

The use of the attainment level descriptors for Geography

There are ten levels of attainment level descriptors. Level Four is equivalent for Year One and two in Primary school and each level then progresses at two yearly intervals.

Each strand of learning has a set of attainment levels which describe the progression in student learning. There are ten attainment level descriptors that cover the full range of attainment of ALL students. The attainment level descriptor Four is indicative of what the average student can learn by the end of Year Two in Primary education. Each subsequent level represents the range of attainment that an average student can be expected to achieve every two year years. Attainment levels one, two and three are indicators for students who may not attain level four at the end of Year Two. Attainment level ten is for those students who significantly exceed the expected level of attainment at Form Five.

The attainment level descriptors are observable statements of learning outcomes that students can attain. There are approximately eight of these statements in each attainment level descriptor. The statements are referred from the Teaching Objectives Framework and indicate a sample of what can be expected to be learned. Once a student has attained the majority of the learning outcome statements in an attainment level descriptor they are assumed to be working within the next level. The attainment level descriptors for Geography are:

Strand 1: The Environment – Natural and Human

This strand is concerned with:

- the landscapes and aspects of the environments which have been formed by natural processes (geomorphology and meteorology)
- the people who live in different environments, their activities and the features which they have created.

These physical and human processes cause change and development in places and can be used to explain patterns and distributions.

Attainment Level 1

Students encounter activities and experiences such as weather elements, rain, cold, etc. Student follows a slow moving object. Student watches hand when it moves. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example, by tipping a container in order to pour out its contents. Student makes sound when distressed. Student shows interest in adults. Student use emerging conventional communication. They vocalize sounds similar to models immediately and imitate at least one invisible gesture. They attempt to activate an object by giving it back to adult. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time: e.g. uses a stick to get an object without demonstration.

Attainment Level 2

Students extend their skills to help them explore the world. They become aware of weather conditions. They start to recognize and to make observations about simple weather elements. Students experience the concept of hot and cold through every day items. They associate dressing up for the different weather conditions. Students encounter different environments within the school to consolidate their awareness of human and physical features in their daily surroundings e.g. walking around the school. They start to identify the use of different areas such as yard, office. They follow arrows or a coloured line that indicates a route to locate areas, for example, go to head's office or assembly hall. They consolidate a sense of direction following verbal prompts and hand instruction.

Attainment Level 3

Students observe and start to recognize some weather elements. They experience and identify rain, wind and temperature changes e.g. put up umbrella when using watering can to simulate rain, using a rubber glove filled with cold water and then filled with warm water to indicate temperature difference. Students become aware of the differences between the physical/natural and human/made features of places. They use pictures or symbols to show familiar places and what they are for, e.g. the school, the church. They start to realize that a simple plan can be used to identify the location of, for example the teacher's desk on a simple class plan. Students start to communicate their preferences about the physical/natural and human/made features of places e.g. when asked what they prefer or like, they point to a particular feature example, the sea or public garden. Students recognize the physical/natural and human/made features of places, e.g. start to identify familiar buildings such as their home and school. They start to understand that different buildings have different uses.

Attainment Level 4

Through oral expression and pictures, students recognise some physical features of their locality. They identify and talk about a limited range of places and features in the locality, namely the school, the surrounding area and their neighbourhood. They start using simple directional language such as *up, down, forward, backwards*. Students attempt to describe orally simple picture maps not to scale. They observe and begin to comment about some natural cycles that are evident in everyday life e.g. night (or) day, rainy (or) sunny. They use resources that are given to them to ask and provide simple answers to questions about places around them. They use their own observations to ask and provide simple answers to questions about some places around them.

Attainment Level 5

Students can recognise and suggest some simple descriptions of the common features of the Maltese countryside and of a typical Maltese urban settlement. They begin to observe how physical features give places their character. They use resources that are provided to them like photographs, models, sketches and drawings to answer questions about the Maltese countryside and a few selected urban areas. They carry out simple tasks such as collecting soil samples and stones and observe living things in their habitats. They use this information and their own observation to respond to questions about natural environments. Students can differentiate between jobs directly related to tourism and those

that are indirectly related. They can suggest ways how their locality can contribute towards improving the tourism industry. Students begin to use simple but appropriate geographical vocabulary. They record and communicate experiences and observations using simple drawings, displays, models and sketches.

