Geography

Term 1 Newsletter

Welcome,

Our team is back on the road this term, and it has been a real pleasure meeting Geography teachers in schools and education centres right across the country. We are now facilitating Ask, Explore, Discover: Inquiry-Based Learning, the second Professional Learning Experience (PLE) in our series supporting teachers with the redeveloped Leaving Certificate Geography specification. This year, we're exploring how inquiry-based learning can spark curiosity, encourage student-led discovery and develop geographical thinking. Together, we investigate how effective geographical questioning, practical activities and fieldwork can bring learning to life and become an integral part of everyday Geography teaching and subject planning.

Meet the 26/27 Team



Sinéad Duffy
Senior Leader



Elaine Power



Mary Gorman



John Coyle



Simon McLean



Michael Organ



Dylan Sweeney

Updates

CBA UPDATE

The adjusted CBA arrangements will continue for third-year students in 2026/27 and 2027/28, with a minimum of one Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) and no Assessment Task examined.

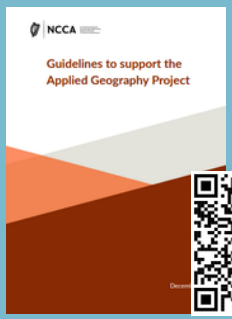
The University of Limerick's longitudinal study, commissioned by the NCCA, highlights the value of CBAs in developing students' skills and supporting active, engaging learning experiences. The findings will help inform the ongoing review of CBAs, refresh their content and shape assessment arrangements for the 2028/29 Junior Cycle cohort.

Feedback

Over 90% of teachers rated this year's Geography Subject Cluster PLE sessions as helpful or very helpful.

Student-led inquiry and practical classroom resources were identified as key takeaways, supporting teachers in developing inquiry-based approaches to learning in Geography.

