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## SAMPLE GEOGRAPHY WORKSHOP TOPICS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS<sup>1</sup>

Geography helps us make sense of this complex world. Environmental scientist, marketing executive, pilot, military expert, map-maker, teacher, writer, worker for social justice ... whatever your career goal is, geography is vital. It's also fun! Enjoy sports, music, dance? Geography makes it all more enjoyable. Welcome to 21<sup>st</sup> century geography education!

**Syllabi connected:** All Indian and international syllabi

**Languages:** Available in English and Kannada

**Classes:** Ages 12 and above

**Participants:** Maximum 30

- Audiences:**
1. **General** (general adult audiences who are curious to explore geography)
  2. **Parents** (parents who want to facilitate and participate in their children's geography exploration)
  3. **Students** (focus on content and ways to learn)
  4. **Teachers** (focus will be both on content and instructional pedagogy)

**Duration:** 3:00 to 3½ hours with suitable breaks of 10 minutes approximately every hour.

**Continued engagement:** Longer-term engagement is recommended for follow-up support for schools to implement innovative geography education systematically, with horizontal and vertical integration. This is the only way to sustain and grow a meaningful, integrated, and relevant geography education. It can also yield better returns on investment. Thus, the time and finances used for the workshop(s), become *investments* rather than one-off *expenses*.

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<sup>1</sup> Current to 15 July 2021

**Academic scope:** Workshops cover three levels

- Curricular **(C)** – purely for the curriculum-based content
- Co-curricular **(CC)** – content that goes slightly beyond the curriculum also
- Extra-curricular **(EC)** – exciting topics not in the curriculum, but able to strengthen geography education. This level is very useful for inter-disciplinary life-education. These offer more intellectual exploration opportunities.

**Presenter:** **Dr Chandra Shekhar Balachandran**, geographer and geography educator with over 30 years of teaching experience at school and university levels in the USA and India. He is founder and director of The Institute of Geographical Studies, Bangalore.

**Costs to be borne by the host institution:**

- **Resource person's fees:** INR 6,500/session (1 session = 3 – 3½ hours)
- **Travel costs:** On actuals; local and intercity.
- **Room & board:** On actuals (If workshop is outside of Mysuru)
- **Duplication:** Host institution takes care of duplication. Necessary materials are emailed to host institution at least 3 days in advance. *(Materials from TIGS are provided under Creative Commons Licensing – free to reproduce, re-distribute, modify but with citation to original source: The Institute of Geographical Studies)*

**Site arrangements:**

1. **A/V:** LCD projector, screen, power strip, extension cord, good quality speakers (for certain workshops where voiced video clips may be used).
2. **Stationery:** pens, pencils, rulers, erasers, notebooks/notepaper, atlases, etc. as needed for each workshop topic.
3. **Seating:** Depending on the workshop topic, either **circular** or **cluster** seating is highly recommended. *No auditorium-style seating!*
4. **Feedback on video:** For each workshop, brief feedback will be solicited from participants. These will be video recorded with their permission. The feedback will be posted on relevant online sites as part of TIGS outreach and information dissemination.
5. **Personnel:** At least one teacher to assist in handing out materials, etc.