Attainment Level 6

Students become aware that on a globe one can note a number of continents and oceans. They recognise that continents have different shapes. Students show their developing knowledge of the location and names of urban areas in Malta and capital cities of the neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean. They use globes and maps to become familiar with the location of these towns and cities. They recognise that different places may have both similar and different characteristics that influence the lives and activities of people living there. They are familiar with a few main national symbols characterising some Mediterranean countries, e.g. Colosseum (Rome) and Pyramids (Egypt). Students begin to associate their geographical knowledge with the places mentioned in the news. Using both Internet and other publications they can research about foreign countries, comparing their physical characteristics and their human elements with those of the Maltese Islands. They can observe and record varying weather conditions using appropriate vocabulary and simple equipment in response to tasks set by the teacher. They use skills and sources of evidence to explore how the weather influences the lives of people and how seasonal changes affect people and plants in the locality.

Attainment Level 7

Students show knowledge and understanding of aspects of the geography of Malta and the Mediterranean as part of the wider world by the use of co-ordinates on atlas maps. They demonstrate orally and in writing, through pictures and maps an understanding of the characteristics of a range of physical features and of human activities within these places. They describe how tectonic activity changes the features of places and affects the lives of people living there. They explain the physical processes at work in the formation of landscapes including sedimentary rocks, rock strata, underground water and fossils. They recognize and describe simple climatic and geomorphic patterns and processes associated with desert landscapes and analyse why deserts are difficult environments for human, animal and plant survival. They explore the major features of the built environment by focusing on settlement functions and patterns of some localities in Malta. They use geographical terms to communicate their findings on fishing and tourism in Malta. Students learn about and interpret their location or locality relative to other places through mapping skills including scale, compass points, direction and 4-figure grid reference. They identify features on maps through symbols and keys and use maps at different scales to find their way around and plan journeys. Students use a range of geographical skills including equipment and ICT to observe weather phenomena, display simple weather observations in an organised way using climate graphs and appropriate vocabulary as well as to integrate their understanding of rainfall with the hydrological cycle.

Attainment Level 8

Students use appropriate geographical vocabulary to offer detailed descriptions and explanations of patterns of weather and climate in a European-scale context. They use appropriate sources including ICT to examine satellite images and weather maps to investigate weather patterns. They suggest relevant geographical questions about the causes of floods and how people contribute to their frequency and intensity. Students describe in depth processes of weathering, erosion and deposition in river valleys and coastal areas in relation to studies of a range of places at more than one scale. They recognise some features produced by these processes. Students use a range of geographical skills such as topographical maps with 6-figure grid reference and contour lines, tabulated data and images to help them investigate, recognise and describe geographical patterns and processes related to population distribution and settlement location. They recognise and describe how these processes may lead to similarities and differences between places in more economically developed countries (MEDCs) and less economically developed countries (LEDCs) and in the lives of people living there. Through role play, illustrations and video-clips students explore the characteristics of different forms of transport and by means of case studies analyse how new transport developments increase accessibility. Students present and communicate their findings, ideas and information using appropriate terminology, maps, visual images and a range of graphical techniques and ICT.

Attainment Level 9

Students describe and begin to explain interactions within and between the physical processes which cause earthquakes and volcanoes and how people respond to them. They explain how these interactions create geographical patterns of tectonic activity and help change places and environments in 'active zones'. They research case studies of specific volcanic eruptions and earthquakes to illustrate the devastating effects caused by these hazards and begin to explain why people choose to live in these zones as well as suggest appropriate planning strategies to save lives. They analyse the main factors which affect climate and the main features which constitute an ecosystem. Students explore some examples of the inter-relationship of climate, natural features, flora, fauna and human life in different environments in some main climatic regions of the world. Students construct and use plans and maps and apply map skills accurately to obtain information about volcanoes, earthquakes and ecosystems. They begin to suggest relevant geographical questions, select and use appropriate skills and ways of presenting information to help them make connections. Independently they use primary and secondary sources of evidence such as statistical data, newspaper extracts and brochures to find about global trends in tourism and to realise the importance of tourism on a worldwide scale. They present their findings both graphically using a range of techniques such as sketch maps and graphs and in writing with ample and pro-active use of ICT. They present conclusions that are consistent with the evidence.