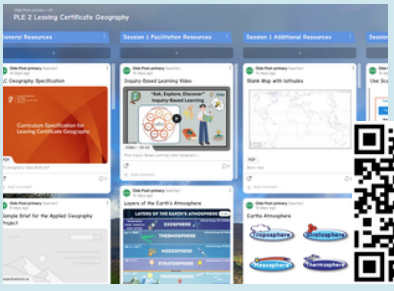
Applied Geography Project Links



Guidelines



Sample Brief



PLE 2 Padlet

Classroom Resource

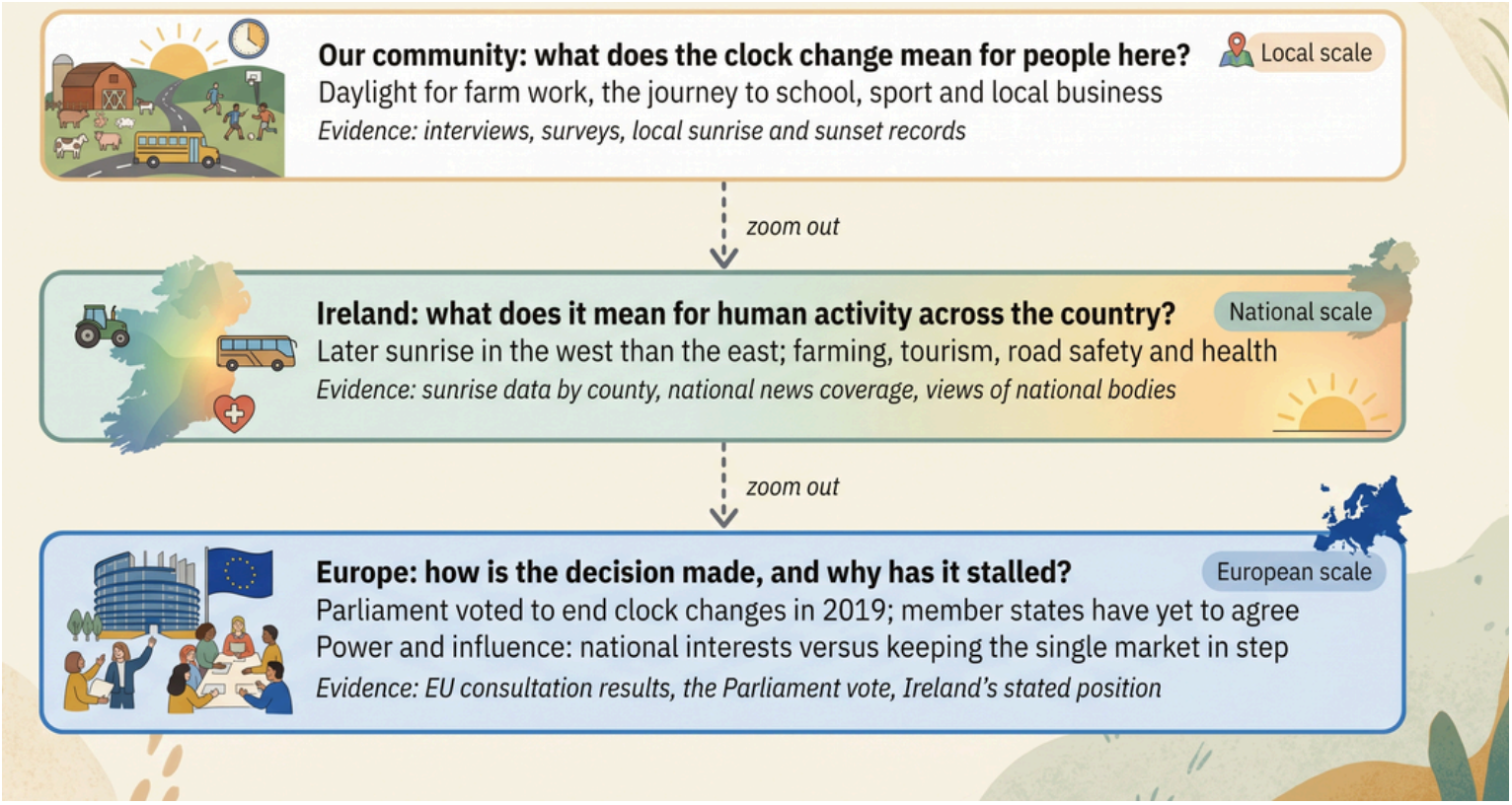
Time to Change? The Clock Change Debate

How does this resource support students' teaching and learning?

By using a real world question around the seasonal changing of the clock we can build student's capacity for geographical inquiry. It develops Junior Cycle key skills and Senior Cycle key competencies, building transferable skills for CBAs and the Applied Geographical Project. Empowers students to become critical thinkers, informed decision-makers and engaged global citizens.

Time to Change?

Scaling the Inquiry: Local, National, European



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Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Classroom Resource

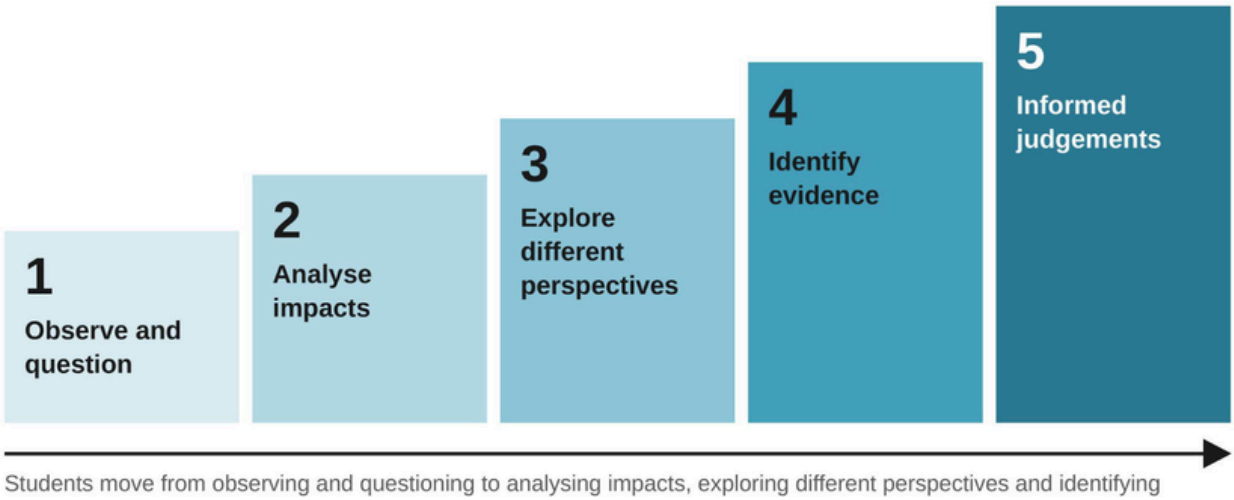
Turning a real world question into student-led inquiry

