

Exploring New Zealand

Megan Brook

New Zealand is a country that is full of geography: glacial, fluvial and volcanic features combine to create majestic landscapes, used to good effect in the 'Lord of the Rings' films. Opportunities for outdoor activities, including skydiving and white-water rafting, are prolific. New Zealand also has a fascinating but troubling human/cultural history, particularly in its Maori roots and the impacts of British colonialism.

It was with the intention of highlighting these factors that I created a key stage 3 scheme of work (SoW) on 'Exploring New Zealand'. The plan was to place this scheme at the start of year 7, to 'introduce' geography as a discrete subject at secondary school, aiming to expose students to the breadth and rigour of geography right from the first term. An additional aim was to establish a sense of 'awe and wonder' in the students about the world, expanding their horizons beyond the classroom and their local environment.

When devising the SoW, I took care to ensure that a range of human, physical and environmental themes and processes were included. I focused on popular New Zealand tourist attractions to ensure that the students remained engaged. This focus also enabled students to gather enough information to devise an extended end-of-topic project, in which they created their own tour around New Zealand; for example, students explored glacial processes and landforms through investigating the Franz Josef Glacier and Milford Sound. This focus also enabled students to investigate environmental issues such as global warming (the impacts of shrinking glaciers in New Zealand) and human issues such as the effects of overcrowding at tourist 'honeypot' sites (Milford Sound).

The SoW works towards achieving the main aims of the key stage 3 National Curriculum for geography (DfE, 2013) in these ways:

1. Students gain an insight into 'globally significant places' such as Auckland, Milford Sound and Rotorua and develop an understanding of the physical and human characteristics that make these places significant.
2. Students investigate the processes which give rise to physical and human characteristics: for example the impacts of colonialism on indigenous groups; climate change; glaciation; and tectonic processes.
3. Students gain competence in geographical skills, such as map reading, diagrams and aerial photographs, as well as persuasive writing and verbal debate.

Figure 1 gives a basic outline of the lesson topics and key questions for the SoW, along with some examples of the types of lesson activities included.

Impact on students

My school has been very pleased with how the SoW has encouraged students to engage with geographical concepts and processes that they wouldn't normally access until key stages 4 and 5. For example, in the lesson about Maori culture and whether tourists should be allowed to visit Maori areas, one student brought up ideas relating to cultural commodification. He discussed whether Maori people may feel forced to change their dances and clothing in order to suit what the tourists wish to see. We had an interesting discussion about this as a group.

The SoW also enabled students to attempt to break down some stereotypes or misconceptions regarding British colonialism. During the lesson on Maori culture, students carried out a comprehension and memory recall activity. Through this activity, students learned about how the British Government broke their promises to the Maori. By the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 the Crown provisionally agreed to honour the Maori's right to their land, but later decided to colonise that land. The students were able to discuss the negative impacts of this action as a group, and many students could link this event with ongoing disputes between the Maori population of New Zealand and those of European origin. One student mentioned in a class discussion how he didn't think that the British flag should be a part of the New Zealand flag any more. It was interesting that he picked this up independently, as it is such a big topic for debate in New Zealand and a referendum on whether or not to keep the flag took place in 2016.

A real benefit of this SoW was the ability to raise bigger geographical themes and topics that we will revisit later in key stage 3 and beyond as discrete areas of study, for instance global warming in year 8 and glaciation in year 10. Looking at glaciation, for example, the students will already have a good grounding on what a glacier is, how fiords are created, and why glaciers are shrinking. This will prove invaluable when they move on to GCSE.

Examples of student work







This student engaged well with the section on the Franz Josef Glacier and how its retreat could affect New Zealand (Figure 2): it was interesting to see how he used some of the protest signs and statements used in the school climate strikes. He appeared to understand how the shrinking of this glacier links to the 'bigger picture' of global climate change.

Another student created a 3D model to go with his written description of a suggested field trip to New Zealand (Figure 3).

Megan describes how she developed a scheme of work on New Zealand for key stage 3 that combines 'awe and wonder' with rigorous geography.