Attainment Level 10

Students show and apply knowledge and understanding of a wide range of places, environments and issues at different scales. They explain a wide range of physical and human processes and investigate the interaction within and between these processes. They evaluate sources of evidence including the use of ICT to explore a number of physical and geomorphic processes. They analyse, synthesise and interpret a range of geographical information to investigate the patterns and processes associated with weather, climate and examine natural systems and cycles such as rocks, the development of river valleys, coastal and other landscapes. They describe in detail how these cycles work and how the processes of erosion, transportation and deposition shape the landscape and create new landforms. They also use topographical maps at various scales to identify and recognise the features produced by these physical processes and apply their knowledge to explain relationships and interactions between people and the environment. Students apply a variety of geographical skills and tools such as maps, atlases, statistical data and even problem-solving skills to describe spatial patterns and geographical processes related to global population issues including density, distribution and change (including urbanisation and migration), settlement and industrial location. They work independently to plan their own investigations (e.g. designing questionnaires) and fieldwork activities (observe, measure, extract and record data) and communicate findings, ideas and information in a coherent way using extended geographical terminology.

Strand 2: Management, Conservation and Sustainability

This strand outlines how geography can foster the student's appreciation of different environments and his/her sense of responsibility for their conservation and enhancement. This strand is concerned also with environmental issues ranging from matters of local concerns to global environmental problems encouraging the student to appreciate the need of promoting sustainable development.

Attainment Level 1

Students encounter activities and experiences such as being taken near the sea or in the countryside. Student follows a slow moving object. Student watches hand when it moves. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, for example, by tipping a container in order to pour out its contents. Student makes sound when distressed. Student shows interest in adults. Student use emerging conventional communication. They vocalize sounds similar to models immediately and imitate at least one invisible gesture. They attempt to activate an object by giving it back to adult. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time: e.g. uses a stick to get an object without demonstration.

Attainment Level 2

Students are aware that there are different environments. They sort pictures about different environments. They show preference for different people and environments and will start to answer simple questions, for example, whether a place is clean or dirty. They are aware that people can affect the environment, example by when they leave paper and objects lying about. They sort pictures of environments according to whether they are clean or dirty. They recognize and are aware of the difference between natural (rural) areas and urban areas. They can look at pictures of, for example, Comino and of Valletta and notice the difference. They are also aware of noise pollution.

Attainment Level 3

Students recognize and may make very basic descriptions of some features of the Maltese countryside and coastal areas as well as of the urban environment. They use resources that are provided to them like photographs and drawings to answer questions about the Maltese countryside and a few selected urban areas. They are aware of their role in caring for the environment. They can look up pictures showing people caring for the environment e.g. planting trees. They consolidate their awareness about the relationship of human activities and environment care by looking at pictures and photos of areas that have changed within a few years. They become aware that there is a link between quality of life with causes and consequences of environmental issues, example drinking dirty water or swimming in polluted water make you sick. They associate pictures of consequences of environmental issues such as death of birds and oil spillage disasters in oceans.

Attainment Level 4

Students use a range of secondary sources to recognise how people can bring about changes to the environment. They use first-hand enquiry to identify how people continually try to control and adapt to their environment, in the process affecting the same environment. They express their views on attractive and unattractive features of the environment around them. Students recognise how altering (changing) physical features in a landscape can have pleasant and unpleasant consequences, e.g. when a field is built up. They start becoming aware that we need to make efforts in order to have pleasant environments where we can have a good time and where we can grow up healthily. They suggest how spoilt landscapes in their immediate environment can be improved by simple concrete actions.

Attainment Level 5

Students show their knowledge and understanding of their local environment, namely school, home and their town/village. They show awareness of some difficulties people may encounter when trying to keep environments clean and healthy. Students appreciate the attributes of the local environment through photographs, drawings and out of school visits. They express their views in simple sentences and drawings and offer some reasons why we need to take care of the local area, village and the countryside. Through outings they develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of and enhancing the environment. They use this information and their observations to help them ask and respond to

questions on strategies for making the local area safer and a more pleasant place to live in. Students begin to classify environments as safe or unsafe. They can propose solutions to change 'unsafe' places into 'safe' ones. They propose ways how safe environments can proceed to be embellished. Identify different aspects contributing towards healthy environments of seaside, countryside and town. They use richer geographical vocabulary to lobby for action.

Attainment Level 6

Students recognise that people continually seek to improve and sustain environments. They show their developing knowledge on the causes of and possible solutions to local and national environmental issues related to solid waste management. They begin to account for their own views about the generation of waste and waste disposal and recognise ways in which people try to manage it for the better. Students ask and respond to geographical questions while undertaking tasks set by the teacher to develop a sense of responsibility and their role as environmental wardens (carers). Students suggest ways how distinctive features of the Maltese Archipelago can be retained and conserved, e.g. rubble walls of the Maltese countryside. They recognise that different countries may have both similar and different characteristics that influence the lives and activities of people living there. Students identify common environmental problems we share with one or two Mediterranean countries. Use ICT to learn about environmental problems facing humanity. They identify some impacts that extreme weather can have on the environment. Learn how to apply their geographical knowledge to news items.

