

Subject	Year 7 Threshold Concepts	How to support students' learning
Geography	Summer Term 2027	
The Circle of Life	Lesson 1: What is an ecosystem? ✓ To describe the global distribution of ecosystems. ✓ To outline key characteristics of different biomes. ✓ To describe and explain processes operating within ecosystems ✓ To explain why soil is 'super'.	Watch an episode of Planet Earth II or Our Planet on Netflix and identify the ecosystem shown, the plants and animals living there and how living things depend on each other. BBC Earth clips: https://www.bbcearth.com Our Planet resources: https://www.ourplanet.com Use the interactive biome maps to explore key characteristics of different global ecosystems: https://www.biointeractive.org/classroom-resources/biomeviewer https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/mapmaker-biomes/ Mini Ecosystem Hunt! Go outside and investigate a local ecosystem such as your garden, a local park, woodland or pond. Record the living things you find, non-living features, food chains you can spot and take photos or draw sketches. Soil Detective! Compare soil from different places (e.g. garden, flowerpot, park). Observe colour, texture and moisture. Design a poster titled: "Why Soil is Super!". Include information about nutrients, plant growth, water storage, habitats for organisms and carbon storage. Useful website: https://www.soils.org/discover-soils

Lesson 2: What is happening to Madagascar's tropical rainforest?

- ✓ To learn facts about Madagascar's physical geography.
- ✓ To describe the location of Madagascar's tropical rainforest.
- ✓ To identify the characteristics of tropical rainforests.
- ✓ To explain how plants and animals are adapted to tropical rainforests.
- ✓ To investigate deforestation in Madagascar.

Choose one Madagascan species and create an information card. Examples: Ring-tailed lemur, Indri, Fossa, Panther chameleon or Aye-aye. Include information about its habitat, diet, adaptations and conservation status.

Useful website: <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org>
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals>

Using **Google Earth** - find Madagascar, measure how far it is from the UK and locate major cities and rainforest regions.

Research: Why are Madagascar's rainforests being cut down? What happens to animals when forests disappear? What is being done to protect them?

Useful websites: <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org>

Persuasive Writing - Write a letter to the Madagascan government or a conservation charity explaining why rainforests should be protected, why biodiversity is important and what people could do to help.

Read a Nature Book! Suggestions:

- *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell
- *A Life on Our Planet (Young Readers Edition)* by David Attenborough
- *National Geographic Kids Almanac*

Wildlife Photographer Challenge - Take photographs of local plants, insects, birds and habitats. Create your own mini "Planet Earth" photo gallery.

	Lesson 3: What are some of the distinctive characteristics of Antarctica and the Arctic? ✓ To outline the difference between Antarctica and the Arctic. ✓ To explain why polar regions are so cold. ✓ To explore polar animal and plant adaptations. ✓ To assess the opportunities and risks with tourism in Antarctica.	Watch a documentary about the polar regions and make notes on the differences between Antarctica and the Arctic. Recommended documentaries: Frozen Planet (BBC), Frozen Planet II (BBC) and Our Planet: Frozen Worlds (Netflix) Useful websites: https://www.bbcearth.com , https://www.ourplanet.com Why Are the Poles So Cold? Research and create an explanation of why polar regions receive less solar energy than other parts of the Earth. You could include the angle of the Sun's rays, ice and snow reflection (albedo) and long polar nights. Present your findings as a diagram or a comic strip. Polar Plant Investigation Research plants that can survive in the Arctic or Antarctica. Find out what species grow there, how they survive harsh conditions and why there are so few plants. Create a mini fact sheet with pictures and key facts. Tourism Debate Investigate tourism in Antarctica. Create a table showing benefits (e.g. supports scientific awareness, brings income to tour operators) and risks (e.g. pollution and disturbance to wildlife) to help you with your arguments. Useful websites: https://www.antarctica.gov.au and https://www.iaato.org Persuasive Writing • Create a travel brochure encouraging visitors to Antarctica. • Write a newspaper article arguing against tourism in Antarctica. • Write a speech explaining why polar environments should be protected. Create a board game based on surviving in the Arctic or Antarctica.
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This is Africa	Lesson 1: What makes Africa unique? ✓ To name and locate countries in Africa. ✓ To describe and locate some of the key physical features of the African continent. ✓ To explain how Africa's past has shaped its present. Lesson 2: What are the challenges and opportunities in Kenya? ✓ To describe the location of Kenya. ✓ To explain how urbanisation has impacted Nairobi. ✓ To evaluate the opportunities and challenges of tourism in Kenya.	Create a colourful poster showing at least five physical features found in Africa. You could include the Sahara Desert, Nile River, Mount Kilimanjaro, Congo Rainforest and Great Rift Valley. For each, describe where it is located and why it is important. Create a single-page collage or infographic that answers the question: "What makes Africa unique?". Make it colourful, informative and creative! Africa has a rich history that has helped shape the continent today. Choose one historic African kingdom or civilisation, such as Ancient Egypt, Mali Empire, Kingdom of Kush or Great Zimbabwe. Create a fact file including when it existed, where it was located and how it influenced Africa today. Create a quiz with 10 questions about Africa. Include questions about countries and capitals, physical features, wildlife, African history, or questions comparing Africa to another continent (such as its size, number of languages spoken etc). Challenge your family to complete the quiz and record their score! Create a poster or digital advert encouraging tourists to visit Kenya. Include at least 3 attractions (e.g. Maasai Mara, Mount Kenya, Diani Beach), images or drawings, reasons why people should visit and a catchy slogan. Challenge: Explain how tourism helps the Kenyan economy. Research an informal settlement in Nairobi, such as Kibera. Write one sentence to answer each question: • What is an informal settlement? • What challenges do people living there face? • What improvements have been made to help residents? Useful website for research: https://kids.nationalgeographic.com https://www.worldatlas.com
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Lesson 3: What is it like in Africa's deserts?

- ✓ To describe the distribution of deserts.
- ✓ To explain why deserts are found in these locations.
- ✓ To discover key feature of the Sahara Desert.
- ✓ To explore how plants and animals are adapted to desert conditions.

Sahara Survival Guide - Imagine you are creating a survival guide for someone travelling across the Sahara Desert.

Include:

- 5 things they should take.
- 3 dangers they might face.
- 3 tips for staying safe.

Pretend you are a **weather reporter** broadcasting live from the Sahara Desert. Write a short weather report describing:

- Temperature
- Rainfall
- Winds
- Conditions during the day and night

Find the **world's major deserts** on a map. Can you locate the Sahara, Kalahari, Namib, Arabian Desert and Gobi Desert. What do many deserts have in common about their location?

Mythbusters! There are many misconceptions about deserts. Decide whether each statement is **True or False** and explain why.

- Deserts are always hot.
- It never rains in the Sahara.
- Very few people live in deserts.
- Camels store water in their humps.
- Plants cannot survive in deserts.

Challenge: Create two additional desert myths and explain the correct facts.