## Sample list of workshops:<sup>2</sup>

ID	Suited for classes <sup>3</sup>	Scope	Audiences	Title	Description	Flyer blurb <sup>4</sup>	Duration + remarks
1.	05 and above	C	G, P, S, T	<b>Maps, atlases, and how to read them.</b>	<p>Maps are to geography what graphs are to mathematics. There are many kinds of maps and each has a purpose: convey geographical information.</p> <p>This workshop takes participants from mental maps to reading atlases and reading topographical maps, and looking at strange and amusing maps. This will also help them learn how to ask geographical questions.</p>	<p>Maps are colorful pictures that can show us many things. If we learn to read them, we can discover and understand many exciting things about places, and why these things are important to know. Maps are powerful ways to communicate geographical knowledge. And they can also be fun! In this workshop, learn how to make a map of your own and to read other kinds of maps.</p>	3 hours
2.	05 and above	CC, EC	G, P, S, T	<b>Mapping your neighborhood</b>	<p>Abstracting the neighborhood on to a sheet of paper helps participants learn how to read the 3-dimensional landscape and represent it on a 2-dimensional surface. They will learn how to extract information from the landscape, and analyze their information in some ways. This will also help them learn how to ask geographical questions.</p>	<p>How well do you really know your own neighborhood? You look, but do you see? It's not just where things are, but how things are connected to each other. Just by drawing a map of your own neighborhood, you can learn new things. You can also understand whatever you already knew, in new ways. So, let us get out there and map our neighborhood.</p>	3 hours

<sup>2</sup> This list is only indicative of the topics that can be covered. Other topics may also be possible depending on the host institution's needs. Let us discuss any other needs you may have.

<sup>3</sup> This is a general indication. There have been several exceptional cases where children as young as 8 have engaged with geographical **analysis** well beyond their ages!

<sup>4</sup> This text would be suitable to put on flyers about the workshop.

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3.	06 and above	EC		<b>Delicious and precious geography!</b>	This workshop takes participants on a journey of understanding how the formation of Earth, the processes going on even now inside Earth, and several surface geographical and historical factors all connect to our life today. Participants will learn the traditional concepts of Earth's structure and processes, oceanic currents, global winds, biogeography, mineral geography, and how all these are connected to present-day life.	Capsicum, cinnamon, pepper, chillis, papaya, guava, precious stones, and the might of the Vijayanagara Empire. What do these have to do with what is going on under our feet? The connections will surprise you, fascinate you, and may prove to be delicious, too! This is geography at its yummiest. Those "french fries" that you love so much will take on a whole new meaning after this workshop.	3 hours
4.	07 and above	C	<b>G, P, S, T</b>	<b>Address on Earth: Latitudes and Longitudes.</b>	Using an interactive problem-solving approach, participants will learn the nature of a grid on a flat surface, and then transfer the idea on to a globe. They will also learn about a few of the uses of latitudes and longitudes.	Latitudes and longitudes – those "imaginary lines" that you struggle with? They are very important to understand. Not just for your exams, but for life itself. They connect with agriculture in USA, the killing of Osama bin Laden, overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi, defence of national boundaries, marking time, the health of call centre workers, and much more. Find out how!	3 hours
5.	08 and above	C	<b>G, P, S, T</b>	<b>Weather and climate</b>	In this workshop participants learn how physics, geography, and culture come together to influence life on Earth. They will learn about the difference between weather and climate, elements and controls of climate, and human role in and responses to climatic patterns. The workshop also includes a section on the Indian monsoons.	Should I buy a monkey cap? Should I carry an umbrella with me today? Why do I feel like dancing in the rain? Earth's atmospheric conditions vary over time and place. What are the systems that operate to determine the particular kind of climate at a place? How does climate influence culture, economy, agriculture, etc.?	3 hours
6.	08 and above	C	<b>G, P, S, T</b>	<b>Geography of climate change.</b>	Human-environment interaction is one of the major themes of geography. Scientists have now established that Earth's climate is changing and that human beings are a great source of that change.	Global warming is good! So, what's the problem? Are we doomed? How will different places feel the impact of climate change? This workshop looks at human factors and their impact on	3 hours

