

# Identifying High Potential Learners in Geography

## Summary

This advice sheet contains a checklist of criteria, originally compiled by the QCDA (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency), to help with identifying learners who are demonstrating high learning potential in Geography. It is aimed at secondary school subject teachers, as well as high learning potential lead teachers.

Below is a list of the characteristics commonly shown by learners who are demonstrating high learning potential in geography. A learner need not be showing all of these to be considered a high potential learner, but would most likely be demonstrating a majority of them.

Learners who show high learning potential in geography:

### Understand concepts clearly

- can apply this understanding to new situations in order to make interpretations, develop hypotheses, reach conclusions and explore solutions
- understand geographical ideas and theories, and apply them to real situations

### Communicate effectively using both the written and spoken word

- communicate knowledge, ideas and understanding in ways that are appropriate to the task and audience (for example, writing formal letters and reports, producing brochures representing particular groups)
- learn subject-specific vocabulary, use it accurately and are able to define words

### Reason, argue and think logically,

- show an ability to manipulate abstract symbols and recognise patterns and sequences
- use and apply mathematical principles (such as area, shape, spatial distribution) and formulae (such as Spearman's rank correlation coefficient) to solve geographical tasks and problems
- identify their own geographical questions and establish sequences of investigation
- understand, and are able to explain, complex processes and interrelationships (for example, within and between physical and human environments)

### Enjoy using graphs, charts, maps, diagrams and other visual methods to present information

- transform relief shown by contour lines into three-dimensional models in their minds
- are competent and confident in using the wide range of visual resources required in geography -- aerial photographs, satellite images, maps of different types and scales, GIS systems and so on

### Are confident and contribute effectively when taking part in less formal teaching situations

- take part readily in role-play situations or simulations and enjoy contributing to outdoor fieldwork

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**Relate well to other people, showing an ability to lead, manage and influence others, appreciating and understanding others' views, attitudes and feelings**

- are willing to share their knowledge and understanding, and steer discussion

**Have a more highly developed value system than most pupils of their age**

- have well-considered opinions on issues such as the environment and the inequalities of life in different places

**Have a wide-ranging general knowledge about the world**

- have good knowledge of where places are in the world and of topical issues

**Are able to transfer knowledge from one subject to another**

- transfer their knowledge of physics, for example, to understanding climate transfer knowledge of the industrial revolution from history to help explain the location of industry in the UK

**Are creative and original in their thinking, frequently going beyond the obvious solution to a problem**

- for example, faced with the problem of storm pipes being unable to cope with sudden storm surges in an area, they might suggest taking measures like afforestation to reduce storm surges, rather than proposing technical improvements to the pipe system
- for example, faced with the problem of congested roads, they might suggest taxing cars more heavily, improving public transport or changing land use patterns, rather than building bigger roads.

## Further Information

<a href="http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100209093708/http://www.gcda.gov.uk/2249.aspx">http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100209093708/http://www.gcda.gov.uk/2249.aspx</a>	Archived National Strategies information about identification of gifted and talented learners in geography
<a href="https://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/GT-Policy.pdf">https://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/GT-Policy.pdf</a>	Example Gifted and Talented Policy for Geography
<a href="https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/teaching-gifted-and-talented-geographers">https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/teaching-gifted-and-talented-geographers</a>	Resources for teaching gifted and talented geographers from the Royal Geographical Society
<i>Meeting the Needs of Your Most Able Pupils in Geography</i> by Jane Ferretti	Book published by David Fulton with guidance on identification, planning, differentiation and support. Also has CD with lesson plans.

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