Using the seasonal clock change as a real-world example



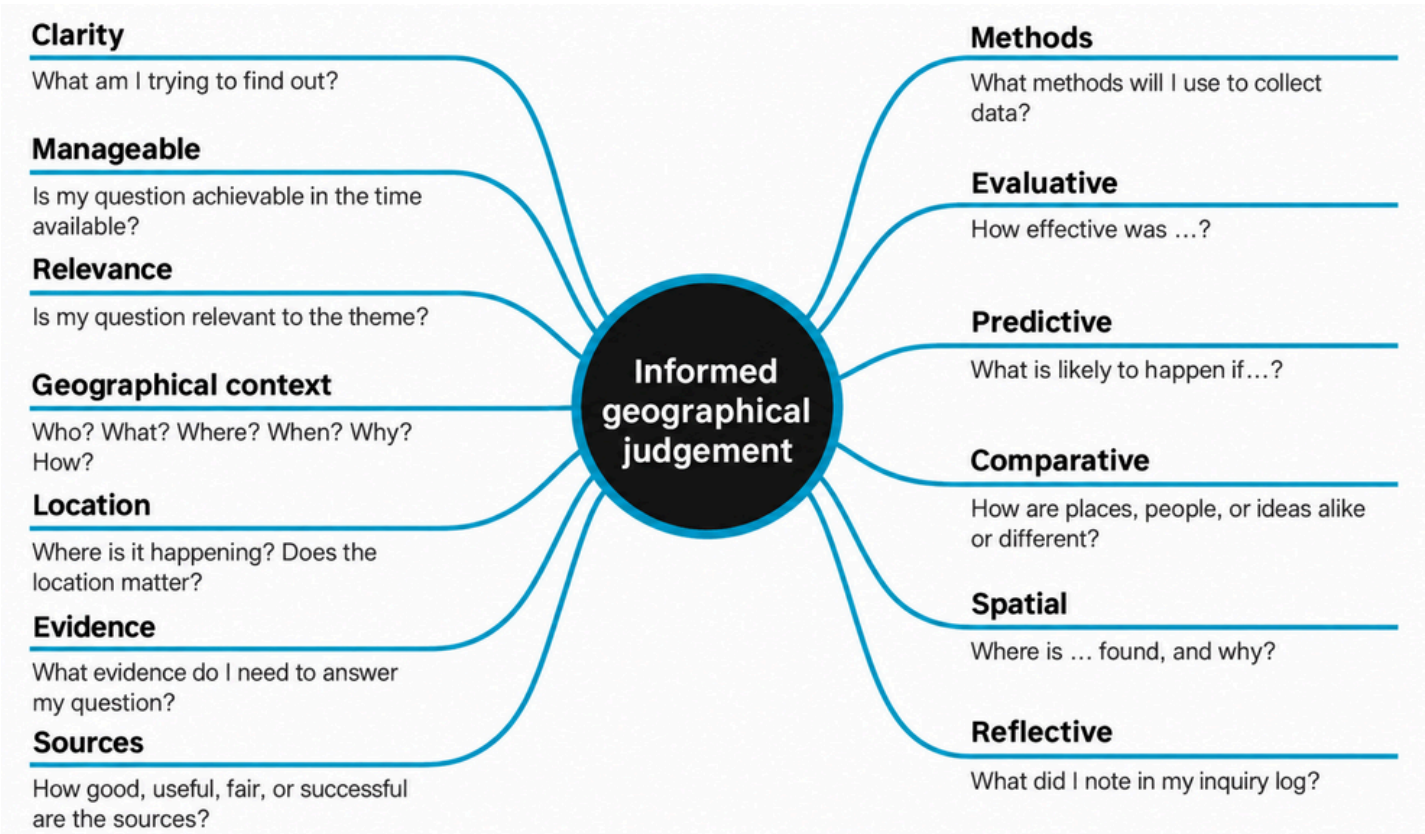
What?

This resource shows how images can spark curiosity and develop geographical inquiry.



Students move from observing and questioning to analysing impacts, exploring different perspectives and identifying

Sample questions learners could explore to build towards an informed geographical judgement



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How?

Students can develop their inquiry questions using the clock change example

1 GETTING STARTED

Closed questions with no setting

Should Ireland stop turning back the clocks?