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					Understanding climate change requires an understanding of geography. Such understanding helps integrate many disciplines towards a holistic understanding of this important issue.	climate, what is being done about it, and what we can do as individuals to become 'greener.'	
7.	08 and above	CC	G, P, S, T	<b>Jinnah and geography.</b>	It is often said that geography is the mother of history. This workshop looks at some of the aspects of the evolution of the modern map of the Indian sub-continent – with special attention to India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.	Jinnah's vision of Pakistan was rather short on geographical thinking. Historical circumstances also played a significant role. Pakistan was created, but was religious identity enough to sustain the new country? How has geography influenced some aspects of South Asia after partition?	3 hours
8.	08 and above	EC	G, P, S, T	<b>Geographies of the divine.</b>	Places are not just locations with physical features. We also give them different meanings, give them character, and thus produce places. This is called 'spatial production.' The study of sacred geographies is very fascinating and useful. Participants will learn some of the fundamental concepts of sacred geographies, their production, and their power in human and human-environment interactions.	In every culture, there are holy places that people visit for spiritual reasons. What is it about places and faith that makes such journeys so fascinating? What are the components of geography that touches our spirits and helps us? Are holy places fixed in location or can they move about? How do spiritual thinkers construct these places and spaces? How can we engage with them and how can we use them? Find out!	3 hours
9.	08 and above	C, CC	P, S, T	<b>Case study approach to learning Geography</b>	Print, Internet, and broadcast media offer many case studies with which Geography can be taught in interesting ways; show students (and adults!) how Geography is at work in the world, how Geography can be used to understand issues. Teachers will also learn to explore how to select case studies to fit Geography themes and topics and how to frame guiding questions, discussions, and analyses of these. This workshop is especially suitable	Most people, especially children, do not read the newspaper in any depth. Yet, the newspaper is a very useful tool for geography education. Don't fret if your students think only the sports section. The NiE (Newspapers in Education) is largely only for show in most schools and is not linked to any actual educational practice. Here's how you can change it without having to compromise your syllabus.	3 hours

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					for using the NiE (Newspapers in Education) scheme.	Also, you can encourage children to learn outside the classroom on their own.	
10.	08 and above	C, CC, EC	G, P, S, T	<b>Thinking geographically</b>	<p>A 1-hour documentary on a geographical topic will be screened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be guided to think about the presentation and learn geography from it.</li> <li>• Teachers will learn how to use a documentary to teach geography and its connections.</li> <li>• Parents will learn how to have geographically rich conversations with children.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Documentary will not be distributed to participants)</i></p>	<p>Earth is fascinating system with complex interconnections. The Amazon rainforest and the Sahara Desert, cracks in Earth's surface and civilizations, the Antarctic ice and algae in the tropical seas ... every tale told is a geography tale.</p> <p>A good documentary, watched with interactively, is a fascinating way to learn to think geographically. No more watching documentaries passively!</p>	3 hours
11.	08 and above	C, CC, EC	G, P, S, T	<b>Geographies of Ebola</b>	<p>Latitude, physiography, distance, climate – physical geographic factors; poverty, belief systems and practices, provision of health care – human geographic factors. What do these have to do with the current outbreak of Ebola? Why should we know about these connections?</p> <p>This workshop is most suited for students in class 8 and above (including undergraduate students).</p> <p>Through a mix of audio-visual media, lecture, discussion, and hands-on work, participants will learn the importance of knowing geography to understand Ebola's impact.</p>	<p>Medical geography, more than any other branch of geography, brings together social and natural sciences in powerful ways. The modern pandemic, Ebola, challenges social, cultural, ethical, geographical, political, medical, and many other values and practices. At every level, understanding its geographies is crucial to addressing the issues.</p>	<p>2 sessions of 3 hours each (1 day)</p> <p>Participants need to bring their atlas with them.</p>

