

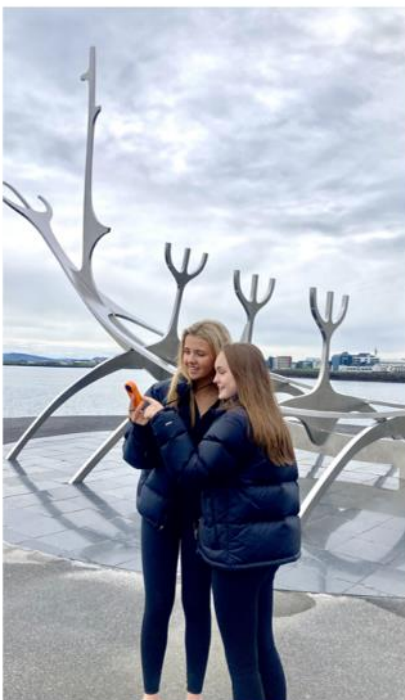
Lower 6 geographers complete fieldwork in Iceland



Having referenced Iceland in geography lessons at various points throughout the hazards topic, the highlight of the Lower 6 geography course has to be the trip to the “Land of Fire and Ice” itself.

For Tilly and Sophie, the countdown was over this week as we spent five wonderful days in Iceland. Below is a summary of their trip to give you a flavour of Iceland and possibly even inspire you to visit yourselves.

Day 1: Reykjavik



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Having landed into the most northerly capital of the world, we set out to explore the area whilst also collecting microclimate data. Our hypothesis considered whether the urban heat island effect is observed within the city and was tested by completing a transect in which temperature, wind speed, air quality, nitrous oxide, particulate matter and ozone were measured, with specific consideration given to the effects of green and blue spaces.

Our GIS mapping skills were then applied in the evening to plot the data and perform an analysis, which gave us the chance to practice this skill ready for our own independent NEAs that we are starting this summer.

Day 2: The Golden Circle



Day 2 was spent completing the classic Golden Circle tour which incorporates three of Iceland's famous natural wonders: the Thingvellir National Park where we debated Wegener's views of Pangea and Hess's theory of seafloor spreading, Gullfoss, the "golden waterfall" and our personal favourite, the Strokkur geyser. The weather was definitely in our favour, so we also squeezed in a visit to the geothermal beach before a lovely evening meal at an Italian restaurant in Reykjavik's city centre.

Day 3: Southern Iceland

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We started the day early for our day tour of Southern Iceland to visit some of Iceland's spectacular sights. We observed the coastal landforms at the black sand beach, including caves, arches stacks and stumps. Following this, we walked to a glacier where we could see evidence of climate change, then we bravely decided to walk behind a waterfall which left us completely drenched, but with many funny memories!

Day 4: Volcanic wonders and the Blue Lagoon



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Today started off with an earthquake! Whilst Iceland experiences around 70-100 earthquakes a year, most of these are too small to be felt. Seismic activity increased today though, and we actually felt one of magnitude 4.8. In fact, by the time the day was over, there had been 1200 earthquakes, 20 of which were magnitude 4.0 or more!

With that little excitement over, we prepared for our hike up a volcano with a visit to our favourite bakery and then eagerly boarded the bus to see the volcanic wonders that Iceland has to offer. Once we passed through geothermal areas, we arrived at the active volcano and began our ascent. Unfortunately, the wind was not in our favour, but we persevered despite the physical and mental challenges faced, which left us feeling very rewarded once we reached the crater. We even had chance to walk on the lava upon our descent. Following this, we took a well-needed spa trip to the Blue Lagoon, where we were able to experience one of Iceland's impressive geothermal pools.

Overall, this trip has been filled with nothing but laughs and smiles, and we have made memories that we will definitely treasure forever!

Sophie Brearley, Tilly Rose Cundale and Mrs Elizabeth Hayward