

Y3 – The United Kingdom and my region

What are the key geographical features of the UK and my region?

Overview of learning

In this unit, children will deepen their understanding of the key geographical characteristics of the United Kingdom. They will begin by revisiting the four countries of the UK and their capital cities before exploring other major settlements and learning how England is divided into regions and counties. Children will investigate how different types of settlements vary and will explore both the human and physical features of the UK, as well as those of their local area. Throughout the unit, they will use maps and atlases to study the UK's topographical features while developing their skills in using compasses, four-figure grid references, map keys, and symbols. The unit will conclude with children creating a sketch map of their local area, showing key physical and human features and applying the mapping skills they have developed.

Knowledge and understanding objectives

NC KS2: Children will:

- name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time
- use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied
- use the eight points of a compass, four and six-figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps) to build their knowledge of the United Kingdom and the wider world
- use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies

Key vocabulary

Tier 2: atlas, city, coast, county, country, culture, direction, horizontal, landmark, location, map, mountainous, peak, population, region, represent, rural, settlement, symbol, town, urban, valley, vertical, village, view

Tier 3: aerial photograph, compass, contour line, eastings, human feature, map key, moorland, northings, Ordnance Survey, physical feature, rock formation, topographical map, topography

Possible misconceptions

Possible areas of misconception include the scale of settlements and land areas, such as continents, countries, regions, and counties. Children may be confused as to why the size of settlements can be inconsistent (for example, some towns being larger than cities). They may believe that places are entirely urban or rural. Children may not understand the differences between regions within the UK and how these are influenced by historical, cultural, and topographical features. They may think that north is always at the top of a map.

Previous learning

In **Key Stage 1**, children developed their understanding of the world around them through engaging geographical studies. They learned about the geography of the world, including the seven continents and five oceans, and explored the countries, capital cities, and surrounding seas of the United Kingdom. They also studied their local area, examining its human and physical features, and used this knowledge to carry out a comparison study with Tulum, Mexico, deepening their understanding of similarities and differences between contrasting environments.

Future learning

Year 4 – Children will learn about the world and how it is represented on maps. Children will discover the different countries and capital cities of Europe, then complete a comparison study of their region and Campania, Italy. Children will learn about plate tectonics, earthquakes and volcanoes. Children will also explore their local area within a fieldwork unit. Children learn about Ordnance Survey maps and use them to learn more about their local area.

Year 5 – Children will discover the different countries and capital cities of North America and then complete a comparison study of their region and the Western region of the USA, including biomes, climate zones, vegetation belts, earthquakes and volcanoes. Children will learn about the physical processes of rivers, mountains and the water cycle.

Year 6 – Children will do an in-depth study into the economic activity of the United Kingdom. Children will learn about the three main economic sectors and how each of them impacts the economy of the UK. Using a range of case studies, children will find out how sustainable different economic activities in the UK are and the ramifications they have on the environment.

How are geographical knowledge and concepts developed in this unit?

Geographical knowledge	Geographical concepts
 Know that the United Kingdom consists of four countries, each with their own key settlements (including capital cities) and that England is further divided into regions and counties	 Recognise that culture can shape the character of a place, and that places can be understood differently by people with different cultural perspectives
 Use atlases and a range of maps to identify the locations of key settlements (including capital cities), regions, and counties, and begin to recall these locations from memory	 Understand that places are unique, with their character influenced by geography, location, and history
 Know the location of some key human and physical landmarks within the UK	 Build a sense of place of their location within the UK
 Understand that different settlements have different human features to meet the needs of the people who live and work there	 Understand that places have different characters which can be shaped by a combination of factors, including landmarks, local events and festivals, long-standing traditions, regional foods and delicacies, and other cultural practices that make the area unique
 Define and give specific examples of human and physical features	 Understand that England is divided into regions, which are further split into counties
 Use simple topographical maps to explore and understand the geography of different places	 Understand the key characteristics of, and differences between different types of settlement
 Follow and give directions using compass points, including both cardinal (N, S, E, W) and ordinal directions (NE, SE, SW, NW)	 Understand that the physical features of an area are influenced by its topography, as well as other factors such as climate, geology and natural forces
 Use a map key to understand what different map symbols mean	 Begin to understand why certain features are found in particular areas. E.g. mountains are found in areas of highland, key settlements are often found along river courses
 Read four-figure grid references to find features on a map and begin to write four-figure grid references to show the location of features	 Have a basic understanding of the topography of the UK and their region
 Describe the key topographical features of the UK	 Understand how maps help us to locate places and features, recognise patterns, and make sense of the world around us
 Give examples of key human and physical features which can be found in the UK and in their region	 Understand that human and physical processes have changed and will continue to change places
Be able to create a sketch map, which includes a key and symbols	



Unit overview

What are the key geographical features of the UK and my region?

