

GA PUBLISHERS' AWARDS 2010

Silver

GCSE Geography OCR A Students' Book

Edited by John Widdowson

Oxford University Press, 2009

£20.00

While books written for many of the GCSE specifications focus on course content and 'training' for examination, this book, written for the innovative OCR A specification, does much more. The fact that the specification itself is radically different in terms of content and approach inevitably means the book starts with an advantage, one that allows it to cover themes that are fresh, exciting and relevant and provides the scope to include completely new content and resources.

One excellent aspect of the book is how it encourages students to make connections: between one theme and another; between the themes and their own experiences; between their everyday choices and local and global implications of these choices. Students are invited to make these connections through discussion, through their own geographical enquiries, and through some original activities. There are suggestions for investigating geographical issues in a range of refreshingly diverse ways.

The book's structure and presentation encourage an enquiry approach. Each section is introduced with some key questions, while activities require students to study the wide range of secondary data – maps, adverts, photographs, statistics and extracts from newspaper and books. Teachers are actively encouraged to adapt the resources and ideas presented to suit their own local contexts.

This textbook helps students to make sense of their world and to understand current issues that affect their lives. As well as 'covering' the syllabus and the demands of assessment, this book is educational in that it stimulates, excites and informs. It introduces young people to geographical ways of thinking which could transform the way they see and understand the world long after they have been assessed for the course.