What's working

A real issue that hooks interest straight away.

Is it better to have brighter mornings or brighter evenings?

Next step

Both are closed questions (yes/no, either/or) with no setting. Open them up with "how" or "to what extent", and name a place and its people.

2 DEVELOPING

Open, but still too broad

How would ending the clock change affect people in Ireland?

What's working

Open questions that focus on impact and people.

How does the change of seasons affect daily life in our area?

Next step

Still too broad to gather evidence on. Narrow the setting and decide whose views and what data will answer it.

3 DEEPENING

Open, local and multi-scale

To what extent would ending the clock change benefit people in (our community), and how do views on this decision differ at local, national and European scales?

What's working

Open, rooted in a real place, centred on a decision, and makes scale explicit.

How far does the change in daylight affect the working day of farmers in (our area), and how do their views compare with national and European positions on the clock change?

Next step

Ready to investigate using a variety of methods. Qualitative: interviews or desk research. Quantitative: sunrise and sunset records, class surveys (e.g. travel to school), or a local GAA survey on floodlight running costs. This builds the skills needed for CBAs and the Applied Geography Project.

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Say What You See Activity



Question: When the Clocks Go Back, Who Gets the Daylight?

From Image to Inquiry: Seeing, Questioning, Investigating.

NOTICE: What do you notice about the light, time of day, weather, people and journeys?	**DESCRIBE:** How are the two journeys similar and different?
QUESTION: What questions does each picture make you ask about the clocks going back?	**EXPLAIN:** Why might darker mornings or brighter evenings affect people differently?
ANALYSE: Which groups might experience the greatest benefits or challenges, and why?	**COMPARE:** Would the impacts be the same in a city, town, village or rural area of (East/West Ireland?
EVALUATE: Is changing the clocks a fair way to organise daylight? Use reasons from the pictures.	**INVESTIGATE:** What sources, evidence or data would help you answer your question, such as Met Éireann, CSO, school surveys or RSA road-safety data?
EXTEND: What further question could you ask about the physical, human or social impacts of daylight?	E.G. Impacts on electricity costs, Farming practices, Solar energy etc.

Key Challenges:

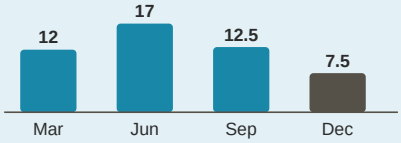
Keeping questions manageable, ensuring feasible and safe data collection, checking source reliability and bias, balancing perspectives, and challenging cultural assumptions.

Gathering Evidence:

Quantitative 123

Numbers you can measure

Daylight hours in Dublin



- Sunrise times by county
- Survey tallies and counts

Qualitative “”

Words, views and images

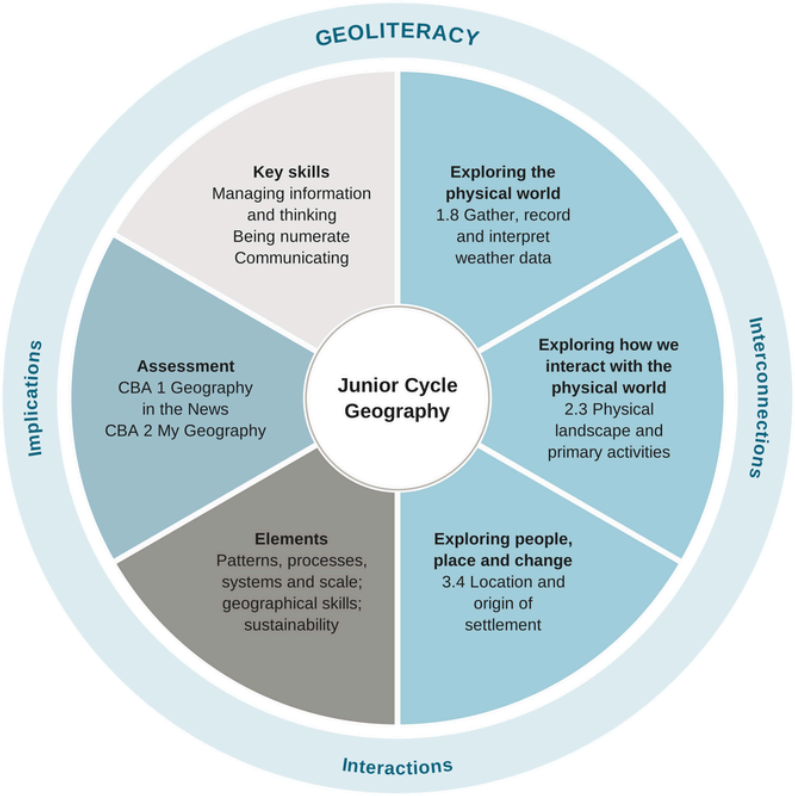
> *“In December I’m feeding the cattle in the dark before the school run.”* Sample interview