What are the countries of the UK and the regions of England?	What are the key geographical features of the UK?				How can I use maps to understand a place?
Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	
Key question: What are the countries of the UK and the regions of England?	Key question: What are the key settlements of the UK and counties of England?	Key question: What are the human features and landmarks of the UK?	Key question: What are the physical features of the UK?	Key question: How can I use compasses, keys and symbols to read a map?	
Learning objective: I can recall the four countries of the United Kingdom and understand that England is divided into regions.	Learning objective: I can name and explain the differences between different types of settlements, and I know that England is divided into counties.	Learning objective: I can name human features commonly found in different settlements and give examples of key landmarks across the UK.	Learning objective: I can name physical features in the UK and give examples.	Learning objective: I can use a compass, key and symbols to read and describe features on a map.	
Success criteria: By the end of this lesson children will be able to name and show the location of the four countries within the UK. They will know that England is divided into nine regions and be able to show the location of some English regions.	Success criteria: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to name the three main types of settlement and describe their key features. They will be able to give examples of the key settlements of the UK. They will understand that England is divided into counties, each with its own unique character.	Success criteria: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to give examples of human features and understand that these vary between settlements. They will also be able to recognise, identify, and give examples of key human landmarks across the UK.	Success criteria: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to name and give examples of physical features found in the UK. They will also be able to interpret simple topographical maps.	Success criteria: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to use map keys and symbols to identify features on a map. They will be able to use a compass rose to follow and give directions.	
Cumulative quiz: Q1 – Q3	Cumulative quiz: Q4 – Q7	Cumulative quiz: Q8 – Q10	Cumulative quiz: Q11 – Q13	Cumulative quiz: Q14 – Q16	
Geographical knowledge:  Locational knowledge  Place knowledge	Geographical knowledge:  Locational knowledge  Place knowledge	Geographical knowledge:  Locational knowledge  Human and physical geography	Geographical knowledge:  Human and physical geography	Geographical knowledge:  Geographical skills and fieldwork	
Geographical concepts:  Place  Cultural awareness and diversity	Geographical concepts:  Place  Scale  Cultural awareness and diversity	Geographical concepts:  Place  Cultural awareness and diversity	Geographical concepts:  Space  Place  Physical and human processes	Geographical concepts:  Space	

Unit overview

What are the key geographical features of the UK and my region?

How can I use maps to understand a place?	How can I use maps to learn more about the UK?	What are the key characteristics of my region?	
Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8	Lesson 9
Key question: How can I use four-figure grid references to read a map?	Key question: What are the key topographical features found in the UK?	Key question: What are the key human and physical features of my region?	Key question: How can I create a sketch map of my local area?
Learning objective: I can use a four-figure grid reference to find a place on a map.	Learning objective: I can use a map to explain some of the topographical features of the UK.	Learning objective: I can give examples of human and physical features which can be found in my region.	Learning objective: I can create a simple sketch map of my local area.
Success criteria: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to read four-figure grid references to find features on a map and begin to write four-figure grid references to show the location of features.	Success criteria: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to describe some topographical features found in the UK. Children will be able to retrieve simple information from topographical maps.	Success criteria: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to give examples of human features which can be found in their region, including key settlements and landmarks. They will also have a basic understanding of the topography of their region and give specific examples of physical features which can be found there.	Success criteria: By the end of this lesson, children will be able to use what they have learned during the unit to create a simple sketch map of their local area, showing some of its key human and physical features.
Cumulative quiz: Q17 – Q19	Cumulative quiz: Q20 – Q22	Cumulative quiz: Q23 – Q25	Cumulative quiz: Q26 – Q28
Geographical knowledge:  Geographical skills and fieldwork	Geographical knowledge:  Human and physical geography  Geographical skills and fieldwork	Geographical knowledge:  Place knowledge  Human and physical geography	Geographical knowledge:  Geographical skills and fieldwork
Geographical concepts:  Space  Scale	Geographical concepts:  Place  Space	Geographical concepts:  Place  Space	Geographical concepts:  Place  Space

Unit overview

Stretch and challenge ideas across the unit

Children could:

- create a travel brochure or digital poster that compares two regions of the UK, highlighting their key human and physical characteristics
- make a puzzle map of the UK where each region is labelled with a key fact or landmark
- write a report explaining how regions are different and what makes each one special
- design an illustrated timeline showing how their settlement has grown and changed over time
- create a UK landmark trail using a map, compass directions, and grid references to plan a route between famous sites
- write a persuasive speech encouraging tourists to visit one of the UK's key landmarks, using geographical vocabulary
- make a mini-orienteeering course in the school grounds, giving clues as grid references
- create a "future map" showing how they think their local area might change in 50 years, based on human and physical geography

Assessment

The **knowledge organiser** can be used to support children. It could be on display, on the tables, sent home, or used to pre-teach key vocabulary or concepts.

The **post-unit test** can assess the knowledge and understanding of the objectives taught throughout the unit. It can be done independently or in small groups with a teacher and is based on 'I can' statements.

The **cumulative quiz** can be used to assess knowledge and understanding after each session and throughout the topic, providing immediate feedback and informing future planning. The quiz questions are linked directly to each objective and provide the opportunity to identify misconceptions.

Each lesson also includes small '**pit stop**' style activities, such as true-or-false or stop-and-jot activities.

Geographical knowledge key



Locational knowledge



Place knowledge



Human and physical geography



Geography skills and fieldwork

Geographical concepts key



Place



Space



Scale



Physical and human processes



Interdependence



Environmental impact



Sustainable development



Cultural awareness and diversity

