

# REASONS TO DO FIELDWORK

DEVELOPED BY THE GA'S FIELDWORK AND OUTDOOR LEARNING SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

## BUILDS SKILLS

Fieldwork allows students to practice using equipment and techniques that previously they may only have read about. It also builds cognitive skills such as analyses of observations and data, as well as the ability to evaluate and critique one's methods.



## ENGAGES EVERYONE

Regardless of a student's age, ability, background or life goals, there is something about the real world that will interest them. Fieldwork can therefore provide opportunities for new levels of engagement with every member of your class.



## FOCUSED GEOGRAPHY TIME

Being a teacher, and therefore a professional geographer, means we live and breathe our subject everyday. Students rarely however get the opportunity to really immerse themselves in geographical learning for more than an hour at a time. Fieldwork provides that opportunity.



## THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Research using scientific enquiry gives students the means to identify current thinking, be creative in designing a research method, describe and analyse information, and to evaluate one's learning. This well-versed sequence of skills complements many scenarios in work and life.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEAMWORK

Fieldwork is rarely carried out in isolation and so stepping outside the classroom provides lots of opportunities for students to work together practically in teams. A real sense of collaboration can develop when everyone is expected to collect data individually to feed into and create a larger sample.



## CONNECTS US TO OUR LOCALE

In an era when every far-flung part of the world is reachable through online networks, it might be very easy for students to lose their connection to their own locale. Fieldwork can re-engage students with areas close to their home and school that they might otherwise have overlooked geographically.



## CREATES MEMORIES

Whether it is the planned learning experience or the unplanned (and often humorous) situations that bond a group together, time out of the classroom is special to students. Fieldwork creates memories in the subject that they recall with enormous affection.



## OPENS OUR MINDS

Fieldwork holds the key to unlocking all kinds of new experiences to students. Time spent learning in the real world shows students that places are not always the same as the ones they experience in textbooks and online - it opens their minds to new possibilities.



## SEE PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS

It is all too easy for students to compartmentalise geographical concepts into discrete, easy to manage boxes. Fieldwork opens these boxes and provides unrivalled opportunities for students to witness the myriad of connections between these concepts and ideas.



## STRETCHING OUR COMFORT ZONE

Some students can get very comfortable in a particular, and familiar location and with a pre-defined routine. Taking them to a new setting in itself can challenge their sense of place. Asking students to then work in new and unfamiliar ways can really test their growth mind set.



## BUILDS CONFIDENCE

Despite our best efforts as teachers, the classroom can be an intimidating place for some students. In the field however, new opportunities develop for quiet students to become leaders and play stronger roles in their own learning. This confidence is then brought back into the classroom.



## APPRECIATION OF THE MESS

Going outside the classroom and into real-world geographical spaces gives students a far greater appreciation of how 'messy' the world is. It allows students to search for the geography that underpins the unpredictability that we often see in data and the world around us.



## ANCHORS IDEAS

Fieldwork has the ability to anchor certain concepts in students' minds, that they may otherwise forget the moment you stop teaching them. Bringing those concepts to life in the field makes them more memorable by creating meaningful connections to the real world.



## INDEPENDENT WORKING

Older geography students are increasingly being asked to carry out geographical research in an independent manner. By doing so, students develop high-level problem-solving skills, while being challenged to think and behave like a geographer, and importantly, become critics of their own work.



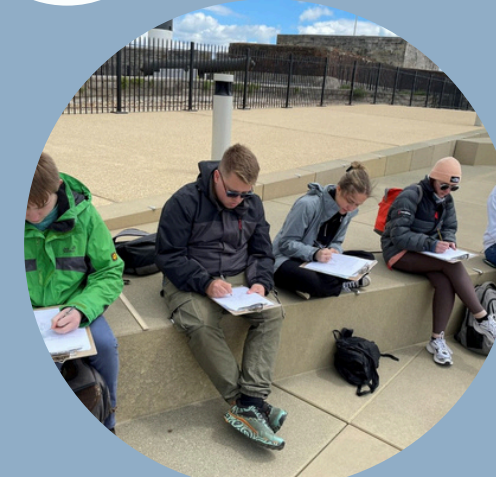
## NEW SENSORY EXPERIENCES

Only fieldwork allows students the opportunity to experience the geography of a place through all five senses. For many students this may lead to a series of 'first experiences' as well as an ability to develop a higher level of understanding of a place through those important and unrivalled encounters.



## UNFAMILIAR BECOMES FAMILIAR

There are many geographical experiences which are simply impossible to imagine or replicate in the classroom. By immersing students into geography in the real world they have a unique opportunity to make once unfamiliar ideas and concepts become more familiar and meaningful.



## FAMILIAR BECOMES UNFAMILIAR

Places and ideas that students may only have ever seen in books or on the internet can very much come to life during fieldwork. What students might not expect is how different some of those scenarios are when they are situated in the real world, making the familiar now unfamiliar.