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12.	08 and above	C, CC, EC	G, P, S, T	<b>Follow the man with the Rubik's Cube.</b>	International relations and geography are very closely connected. Politics, intrigue, law, etc. are played out in the context of geographies. The geographies, in turn, are created by these inter-plays. This workshop traces the story of Edward Snowden and the geographies related to it. Participants will see aspects of geography in the real world that no textbook teaches them. This workshop will also help participants learn how to initiate and carry on geography conversations; particularly between adults and children.	Edward Snowden, at age 26, unleashed a huge debate around the world on the issue of human rights to privacy and freedom of speech and thought. By his actions he became a hero to many and a villain to others. There are interesting geographies connected to this story that no textbook teaches, though it ought to. Learn about the dramatic geographies involved, and how you can use other contemporary stories to uncover interesting geographies. Conversations just got a lot more interesting!	3 hours. Participants will be given a problem to solve and discuss their solutions. You will apply and appreciate geography in ways you had likely never before done.
13.	08 and above	EC	P, S, T	<b>Geography project work</b>	Project work in most cases have become reduced to mechanical activities – make models (often with eco-unfriendly materials), copy and paste information (without citing sources), and mugging up ‘talking points’ to impress an audience ... rather than enjoying the learning process and to be able effectively to convey that joy to others. This will be a guided, long-term engagement with students wanting to do geography projects. At the moment, projects in physical geography will not be possible, but other topics of interest to students can be explored. Students will learn how to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask geographical questions.</li> <li>2. Select, plan, and design a project.</li> <li>3. Execute it.</li> <li>4. Collect, organize, and analyze data.</li> </ol>	The way you think about geography may be too limited – all textbooks, exams, and general knowledge questions! How do you understand geography in different contexts? How do you make the geographical connections by asking geographical questions? Everything around you has a geography connection. This workshop will get you to explore those connections.	Duration is variable. The costs will be determined depending on the needs of the organization.

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					5. Practise the ethics of research. 6. Communicate the results of the research. 7. Do a self-evaluation.		
14.	10 and above	EC	<b>G, P, S (class 10 and above only), T</b>	<b>Geography of HIV / AIDS</b>	<p>The concept of 'place' is central to understanding geography. It informs and educates our understanding of phenomena, including the spread of diseases.</p> <p>Participants will learn about some of the salient geographical connections underlying the twin phenomenon of HIV/AIDS. The workshop will involve an interesting activity through which the concepts will be illustrated.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Suitable for students of +2 and above. The topic is very sensitive and frank discussions will be required. A lot of activities will be included in the workshop to help participants understand some of the important aspects of the geography of this pandemic.</p>	Medical geography, more than any other branch of geography, brings together social and natural sciences in powerful ways. The modern pandemic, HIV/AIDS, has challenged social, cultural, ethical, geographical, political, medical, and many other values and practices. At every level, understanding its geographies is crucial to addressing the issues.	2 sessions of 3 hours each (1 day) Students need to bring their atlas with them.
15.	NA	C	<b>P, T</b>	<b>Computer-based resources for geography education.</b>	<p><b>This workshop is for teachers and parents.</b></p> <p>Participants will learn about the resources available online (content) for use in making geography education exciting; how to access these resources; and how to use them (pedagogy).</p> <p><b>Live internet connection required for presenter and participants.</b></p>	There are many internet and other computer-based tools that can help you teach/learn geography more effectively. And most are FREE! Build your own resource set for your classroom use. This workshop will help you get started with many useful ideas.	1 day (2 sessions) (If teachers need training to develop lesson units based on case studies, add 1 more day)
16.	NA	NA	<b>G, P, T</b>	<b>Nurturing geography</b>	Many children have a deep interest, understanding, and empathy for the discipline of geography. Sadly, the education system and adults around them	When children express interest in geography, they are often told to concentrate on science, mathematics, and computer science instead. This is	3 hours.

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				<b>interest in children.</b>	do not nurture this interest. Children are often actively dissuaded from following their passion in the name of "being practical" and that "geography does not get you jobs." This, of course, is bunk! Participants will learn about what is geography, how to understand it, and the power of studying it. They will also learn why they should nurture children's interest in geography and how to go about it. The results will be more far-reaching than just study, because geography is all about life-skills.	to "score high marks" and get into "professional courses" so that they can have "real jobs and careers." This is utter bunk! Find out how and why a good geography education matters not just for children's growth, but for life itself. Many traditional notions will be challenged in this interaction.	