Attainment Level 7

Students show their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to studies of a range of factors that have an adverse effect on the environment. Students carry out practical investigations and by the use of traffic counts, surveys and various other secondary sources, they investigate some ways by which transport affects the environment. Drawing on their knowledge and understanding, they make suggestions as to how traffic problems can be tackled in urban areas. Through debates, role play, discussion and research work students identify some of the causes of over-fishing as well as the benefits and negative effects of aquaculture. They select and begin to evaluate sources to present evidence for their investigation on the deterioration of ground water reserves and suggest plausible solutions for sustainable water management. They show genuine concern and give evidence of their improved lifestyles. Students fully realise why tourists visit Malta. Drawing on this knowledge they suggest relative geographical questions in relation to the positive and negative impact to the economy and environment of the tourist industry in Malta. They offer reasons for their own views about such environmental issues and recognise that other people may hold different views. Students can communicate their findings, ideas and information using appropriate geographical terminology, maps, annotated photographs, diagrams and ICT to develop and present their understanding of such environmental issues.

Attainment Level 8

Students analyse the impacts of quarrying on the natural environment and describe ways in which a disused quarry may be restored. They become aware of the species that are becoming endangered and the causes and consequences of industrial pollution. Students value the importance of the Earth's renewable and non-renewable resources and the urgent need to invest in alternative sources of energy to combat climate change. Students recognise how conflicting demands on different types of

environment may arise and describe and compare different approaches to manage these environments sustainably. They appreciate that different values and attitudes, including their own, result in different approaches, which have different effects on people and places. Students extract information from the internet, illustrations and walkabouts in their own town about urban problems arising out of traffic, pollution, crime, vandalism and waste management. Drawing on their knowledge and understanding they suggest relevant geographical questions and appropriate sequences of investigation of these environmental issues. Through individual research and investigations students make suggestions as to how traffic problems can be tackled in urban areas. They use effectively a range of skills and select a range of sources of information including the internet with confidence to establish evidence for their investigations. They present their findings in a coherent way and reach conclusions that are consistent with the evidence.

Attainment Level 9

Students collect and record information from the web, illustrations, video clips, climatic graphs, maps and other secondary sources about three different world biomes and recognise and understand complex relationships between people and the environment, identifying current problems. Students recognise that the development of the tourist industry can bring benefits to the local people and at the same time may cause adverse environmental effects. Students realise and explain conflicts between different land users in certain attractive areas. They offer informed explanation of the viewpoints of different groups and suggest ways by which conflicts of interest might be resolved, showing awareness of some of the complexities of compromise. Students begin to evaluate existing policies for managing the impact of these environmental issues to ensure sustainability. They identify geographical questions and establish their own effective sequence of investigations into tourism studies. Students use the internet to design brochures and write letters of protest on new tourist developments in attractive areas. Drawing on their knowledge and understanding students plan and compile their own questionnaires on the attractions of the local tourist industry and to identify the problems created by mass tourism. They suggest possible solutions how tourism can be managed sustainably. They use different appropriate statistical, graphical, cartographic and verbal skills to help them present their information, make conclusions and to present their findings in a coherent way.

Attainment Level 10

Students show and apply knowledge and understanding of a wide range of environmental issues at various scales. They explain how places change due to various human activities such as tourism, agriculture and industry, identify trends and describe how different land uses impact the environment. Students investigate environmental issues such as soil erosion, urbanisation, over-fishing, sea and water pollution, and the generation of waste, and recognise how environmental change leads to conflicting views about management and different interpretations of sustainability. They make informed judgements about these issues, develop and reflect on their own views and opinions, evaluate existing policies and finally design policies in order to resolve conflicts and ensure sustainability. Drawing on their knowledge and understanding on sustainable development they plan their own sequence of investigations and suggest relevant questions on how to protect threatened environments and ecosystems. They use appropriate techniques and technologies such as satellite imagery, maps, data and the internet to analyse and interpret evidence on current issues such as climate change and global warming in order to assess bias and the reliability of geographical evidence to weigh arguments, and to make decisions. They carry out independent research and fieldwork activities on environmental issues in the locality and communicate their findings, ideas and information