

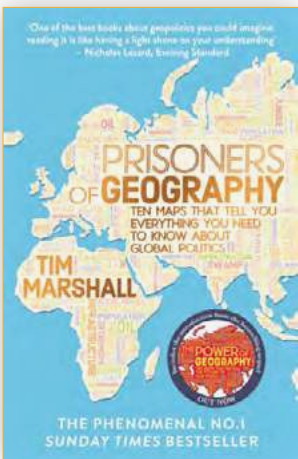
Geopolitical case studies

Alex Pentz, Roseville College

Tim Marshall is an award-winning journalist who has studied international affairs for over thirty years. His two bestselling books *Prisoners of Geography* and its sequel *The Power of Geography* provide detailed insights into ten geopolitical case studies each.

Each chapter opens with a political map of the chosen country or region, followed by an exposition of the geographical history, strengths, and vulnerabilities of the case study. Both books mainly focus on the importance of geography in determining the defense strategies of each country, and their political relationships with neighboring regions. Marshall does a particularly good job in making the importance of physical geography come to life – it is fascinating to learn about how physical features are integral to a country's success and to the outcome of war and defense, and this is a unique feature of these books.

The following case studies are explored in each book:

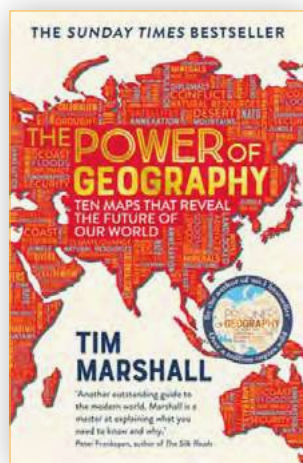


Prisoners of Geography

- Russia
- China
- USA
- Western Europe
- Africa
- The Middle East
- India and Pakistan
- Korea and Japan
- Latin America
- The Arctic

The Power of Geography

- Australia
- Iran
- Saudi Arabia
- The United Kingdom
- Greece
- Turkey
- The Sahel
- Ethiopia
- Spain
- Space



relationships with India, Taiwan and Hong Kong which is both timely, and would engage students. The chapter on Russia is now a little outdated but does provide compelling analysis of Putin's strategy and the reasons for the invasion of the Ukraine. The section in *The Power of Geography* on the Sahel was also very interesting in exploring future refugee crises due to political instability. Australia's chapter as well provided a great overview of the key natural resources that we have used to spur economic success, whilst also exploring some of our key defense weaknesses.

I would mainly recommend using these books for professional development. They both provide unique insights into particular countries or regions and would be useful as additional background reading before teaching on any of these cases. Marshall does an excellent job in summarising an extensive amount of information in an engaging way, and each chapter provides a thoughtful summary of how each country has been shaped by its geography. For passionate geography students wanting to explore more, these books would be a great read for them.

Additionally, each chapter could be used as a stand-alone reading for extension students or senior students if they are focusing on a particular country within their study of Geography. These chapters could be used within the classroom but are complex and would require considerable unpacking alongside students. There is a considerable amount of assumed knowledge within some of the case studies which students will need help grasping. If being used with students I would recommend using them as a basis for the case study or unit, and then spring boarding other activities off sections of each chapter to avoid the reading becoming too dry or challenging for students. These books would work best with units centered around Political Geography (Year 11 or Elective Geography) or Human Wellbeing (Stage 5). I think students would particularly enjoy examining the future predictions Marshall makes about conflict, resource use and political relationships.

Overall, both of Marshall's books are an excellent resource in the geography classroom- for teachers and students alike.