Year 4

YEAR 4 — Counties

How is the United Kingdom organised into distinctive counties, cities and regions?

Prior learning retrieved

Y3 North East region, OS symbols and 4-figure references; KS1 UK countries/capitals.

Geographical concepts

Location; region; scale; pattern; population.

Key vocabulary

county, region, population, area, life expectancy, river, town, city, topography, land use.

Careers link

Demographer • statistician • public health officer • Ordnance Survey cartographer. Gatsby BM4.

SMSC / climate & sustainability

SMSC: understand varied communities and avoid simplistic rankings from single statistics. Sustainability: relate population/land use to place where appropriate.

Why this? Why now?

Year 4 broadens pupils' regional knowledge to the whole UK and makes the relationship between country, region, county and city explicit. Data such as population introduces quantitative comparison, preparing pupils for more complex regional and international comparisons.

YEAR 4 — Counties: Learning Sequence

1. Revisit four UK countries/capitals and compare area, population and life expectancy.

2. Locate UK counties, geographical regions and rivers.

3. Deepen county/region/river location through retrieval and mapping.

4. Locate towns and cities and identify their counties.

5. Apply town/city/county location independently.

YEAR 4 — Counties: Fieldwork & Mapping

Fieldwork / geographical enquiry

Local county/city data collection can be linked to field observation; interpret tables/graphs.

Mapping / GIS progression

OS/digital maps; 8-point compass; 4-figure references; UK topographic maps.

Fieldwork and mapping are taught as disciplinary knowledge: pupils become increasingly accurate, selective and independent in how they gather, represent and interpret geographical evidence.

YEAR 4 — The Arctic Circle

Why is the Arctic distinctive, and why is it changing?

Prior learning retrieved

Y3 rainforest climate zones, Equator/Tropics, global maps and human–environment interaction.

Geographical concepts

Location; climate; environment; adaptation; perspective; change; sustainability.

Key vocabulary

Arctic Circle, Arctic, North Pole, latitude, longitude, hemisphere, glacier, iceberg, ice floe, sea ice, temperature, adaptation.

Careers link

Polar scientist • glaciologist • climate researcher • photographer/journalist. Gatsby BM4/BM5.

SMSC / climate & sustainability

SMSC: respect for Arctic communities and different perspectives. Climate: evidence of changing ice/temperature and implications at local/global scales; avoid treating the Arctic as uninhabited.

Why this? Why now?

Following tropical rainforest study, the Arctic provides a deliberate climatic contrast and introduces latitude/longitude more explicitly. Pupils also consider representation and adaptation, moving beyond feature-spotting towards geographical perspectives and environmental change.

YEAR 4 — The Arctic Circle: Learning Sequence

1. Name countries with territory within the Arctic Circle; explain seasons and their impact.

2. Understand Arctic climate using latitude, longitude, Equator and Northern Hemisphere.

3. Interpret how images convey meanings and compare viewpoints of the Arctic.

4. Explain how people adapt to Arctic environments using human/physical features.

5. Recall Arctic wildlife and explain seasonal impacts.

6. Explain why environmental choices matter using evidence.

YEAR 4 — The Arctic Circle: Fieldwork & Mapping

Fieldwork / geographical enquiry

Local microclimate comparison where useful; analyse temperature/daylight datasets.

Mapping / GIS progression

Latitude/longitude; Arctic Circle; satellite imagery; thematic climate maps.

Fieldwork and mapping are taught as disciplinary knowledge: pupils become increasingly accurate, selective and independent in how they gather, represent and interpret geographical evidence.

YEAR 4 — Rivers

How does a river change from source to mouth, and how do people use and manage rivers?

Prior learning retrieved

Y3 local fieldwork and grid references; Y4 UK counties/rivers; weather/climate knowledge.

Geographical concepts

Process; change; interconnection; land use; management.

Key vocabulary

source, mouth, tributary, channel, valley, erosion, deposition, discharge, dam, water cycle, evaporation, condensation, precipitation, runoff.

Careers link

Hydrologist • environmental engineer • civil engineer • water-quality scientist. Gatsby BM4/BM6.

SMSC / climate & sustainability

SMSC: competing uses of rivers and community decisions. Climate/sustainability: water resources, flooding and river management.

Why this? Why now?

The unit follows UK location work so pupils know where rivers are before explaining how they work. Adding the water cycle within the river-system lesson closes statutory coverage naturally. River Wear fieldwork connects physical processes to local human use and management.

YEAR 4 — Rivers: Learning Sequence

1. Locate key UK rivers using maps/atlases and 8-point compass.
2. Locate significant world rivers.
3. Identify and explain features of a river system.
4. Use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present local physical features; explicitly connect precipitation, runoff, evaporation and condensation through the water cycle (link with science)
5. Describe uses of the River Wear past and present.
6. Describe impacts of damming rivers.

YEAR 4 — Rivers: Fieldwork & Mapping

Fieldwork / geographical enquiry

River/stream enquiry where safe; width/depth/flow proxy, sketch, observations, graphing as appropriate.

Mapping / GIS progression

River maps; OS contours/symbols; 4-figure references; catchment diagrams/digital maps.

Fieldwork and mapping are taught as disciplinary knowledge: pupils become increasingly accurate, selective and independent in how they gather, represent and interpret geographical evidence.