Accompanying online materials

Lesson title	Key questions	Geographical themes	Examples of lesson activities
Exploring New Zealand! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is New Zealand like? (physical and human features) • What tourist attractions are there? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place • Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group brainstorming task to assess prior knowledge. • Map from memory which plots the key physical and human features. • Video clip of top visitor attractions to establish awe and wonder.
Investigating the Bay of Islands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key features of the Bay of Islands? • What activities can you do there? • What environmental problems is the area suffering from and what are the solutions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Overfishing • Food chain disruption • Environmentalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo/video clip analysis to prompt discussion – why is this area a scuba-diving hotspot? • Photo analysis – what are the main threats to this area? • Diagram analysis – why are sea urchins taking over the Bay of Islands? • Writing a letter to Jacinda Ardern describing the problems and solutions in the Bay of Islands.
What is happening to the Franz Josef Glacier? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a glacier and how does a glacier form? • Why is the Franz Josef Glacier a tourism hotspot? • What is happening to the Franz Josef Glacier and why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glaciation • Global warming • Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of mini whiteboards – students say how they think glaciers form and later, what global warming is. • Video clip to prompt discussion – what activities can be done on the glacier? • Extended homework – students create a poster which discusses how global warming is affecting the glacier.
Milford Sound/Piopiotahi: How should it be protected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was Milford Sound formed? • What activities can you do there? • Is it being adequately protected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glaciation • Tourism • Sustainability • Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group work: how do you think Milford Sound formed? • Decision-making exercise: students choose one solution to overcrowding in/around Milford Sound out of five options and justify their choice.
Maori people: The indigenous New Zealanders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the Maori and what is their history? • What is their culture and what are their traditions? • Should tourists be allowed to visit Maori people and places? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural geography • Historical geography • The impacts of colonialism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haka – video and discussion. • Information recall/memory test quiz on the history of the Maori culture and English oppression. • Class debate: should tourists be allowed to visit Maori areas?
Exploring Waitomo Caves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are the Waitomo Caves and why do people visit them? • How did the caves form? • How could we encourage tourists to explore them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluvial processes • Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Mind movie' – story read out to the students to establish a sense of awe and wonder. • Photo analysis to work out how the caves were formed. • Travel writing.

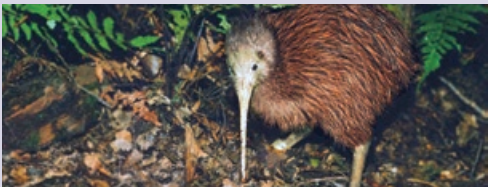

<p>Protecting the kiwi</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the kiwi and why is it important in New Zealand? • Why is the kiwi under threat? • What can be done to protect kiwis? • Environmental protection and sustainability • Carousel activity – students move around the room collecting information to fill in their crib sheets. • Debate: Is it worth protecting the kiwi bird?
<p>Whakaari/White Island, New Zealand</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is Whakaari/White Island dangerous? • Should tourists be able to visit the island? • Tectonic processes • Students use phones/computers to complete a fact file on the 2019 Whakaari/White Island eruption. • Short documentary.
<p>Assessment – designing a tour around New Zealand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use all of their prior knowledge to design a year 7 field trip to New Zealand. • Students are given options on how to present their work.

Figure 1 (continued): Outline of the SoW focusing on New Zealand.

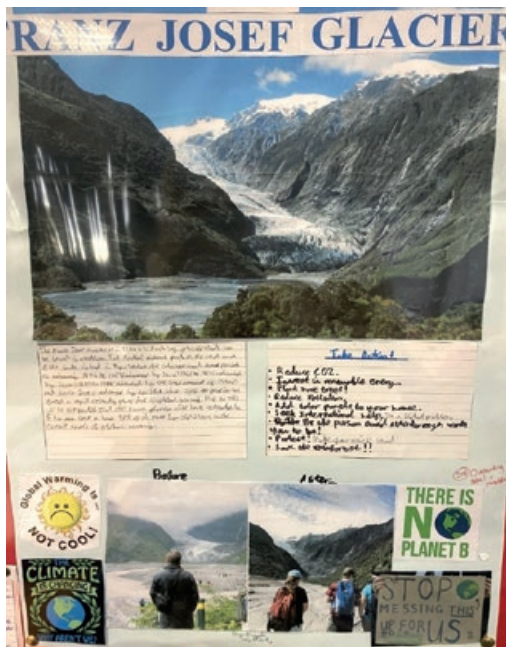


Figure 2: Student work on the retreat of the Franz Josef Glacier.



Figure 3: Student work – a 3D model to accompany a written description of a field trip to New Zealand.

Final observations

At the end of the SoW, students were asked to summarise what they enjoyed/didn't enjoy about the unit on a sticky note. The following is a good reflection of the response of the whole group of students:

I loved doing New Zealand as a topic because we watched some amazing video clips and saw some fantastic photos that really brought it to life, seeing all the colours and things to do. My favourite was the Bay of Islands. I learnt all about how the environment is being affected by humans and what they have done about it.

The sea life looks amazing. Seeing the Franz Josef Glacier and Queenstown bungee jumping has really made me want to go there with my family. There is so much to explore. It was so interesting learning about the Maori people and how they are keeping their culture alive. I loved making my project on my tour around New Zealand at the end, I'm really proud of it.

In summary, this SoW introduces students to the breadth and scope of geography as a subject, while also establishing a sense of 'awe and wonder' about the world. | **TG**

Online resources

The resources for this scheme of work are available to download. Go to www.geography.org.uk/Journals/Teaching-geography and select Summer 2022.

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References

DfE (2013) *Geography programmes of study: key stage 3*. Available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4 (last accessed 31/03/2020).