



GeoPoint

Newsletter of the Association of Geography Teachers of Ireland

Happy New Year!

Fellow Geography Teachers - Welcome back! I hope this school year has got off to a good start for you. I want to thank you for your on-going support of the Association and its activities. Last year was a year of change for the Association. We adopted a new constitution, established a National Executive to replace the former Central Committee and our branches have gone from strength to strength. In addition, the Association has benefitted from TPN funding. While this has also experienced cut backs, it is vital to ensure the on-going support of the Association, particularly of our smaller branches. Equally important however, is that we develop our membership. There are approximately 2500 geography teachers in the country. The Association as a whole, has about 450 members. While not every teacher of geography teaches it as their main subject, considerably more than 450 do. I would ask that you encourage your colleagues to join the Association and attend branch events, and consider getting involved in the work of their local branch.

This year will be challenging on a number of fronts; I would like to wish you every success with your endeavours and I look forward to seeing you at our conference on the weekend of Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd of October.

Peter Lydon, President.

Leaving Certificate Results 2009

The Leaving Certificate Higher Level results in Geography for 2009 were broadly in line with previous years. With a very low A1 percentage of 3.6% and A2 at 5.1%. Further down the grades both B1 and B2 saw slight increases, with the number of B3s falling. The C grades saw little change as with the D grades, whilst E and F grades remain pretty much the same. For the purposes of comparison with other subjects which students choose for 5th year it is worth examining Geography results against these.

Higher Level	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3
Geography	3.6	5.1	8.1	9.9	12.5	11.5	11.9	10.4	7.6	5.9	6.3
French	4.8	5.7	7.8	8.6	11	11.6	12	11.4	10.3	7.3	6.2
History	6.2	6.7	8.1	9.9	12.5	11.5	11.9	10.4	7.6	5.9	6.3
Biology	7.7	8.5	8.1	9	9.9	8.9	9.1	8.9	7.2	6.7	7.2

At Ordinary Level there has been a drop in the number of A1 grades from 0.9% in 2008 to 0.6% for 2009. The A2 grade has increased from 2.5% up to 3.1%. B1, B2 and B3 are all down on last years results. C1 has decreased slightly with the number of C2 and C3 remaining much the same. The number of D grades awarded are all up on last years results, as are the number of E and F grades.

Ordinary Level	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	D1	D2	D3
Geography	0.6	3.1	2.2	7.1	13.4	15.2	18.3	14.6	10.4	6.4	4.8
French	0.2	1.4	4.5	8.6	11.8	13.2	12.6	12.2	10.1	7.9	8.9
History	9.1	9.8	7	10.2	12	9.3	9.5	10.5	7.5	6.7	5.1
Biology	1	2.6	5.2	7.5	10	11	11.3	10.5	9.6	7.8	8.4

Outline Conference Programme

Geography Now!

Friday 2nd October 2009

Friday 2nd and 3rd October 2009

Green Isle Hotel,

Newlands Cross,
Naas Road, Dublin 22.

<http://www.greenislehotel.com/map.html>

Phone (01) 4593406

Rooms rates of €59.00 are available

- 7.30 pm Registration
8.00 pm **New World Atlas**
Regina O'Keeffe, Edco
8.30 pm **Google Earth**
Sujit Tulcidas, Google Ireland
9.00pm Reception Sponsored by NST



Saturday 3rd October 2009

- 9.00 am Registration and Tea/Coffee
9.30 am Key Note Speaker
Dr. Ian Sanders, Trinity College, Dublin
'Investigating the Earth's Interior'
10.30 am Tea/Coffee Break
10.45 am Parallel Session
Aidan Punch, Director, CSO
Changing Population and Society in Ireland
Dr. David Meredith
Functional Urban – Rural Areas? Ireland's Contemporary Economic Geography'
11.45 am **Annual General Meeting**
Annual reports, Accounts, Election of President of the Association 2009-2011
12.30 pm Lunch
1.30 pm Parallel Session
Rev. Nigel Mackey, Wesley College, Dublin
'Habitat for Humanity: An Example of NGO Development Aid in Honduras'
2nd Speaker to be confirmed
2.30 pm Intermission
2.45 pm Key Note Speaker
Speaker to be confirmed
3.45 pm Post-examinations Marking Plenary

Please note that the conference programme is subject to change without notice. The conference ends at 4.45pm but will be followed by the East Central branch AGM for members of that branch.

There will be a selection of exhibitors throughout the conference and we have provided some time between presentations to facilitate this.

Please return the enclosed booking form by Monday 28th September 2009 to secure your place.

Syllabus developments in Junior Cycle Geography

Have you been wondering what's happening to junior cycle Geography? Well, Geography, along with all other subjects in the junior cycle, is currently being rebalanced.

