

Careers involving Geography



Thinking about studying geography at GCSE or A-level? There's a lot more to it than just volcanoes, field trips and colouring in maps, in fact there's a whole host of cool careers in geography out there.

Combining both social and physical sciences, geography is all about looking at how we affect our environment and how our environment affects us. The subject is typically divided into two main areas:

- Physical geography, which deals with climate, atmosphere, soil, streams, landforms, and oceans.
- Human geography, which looks at people, cultures, and migration.

Whether you're weighing it up as a GCSE choice, or you're about to start a degree, this subject is way more than just filler for your CV. Want to seriously impress potential employers? Fancy learning a whole range of transferable skills? Geography just might be the subject for you.

What are the benefits of geography for my career?

Okay, so you're probably wondering what careers in geography you can do if you study it at school or university. After all, if journalism students can become journalists and law students have the chance of becoming lawyers, what jobs do geography graduates and students choose? Do they become geographers?

Well, sort of.

Whilst geographers can choose to specialise in a particular field of geography, like mapping ("cartography") or researching population growth, there are a huge number of jobs to do with geography for graduates of the subject. So what exactly are your options?

'Careers in geography range from journalism and law to weather forecasting and architecture'

Tweet this to your followers

Check out our list of careers in geography to see five cool jobs a degree in the subject could help you bag:

1. Journalist



If I want to be a writer I have to study journalism or media, right? Wrong. The great thing about journalism is that there's so many different fields and areas of expertise. From politics to sport, if you're knowledgeable about a subject, you're pretty much qualified to write about it.

But how exactly does that relate to a geography degree? Although they might sound drastically different, both journalism and geography place a lot of importance on research. What's more, your geography degree might actually help you stand out from the crowd. Whilst (almost) all journalism students can write clearly, not everyone knows about soil erosion or global warming.

If you have a geography qualification and a flair for words, why not use it to your advantage and focus on a topic directly related to geography? Love exploring other cultures? You could become a travel writer. Fascinated by climate change and environmental issues? You could carve out a niche as a science journalist.

Check out our interview with Wannabe Hacks to find out more about getting into journalism.

2. Environmental lawyer

Are you passionate about the environment? Maybe you're worried about the carbon "footprint" humans are leaving on our planet. If so, you might want to consider environmental science jobs in an area like law..

Environmental lawyers typically focus on things such as climate control, energy sources, pollution, and corporate social responsibility (that's making sure businesses try to manage the impact they might have on the environment or a group of people).

Aside from a law degree, those looking to forge a career in this area will need a passion for the cause, strong research skills and the ability to analyse and interpret complex data. Do these skills sound a little familiar? They should. They're all things you'll pick up studying geography, which could make it the perfect springboard to an environmental science job.

3. Weather forecaster



Being a weather forecaster is more than just predicting rain and making hand gestures in front of a blue screen on TV. And, luckily, a geography degree can often help with the more complicated aspects of the job.

For example, weather forecasters often use their geographical knowledge (weather patterns and meteorology) to interpret local and global weather systems. Plus, they frequently rely on their soft skills (communication and data analysis) to help present weather reports in an easily to understand way.

4. Catastrophe modeller or emergency planner

Any job that combines the words 'catastrophe' and 'model' is bound to be pretty cool. Are you the type of person who prides themselves on planning for the worst and keeping cool in a crisis? Perhaps you're fascinated by hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural hazards? You might make a perfect emergency planner or catastrophe modeller.

Emergency planners typically play a key role in planning for and responding to threats to public safety. By assessing risks, analysing data and carrying out safety exercises, emergency planners can help people prepare for acts of terrorism, natural disasters and global epidemics.

Catastrophe modellers, on the other hand, are responsible for using data and computer calculations to help insurance companies assess how much they stand to lose in the event of a natural disaster. If you're good with numbers and enjoy working under pressure, this could be the career for you.

5. Landscape architect

Just because you have a science-based qualification, doesn't mean you can't go for a creative career. If you're looking for jobs to do with geography that include a design element, look no further than landscape architect.

Landscape architects are responsible for helping to design sustainable outdoor environments like parks, nature reserves and industrial landscapes. Who said science couldn't be creative?!



