knowledge and connections	Age related application and evidence	Vocabulary
Autumn 2 **What is it like to live in Shanghai?**	Revisit Shanghai in China and compare a defined neighbourhood with a defined small UK locality. Study homes, transport, services, land use and natural features. Variation exists within both places.	Year 2: describe and begin explaining similarities and differences; use four compass points and a key. Year 3: explain a link between environment and land use using maps and more than one source. Fieldwork: local feature or land use survey.	continent, city, land use, service, comparison, settlement
Spring 2 **Would you prefer to live in a hot or cold place?**	Locate all seven continents, five oceans, the Equator and poles. Compare a named small hot locality with a cold locality and the UK. Climate is a long term pattern; latitude matters alongside altitude and other influences.	Year 2: locate hot and cold areas and explain a simple adaptation using features. Year 3: use climate evidence to explain a pattern and an exception; begin using hemispheres and latitude. Fieldwork: local weather observations compared with climate records.	Equator, pole, climate, weather, adaptation, latitude
Summer 2 **Why do people live near volcanoes?**	Volcanoes occur in patterns, often near plate boundaries. Eruptions can create hazards; fertile soil, resources, tourism or established homes may encourage settlement. People manage risk in different ways.	Year 2: locate an example, describe features and give a simple benefit and risk using images or a model. Year 3: explain a simple plate process and weigh reasons for living nearby. Fieldwork: map local settlement uses as a comparison; use secondary evidence for volcanoes.	volcano, eruption, lava, hazard, tectonic plate, settlement

Shanghai revisits Mars learning at a higher level: Year 2 begins to explain comparisons; Year 3 links land use and environment using several sources. Retain UK countries, capitals and surrounding waters, all continents and oceans, weather, feature vocabulary, four compass points and local fieldwork.

Geography in Year 4

Cycle B 2026 to 2027 | Geography in the second half of each term

Term and enquiry	Essential knowledge and connections	Age related application and evidence	Vocabulary
Autumn 2 **Who lives in Antarctica?**	Antarctica surrounds the South Pole and contains ice, mountains and a cold desert environment. It has research stations rather than a permanent resident population. Distinguish Antarctica from the Arctic and study human adaptation and environmental protection.	Year 4: locate Antarctica, polar circles and relevant oceans; explain adaptation from maps, images and accounts. Fieldwork: a local route or microclimate task practising compass points, four figure references and systematic recording; compare with polar evidence.	Antarctic, Arctic, polar, research station, adaptation, environment
Spring 2 **Are all settlements the same?**	Settlements vary in size, function, services and land use. Compare a defined UK locality with a defined neighbourhood in New Delhi, India. Physical surroundings, transport, history and decisions influence development.	Year 4: compare human and physical features and explain a supported reason for land use. Use OS keys, four figure references and eight compass points. Fieldwork: a land use survey with agreed categories, map annotations and a supported conclusion.	village, town, city, function, land use, residential, commercial
Summer 2 **What are rivers and how are they used?**	Rivers flow through drainage basins from source towards mouth. Erosion, transport and deposition shape channels. Water moves through evaporation, condensation, precipitation and collection; people use and manage rivers.	Year 4: explain linked stages using a diagram; locate UK and world rivers and connect use with physical features. Fieldwork: a safely selected local water or runoff enquiry, using agreed observations or measurements; river data can supplement direct observations.	source, tributary, mouth, erosion, deposition, water cycle

From polar adaptation to settlement comparison and river processes, use maps to explain how physical conditions and human choices interact. Rivers and the water cycle must be explicitly taught, not assumed from earlier years.

Geography in Year 5

Cycle B 2026 to 2027 | Geography in the second half of each term

Term and enquiry	Essential knowledge and connections	Age related application and evidence	Vocabulary
Autumn 2 **What is life like in the Alps?**	The Alps cross several European countries. Study a defined Alpine region around Innsbruck in Tyrol, Austria, and compare with the local UK region. Relief, altitude, climate, settlement and tourism interact; places have seasonal and diverse uses.	Year 5: locate the region, interpret contours and calculate mapped distances; explain tourism benefits and pressures using evidence. Fieldwork: local visitor or land use observations to support a regional comparison; remote Alpine evidence is secondary data.	Alps, altitude, relief, contour, tourism, sustainability
Spring 2 **Why do oceans matter?**	Oceans support habitats, food, livelihoods, trade and climate systems. Human uses can cause pollution or habitat damage. Locate major oceans and study the Great Barrier Reef as an example with competing interests.	Year 5: explain linked causes and consequences, compare views and justify a response. Fieldwork: a local litter or water environment survey with an explicit link to ocean pathways, sampling and suitable charts; distinguish local findings from global claims.	marine, reef, ecosystem, trade, pollution, conservation
Summer 2 **Would you like to live in the desert?**	Deserts receive little precipitation and may be hot or cold. Study the Mojave in the south western USA, including adaptations, settlement and resource use. Compare with the UK region and earlier Antarctic learning.	Year 5: interpret climate graphs, thematic maps and six figure references; explain several influences on land use. Fieldwork: a local environmental comparison using numerical and descriptive evidence; evaluate what the local data cannot tell us about the Mojave.	desert, precipitation, biome, vegetation, arid, resource

Use the Alpine and desert studies to deepen regional comparisons, and oceans to explain connections beyond a single place. Include a first hand local investigation and data interpretation in each enquiry where useful.

Geography in Year 6

Cycle B 2026 to 2027 | Geography in the second half of each term

Term and enquiry	Essential knowledge and connections	Age related application and evidence	Vocabulary
Autumn 2 **Why does population change?**	Population changes through births, deaths and migration. Migration can be internal or international. Density describes people per unit area and differs from total population; patterns vary within countries and over time.	Year 6: compare dated population maps and graphs; weigh several explanations without treating correlation as proof. Fieldwork: local land use or service observations alongside published data; explain sample, timing and boundary limitations.	population, density, migration, birth rate, death rate, distribution
Spring 2 **Where does our energy come from?**	Energy comes from renewable and non renewable sources. Resources, infrastructure, demand and decisions shape supply. Fossil fuel use contributes to climate change. Compare UK and USA energy examples and locate resources, the Greenwich Meridian and time zones.	Year 6: evaluate an energy choice using maps and dated data; explain costs, benefits and uncertainty. Fieldwork: a school energy or possible solar site survey using justified criteria; a short survey is a proxy, not proof of annual output.	renewable, non renewable, fossil fuel, infrastructure, emissions, time zone
Summer 2 **Can I carry out an independent fieldwork enquiry?**	An enquiry answers a manageable geographical question using evidence. Methods, sample size, timing and location affect conclusions. An effective investigation connects locational, place, human and physical knowledge with map and fieldwork skills.	Year 6: independently refine a local enquiry, justify sampling, collect numerical and descriptive evidence, use GIS or mapped layers where useful, present findings and evaluate reliability. Teacher guidance supports safe access and feasible methods.	enquiry, sampling, quantitative, qualitative, bias, reliability, GIS

Population develops interpretation of patterns; energy develops evaluation of choices; the summer enquiry brings the strands together. Teach and practise fieldwork methods before expecting independence in Summer 2.