Rebalancing and what it means

Basically, rebalancing of syllabuses involved

- updating the syllabus and removing unnecessary overlap within the syllabus with material taught at primary level, or taught in other junior cycle subjects
- lining the syllabus up with any changes at Leaving Certificate
- rewriting the syllabus to a common template
- writing learning outcomes for each part of the syllabus
- showing how the syllabus links with and develops from the Primary School Curriculum
- making minor changes to assessment.

Is that not revision of these subjects?

While this may seem a lot of change, the work is really about making space and creating time. You will still recognise most, if not all, of the elements you already teach from the current syllabus.

Who did this work?

The rebalancing has been carried out by representative NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) course committees,.

Why have the syllabuses been rebalanced?

Schools and teachers have long been of the view that the junior cycle curriculum is overcrowded. From a teacher's perspective, there appears to be less and less time to teach the subject. Students are changing; they have a wider ability range, some are learning English as an additional language and their learning styles are more diverse. These factors, along with overlap within and between the subjects, sometimes results in a lack of time to cover the course with the quality of learning engagement with students that teachers would like.

When will I have my chance to say what I think about the rebalanced Geography syllabus?

When the consultation begins, the NCCA will set up a dedicated consultation space on its website. You will be able to find it at www.ncca.ie/juniorycycle. We will encourage you to download a copy of the rebalanced syllabus, a description of the changes that have been made to the syllabus and complete an on-line questionnaire. You can do this on your own or you might prefer to discuss the syllabus with colleagues in your subject department and respond as a group. You may also have the opportunity to express your views through the Association of Geography Teachers, Ireland.

Keep an eye out on the NCCA web site for news of the consultation or subscribe to info@ncca which will keep you updated about developments in both junior and senior cycle Geography.

Janet Wallace

Education Officer, Junior cycle, NCCA

CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE

The CSO website (<http://www.cso.ie>) has to be one of the best resources available to geography teachers - and it's free.

It is constantly updated with the latest demographic, social and economic data. There's lots of tabulated data which can be used for teaching geographical skills, as well as descriptive text which aids the interpretation of a range of graphs presented in the 'current releases' section (<http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications>).

The latest data shows that the 2008 birth rate (75,065) was the highest since 1896 (75,332). Deaths in 2008 amounted to 28,192. The natural increase was 46,873.

The screenshot shows the Central Statistics Office Ireland website. The header includes the CSO logo, the text 'Central Statistics Office Ireland', and navigation links: 'About Us | News | Links | Contact Us | Gaelige'. A search bar is located on the right. Below the header is a main navigation menu with tabs for 'Home', 'Statistics', 'Database Direct', 'Releases and Publications', 'Census', 'Surveys and Methodology', and 'Students Corner'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'News Corner' with links to 'Latest Releases & Publications', 'Website Updates', 'Statistics due for Release', and 'Survey News'; 'Database Direct News' with links to 'Latest Developments' and '20 Most Recently Updated Datasets'; 'Statistics' with sub-sections for 'People and Society', 'Labour Market and Earnings', 'Business Sectors', 'Economy', and 'Environment and Climate'; 'Feedback / Customer Service' with 'Feedback' and 'Customer Service' buttons; 'Latest Releases' with a list of recent publications including 'Vital Statistics Fourth Quarter and Yearly Summary 2008 (PDF 249KB)', 'Press Release Fourth Quarter and Yearly Summary 2008', 'Irish Babies Names 2008 (PDF 132KB)', 'Milk Statistics July 2009 (PDF 570KB)', and 'Livestock Slaughterings July 2009 (PDF 198KB)'; and 'Special Topics' with links to 'Business Statistics Seminar - 11 Nov 2009 NEW', 'Memorandum of Understanding between the CSO and Revenue NEW', 'Census 2006', 'Standard Reports on Methods & Quality NEW', 'Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC)', 'Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS)', 'SPAR - An Examination of Data Holdings in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners NEW', 'Standards and Guidelines: Volume 1 - Quality in Statistics', 'Statement of Strategy 2008 - 2010 (PDF 1.1MB)', 'Ireland - North and South: A Statistical Profile 2008', 'An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh Scéim na Gaeilge 2007 - 2010 (PDF 144KB)', 'CSO Customer Service Action Plan 2007 - 2009 (PDF 113KB)', 'Code of Practice Peer Review Report for Ireland', 'Measuring Ireland's Progress 2008', 'Statistical Yearbook of Ireland 2008', and 'CSO Classification'. At the bottom, there is a 'StatCentral' logo and the text 'The Portal to Ireland's Official Statistics'. A footer contains copyright information: '© CSO | Freedom of Information | Sitemap | Accessibility | Privacy Statement'.

Geology Matters

The latest issue of the GSI newsletter, Geology Matters (Issue 9), has now been published. Amongst the topics explored in this issue are - Landslides Seminar, Carbon Capture & Storage, INFOMAR update, New Products and Diary Dates. Please follow this link to access and download <http://www.gsi.ie/Newsletters/>

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