While a common question of those who are studying geography is, "What are you going to do with a degree in geography?," there are actually many options and potential careers for geography majors. Geography is a major that teaches students a wide-range of useful skills for the marketplace. Employers value the wide-ranging computer, research, and analytical skills that geography students bring to work as employees. When job-hunting, it's important to stress these skills you've gained during college.

While there aren't many job titles that are "geographer," there are many types of positions that fit well with a degree in geography. Think about some of the options below as you begin your job search.

Be sure to intern in any area of interests to get your foot in the door and gain valuable on-the-job experience. Your resume will be much more impressive if you have real world experience in the areas you're applying for.

Urban Planner/Community Development

Geography is a natural tie-in with urban or city planning. City planners work on zoning, land use, and new developments, from a gas station renovation to the development of whole new sections of urban area. You'll work with individual property owners, developers, and other officials. If you're interested in this area, be sure to take urban geography and urban planning classes. An internship with a city planning agency is essential experience for this type of work.

Cartographer

For those with cartography course backgrounds may enjoy work as a cartographer. The news media, book publishers, atlas publishers, government agencies and others are looking for cartographers to help produce maps. This would likely require relocation.

GIS Specialist

City governments, county agencies, and other government agencies and private groups are often in need of experienced GIS professionals. Coursework and internships in GIS are especially important. Computer programming or engineering skills are very helpful in this arena - the more about computers and languages you know, the better off you are.

Climatologist

Agencies like the National Weather Service, news media, the Weather Channel, and other government entities occasionally need climatologist. Admittedly, these jobs usually go to those with meteorology degrees, a geographer with experience and vast coursework in meteorology and climatology would definitely be an asset.

Transportation management

Like urban and city planning, there are opportunities in local government but regional transit authorities or shipping, logistics, and transportation companies look kindly to someone with transportation geography in their background and good computer and analytical skills.

Environmental Management

A plethora of environmental assessment, cleanup, and management companies exist throughout the world today. A geographer brings excellent skills for project management and the development of reports like environmental impact reports. It's often a wide-open field with tremendous growth opportunities.

Writer/Researcher

Undoubtedly during your college years you've spent time developing your writing skills and certainly as a geography major you know how to research! Consider a career as a science writer or a travel writer for a magazine or newspaper.

Teaching/Faculty

Becoming a high school or university geography instructor requires additional education beyond your undergraduate degree but it would certainly be rewarding to instill your love of geography with future geographers. Becoming a geography professor will allow you to research the world of geography and add to the body of knowledge developed by geographers.

Emergency Management

Emergency management is an under-explored field for geographers. Geography majors make great emergency managers. They understand the

interactions between humans and the environment, know about hazards and earth processes, and can understand maps. Add in a bit of political acumen and leadership skills and you have a great emergency manager. Get started in this field by taking hazard courses in geography, geology, and sociology and intern with a local emergency management agency or the Red Cross.

Demographer

For the population geographer who loves demographic data, what can be more rewarding than becoming a demographer and working for state or federal agencies to help develop population estimates and present data? The U.S. Census Bureau is one of the few entities that actually has a position titled "Geographer." Interning in a local planning agency will help in this area.

Foreign Service

Every country on Earth has a diplomatic corps of individuals who represent their home country abroad. Geographers are excellent candidates for this type of career. In the United States, one begins the process of becoming a Foreign Service Officer by taking the Foreign Service Officer Test. The work can be difficult but rewarding and you may spend years, if not your entire career, away from home.

Marketing

Along a similar vein of demography, marketing is a good career for those interested in taking demographic information and getting the word out to those who match the demographics you're searching for. This is one of the more glamorous arenas a geographer can get involved in.

Librarian/Information Scientist

Your research skills as a geographer apply particularly well to work as a librarian. If you want to help people navigate the world of information, this is a potential career for you.

National Park Service Ranger

Are you a physical geographer who needs to be outside and couldn't even consider working in an office? Perhaps a career in the National Park Service is right up your alley?

Real Estate Appraisal

Real estate appraisers develop an opinion of value for a specific piece of property. The work involves research into appropriate market areas, the assemblage of pertinent data, and the use of various analytical techniques to provide an opinion that reflects all pertinent market evidence. This multidisciplinary field incorporates aspects from geography, economics, finance, environmental planning, and law. A solid foundation in geography is essential to a real estate appraiser's success and typical appraisal tools include aerial photos, topographic maps, GIS, and GPS.