

GA Awards

The GA Awards are given for materials associated with geography in schools and colleges which are considered to make a significant contribution to geographical education and professional development. This year's Awards go to:

Gold

The Atlas of the Real World
Daniel Dorling, Mark Newman and Anna Barford
Thames & Hudson, 2008

The Atlas of the Real World is a collection of 366 maps of the world on an incredibly wide range of social, economic, environmental and cultural topics. But these are no ordinary maps! They have been digitally modified to enable each country to be presented in proportion to the data being presented. Each map is accompanied by text, rankings and graphs related to the theme. The atlas presents a truly 'different view' of the world, one which startles, stimulates questions, encourages debate and demands explanation. Is our world really like this and why? Individually the maps are interesting, but the way in which they are presented in pairs on opposite pages adds to the impact. For example, a map showing countries of origin of refugees is opposite a map of their destination countries. A map showing countries which export clothes is opposite a map showing countries which import them. *The Atlas of the Real World* illustrates the power of maps to communicate information and challenge our thinking.

The Atlas of the Real World should be in every geography classroom and in every school, college and university library. Students will find it useful to support their geographical enquiries and also fascinating simply to browse through. Teachers will be able to find maps to support almost every part of the geography curriculum. All the maps can also be found on the Worldmapper website so it is easy to download individual maps for students' investigations or for classroom use.

This attractively presented atlas is highly original and very significant geographically.

Silver

Mapland Scotland
Suzanne Hills and Chris Cromey
John E Wright & Co Ltd, 2008

Mapland Scotland has been given this award for its innovative approach towards teaching about a geographical locality. It provides schools with resources to help develop a whole-school project with a geographical theme that children will find both stimulating and enjoyable. While primarily a geographical resource, *Mapland's* learning programmes present opportunities for other key areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics, literacy and social studies, to be integrated into the project.

Mapland provides a geographical focus day for schools that can be a springboard for a whole-school project about Scotland. The product comprises a giant 180-piece jigsaw of a large scale map of Scotland (1:50,000) which when laid out covers an area approximately the size of a badminton court. In addition, two instructors are provided for the day to organise practical activities for pupils which are differentiated according to age range. Activities include grid reference, map symbols, physical and political feature and much more.

To justify the cost of *Mapland* the whole school will need to be involved. The teaching resources and activities are of high quality and will assist teachers' planning. They will be particularly helpful to members of staff who do not regard themselves as geography specialists.

Mapland provides a high-quality geographical learning environment that is fun for the children to experience.

PowerDown

Taahra Ghazi, Polly Ghazi and Joanne Price
ActionAid, 2008

This excellent resource includes a photo pack, teachers' booklet and DVD-Rom. The booklet contains a variety of lesson plans, resources and appropriate cross-curricular links to support the revised KS3 programmes of study, while the DVD contains slideshows, film clips and all the paper resources in electronic format.

PowerDown supports good quality geography teaching and learning. Learners can adopt an enquiry approach and are given ample opportunity to plan and develop ways of taking charge of their own learning both within the classroom and beyond. The focus on which types of energy use contribute most to the UK's carbon dioxide emissions ensures that young people are able to consider the positive action needed to reduce energy bills both in school and at home.

The pack is of a sturdy, robust quality. It is professionally presented and the approach will support geography teachers who are both new to the profession and those with more experience. It should have a place in every geography teacher's resource file, and as it is currently available free of charge, could not be better value for money.

See Inside Planet Earth

Katie Daynes and Peter Allen
Usborne, 2008

Although the title of this book suggests that its content will be about Earth Science – the mantle, the core, tectonic plates – this is a rich source of geographical information presented in an engaging format. *See Inside*, in fact, does not refer to the inside of the planet, but the lift-the-flap format used by the authors to convey a huge amount of information about atmosphere, climates, environments, ecosystems and issues. This is a strongly geographical book informed by the most up-to-date conclusions about the future of the planet. Issues are presented in an easy-to-understand, but not over-simplified manner, providing a clear agenda for action on global problems in a format that will appeal to young children. This is not just a book about climate change, but a source that could be used to stimulate enquiries about a range of environmental concerns, from deforestation to sustainable fishing to local action on transport and waste. It will be a valuable addition to any school's library and could provide a stimulus for group or whole-class discussion. The lift-the-flap format encourages hands-on involvement and the high quality, robust presentation will make this a long-lasting and durable resource.

