



## Why Study Geography? by Alan Parkinson

Reviewed by Kieran Bonin, Orange High School

If I had a dollar for every time a student has smartly asked throughout my short career 'Why do we have to study Geography?', I'd be able to afford that trip to South America I've been dreaming of.

While that year 9 class, period 6 on a Friday can sometimes be difficult to inspire, the book 'Why study Geography' by Alan Parkinson has reconfirmed my own love for the subject that is Geography. The book itself is targeted at a UK market for students and their parents considering a career in Geography, answering questions such as 'Why you should study Geography beyond school?' and 'What careers you can do with a Geography degree?'. Despite some chapters being very UK focused the book itself is still a useful tool for teachers and students to have in their repertoire.

The holy grail for any Geography teacher is getting a Senior Geography class up and running. Whilst a trip to the Great Barrier Reef may be a draw card for some, often students dismiss the subject because they don't understand what a Geographer does. With a student once telling me they didn't pick senior Geography because they wouldn't like making maps for a living, any Geography teacher wanting more students picking their subject need to be across all options beyond school. This is where this book holds its strength. Alan Parkinson has gone into great levels of detail using quotes and examples across a range of high-profile Geographers, academics, and politicians. One example I now use to start my year 11 course with a quote by Steve Brace from the Royal Geographical Society stating that a Geography degree 'experiences above average rates of graduate employment and earning', with female Geographers earning 10% more than average. I then continue to show my class some examples from the book about people using Geography in real life. I like this as it shows that Geography is more than just a school subject. I



am stealing some of the books quotes and examples when it comes to subject selection night.

Besides helping students consider Geography as a career option, the book itself has been useful in providing resources that I can use in my own classroom. Chapter 2 provides a vast range of geo-spatial websites, tools, and idea such as earth.nullschool.net and Windy for weather, Worldmapper for cool cartograms and maps, Climate Stripes for climate change data and other free spatial

software ideas you could include in your lessons. The final chapter provides a range of books, documentaries, and podcasts to enhance your geographical knowledge. Two that I did not know before reading this book that I now use was 'Time for Geography', a website with short well-made videos about key geographical concepts and the podcast series 'Ask the Geographer' which is currently tickling my geographical itch in my spare time.

As highlighted previously not every chapter is completely relevant, as someone who doesn't know the difference between a GCSE or A Level subject (used in the UK), some chapters lost me. However, keeping in mind this book was not made directly for an Australian market this shortfall was easily overlooked.

The age old joke that Geography teachers just get students to colour in does make me think, do people really know what Geography is? For any new teacher to Geography or an older one wanting to freshen up their perspective on 'Why study Geography' this book is an easy read that like it did for myself will confirm your passion for Geography.

ABOVE: The book's author Alan Parkinson. Source: <https://www.kingsely.org/mr-parkinson-releases-new-book-entitled-why-study-geography/>