

LEADING VOICES FOR PRIMARY GEOGRAPHY

COMPILED BY BEN BALLIN



Since 2006, we have been publishing interviews with a variety of people including educators, academics and public figures. Our thirty interviewees are powerful advocates for geography. In our 30th birthday year, we recall below what they have said about why geography matters.

Here is what our child interviewers had to say

Year 6 children, Fairway Primary School:
'It helps you be safe, to know what is happening.'

Martha Payne: 'Geography helped me see it was difficult to grow food in Malawi because of the soil and weather.'

Aedhan Brown: 'Teachers could set a homework task of building a volcano using LEGO.'

And the adults...

Robin Alexander: 'Teachers [and children] need a national and global perspective.'

Steve Backshall: 'Geography is about getting outdoors and engaging with environment and landscape.'

Anita Ganeri: 'The world is changing so fast, and global warming is casting such a strong and dangerous shadow, that geography is crucial.'

Justine Greening: 'Geography... knits together people and the planet, and at a time when we see how intrinsic that link is.'

Chris Hadfield: 'Geography is the biography of our planet.'

David Hicks: 'A good grasp of geography is essential for any understanding of this planet and what our relationship should be to it.'

Rob Hopkins: 'We have to understand in this age of pseudo-science what's happening; lives depend on it.'

Alastair Humphreys: 'An understanding and appreciation of our planet and how it works is vital.'

Joseph Kerski: 'Without the geographic perspective, and the ability to use it... we are going to have a rough time in the twenty-first century.'

Alan Kinder: 'It hasn't taught me what to think, how to feel about issues... but it has certainly given me food for thought.'



Our interviewees are powerful advocates for geography.

Sascha Kindred: 'We all live on one planet and our resources are finite. We need to appreciate our local environment.'

Ellen MacArthur: 'Geography helps us to understand how systems function, how we fit into the world, how we think, and what the repercussions are.'

Robert MacFarlane: 'Geography' means 'earth-writing'... What more vital or various or fascinating a task could there be?'

Tim Marshall: 'There are so many reasons to study geography, not least climate change.'

Wendy North: 'It is crucial in helping young people make sense of our increasingly globalised world.'

Paula Owens: 'Geography offers us the skills to understand and tackle many of today's big issues such as poverty, inequality, pollution, multi-cultural understanding and energy needs.'

Alison Peacock: 'It's about our place in the world, our environment... things that are absolutely central.'

Daniel Raven-Ellison: '[Geography] can greatly improve the chances of people both near and distant having better lives.'

Eleanor Rawling: 'One of geography's great advantages is its ability to cross the boundaries of arts and science, to enable us to see the big picture.'

David Rogers: 'It's the only real 'joined up' subject... what we do is make connections.'

Michael Rosen: 'Geography... has potential for open enquiry. We might take children into a landscape or cityscape and support them to generate questions.'

Stephen Scoffham: 'If we want to understand the future then geography provides a key perspective.'

Christopher Somerville: 'Facts for fact's sake are pointless. If it is about a real feel for landscape.'

Timothy Spall: 'It takes in our effect on the environment... We've finally twigged how we are affecting the planet, and it doesn't get more profound than that.'

Iain Stewart: 'It's especially important at primary level because it is usually a child's first introduction to the wider world.'

Helen Tse: 'Because it deals with where and how people live, geography is rich in material that relates to international understanding.'

Simon Reeve: 'It helps us to identify and monitor the changes that happen over vast spans of time.'

WEB RESOURCES

PowerPoint download of these quotes:
www.geography.org.uk/pg

Ben Ballin is a Primary Champion, Consultant to the GA, and a member of the Primary Geography Editorial Board.