Highly Commended

AS Geography for Edexcel

Bob Digby, Russell Chapman, Anna King, Catherine Hurst and Andy Owen
Oxford University Press, 2008

AS Geography for Edexcel has been written to meet the requirements of one particular GCE Geography AS specification. It is very thorough in its attention to both core and optional parts of the specification and those studying other specifications may also find it useful. The book sets out to bridge the gap between GCSE and A Level and does this well by using accessible language and by providing support to students through structured texts and bullet lists of key points. Each section is followed by structured activities and suggestions for more open investigations by students.

One of the book's strengths is the inclusion of many interesting new case studies which are described and explained well and supported by photographs, maps and graphs. The book is attractively produced and both teachers and students will be able to use this book with confidence.

Digital Worlds GIS 2
Richard Pole and Jason Sawle
Digital Worlds, 2008

With the demand for GIS work on the increase and the requirement for GIS to be a part of geography at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5, this significant package will help teachers and learners in the modern geography classroom to engage with GIS and benefit from its capabilities. Students can develop their own maps and accompanying data in a variety of ways which can then be exported into other applications such as Word or PowerPoint. Photographs, videos, web pages and GPS data can all be embedded into their maps.

The potential for young people to use GIS effectively during out of classroom learning is substantial through this resource. A real attribute is the full Ordnance Survey and vertical air coverage of the UK all available at a wide range of scales.

This is a professional piece of software and although any GIS package is never going to be simplistic, it is well designed and fairly easy to navigate once you get to grips with it. The only limiting factor is the price. Although £695+VAT and a yearly continuation fee of £250+VAT may be the 'going rate' for a GIS package, the cost will be prohibitive for many geography departments.

Made With Care: Earth Matters
David De Rothschild (Editor in Chief)
DK Publishing, 2008

Earth Matters is an encyclopaedia of ecology. It sets out to inform young people about climate change and its potential impact on both large- and small-scale ecosystems. Although it presents a particular view of the planet and its ecological fragility, it also offers positive messages of what young people can do about the issues discussed. The book is clearly intended to be a campaigning book and this refreshing honesty is one of its strengths.

Earth Matters is very attractive and informative, with stunning photographs and up-to-date data. It is likely to interest young people and capture their imaginations. While an excellent book for the library, it can also be used in the classroom to encourage young people to look critically at the viewpoints expressed and the actions suggested.

In keeping with its 'green' mission, the book has been produced as ethically and responsibly as possible. On the back cover, *Earth Matters* explains that it has been 'made with care' by using recycled paper and vegetable inks and the carbon footprint of its production has been kept to a minimum.

This encyclopaedia is beautifully produced and young people will enjoy using it.

Planet in Peril!
Anita Ganeri
Scholastic Children's Books, 2008

This book sets out to inform the reader about the adverse effect many human actions are having on our planet. It outlines the science behind global warming and how this phenomenon is affecting the Earth. As in all the *Horrible Geography* series, the book adopts a humorous style of writing in order to engage the interest of the young reader. While entertaining to read, it also carries a powerful message about the negative consequences global warming is having on physical features and living things all over the world. It is packed with interesting facts and attempts to promote the notion that we all have to take responsibility for our actions if we are to address the very serious situation our world is facing.

The book is very attractive to look at. It deals with complex issues using clear explanations in language appropriate for an upper Key Stage 2 readership. It provides children with information on how we can all do a little to help sustain our planet. The book's strength is that it deals explicitly with geographical issues that are the result of climate change. *Planet in Peril* does not merely give accounts of the negative aspects of human actions, it also outlines some positive examples of human endeavour that have successfully served to improve our environment.

This book provides an excellent account of the geographical issues surrounding global warming and is a thought-provoking and enjoyable read. It would be a very valuable resource in any classroom or school library.