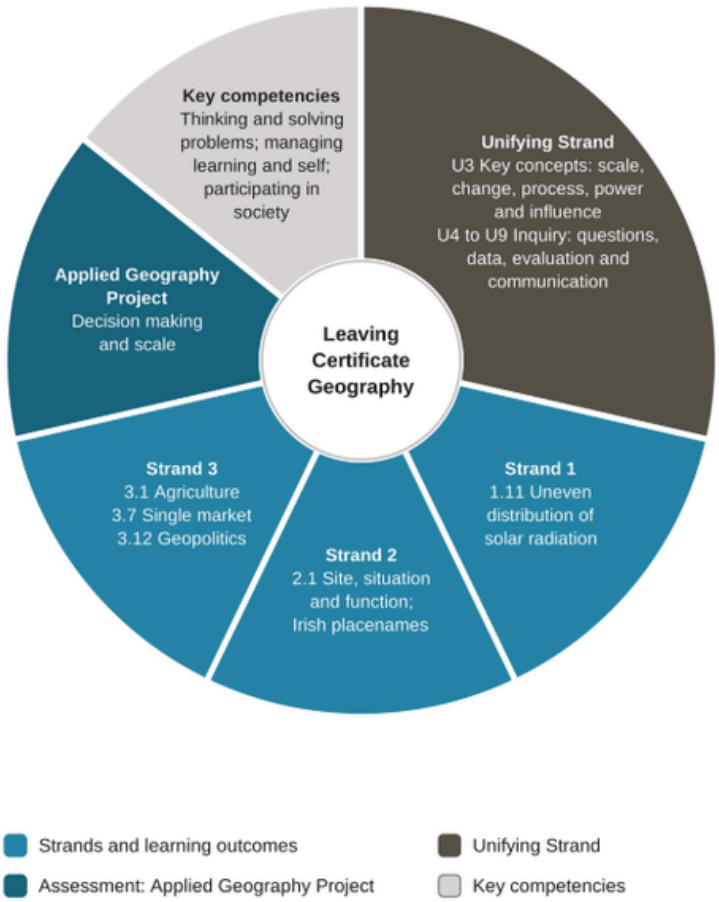
- Interviews and open surveys
- Photos, sketches, news

Numbers show what is happening; words explain why it matters.

METHODOLOGY	HOW IT SUPPORTS INQUIRY
Think, Pair, Share	Group work to brainstorm ideas and share information.
Wheel of Consequence	To show impacts of geographical concepts.
Walking debates	Examine, discuss and justify reasoning.
‘Say what you see’ exercises	Analysing images for what we see.
Then & Now	Examining before and after images, photos or maps.
Gathering evidence	Building up qualitative and quantitative data
Placemats	Analysing and evaluating data at a variety of levels
ArcGIS mapping	Geo-spatial analysis of location and relevant data.
Quiz cards	Assessment for Learning

Links to Junior and Senior Cycle Learning Outcomes





Reminder: In 2026/27 and 2027/28, third-year students will complete a minimum of one CBA, with no Assessment Task examined.

Reminder: SEC will publish the live brief for the Applied Geography Project (AGP) in Term 2 of fifth year (2026/27), which will include the submission date for 2028.

Connect with Us

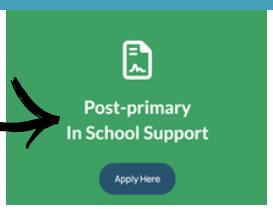
geography@oide.ie

@OidePostPrimary

OIDE SCHOOL SUPPORT

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS TO IDENTIFY PRIORITIES, EXPLORE PRACTICE AND PLAN NEXT STEPS.

Consult with your Principal regarding In-school support for Geography



Applications for in-school support for the 2026/27 academic year are now open.