

Rex Walford Award 2025

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The theme for the Rex Walford Award 2025 is:

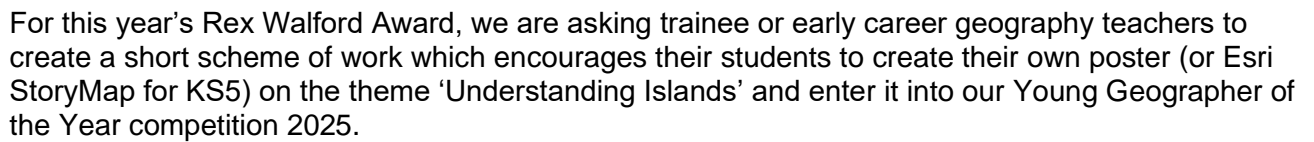
Understanding islands



Let's take a closer look at the World's islands.

It is estimated that our planet contains almost 670,000 islands, of which around 11,000 are permanently inhabited. Islands have a unique geography; their landscapes and coastlines vary massively – some are home to volcanoes; others are barely above sea level. Some are barren, deserts or rocky outcrops, others lush vegetation havens for a range of unique wildlife and plant species. There are islands seen by many as popular holiday destinations, and there are others that are inaccessible or many miles from civilisation. Every island is unique, and every island has its challenges.

The geography of islands is an interesting one. Some are threatened by climate change and issues such as sea level rise, and through this are embroiled in the geopolitics of the climate emergency and the mitigation strategies implemented through both international policies and local-level action. The people who live on islands face a range of socio-economic, cultural or historical challenges, from over-use of their towns and cities by tourists, to access to resources, clean water or adequate living conditions. The 'ownership' of some islands is contested; some are protected, others are fought over because of their geopolitical or strategic significance. In some places, islands are being created to meet the need for more space to satisfy our growing population. By exploring and understanding islands, including the island we live on, we can unlock a multitude of geographical themes and connections across people, places and environments.



- Islands that demonstrate the geographical processes, topics and themes that they learn about through geography.
- The similarities and differences between islands, what connects them and what makes them unique.
- How the unique geography of islands can differ depending on socio-economic, political, environmental and physical aspects.
- The challenges that islands face, and the solutions presented to them at local, national and international scales.

The Rex Walford Award is for trainees or teachers who are in an early career stage (ideally first five years), including students enrolled on a PGCE, SCITT or School Direct programmes, alongside Teach First geographers, NQTs and colleagues at any other early career stage.

The scheme of work created can be aimed at any Key Stage eligible to enter the Young Geographer of the Year competition, and must include:

- A short scheme of work
- At least 3 lesson plans
- Resources to accompany those lessons
- Examples of pupil work if possible

Key Stage 2 criteria: Submit a poster exploring at least one island, exploring its location and unique geography across people, places and environments.

Key Stage 3 criteria: Submit a poster exploring at least two islands, exploring their locations and unique geography across people, places and environments and demonstrating the ways in which these islands are connected via geographical themes, challenges and solutions.

Key Stage 4 criteria: Submit a poster exploring at least three islands, exploring geographical themes they have in common, showcasing their unique differences and demonstrating geographical knowledge and understanding of connections through the consideration of similarities and differences between these places.

Key Stage 5 criteria: Submit a poster or Esri StoryMap exploring multiple islands, exploring geographical themes they have in common, showcasing their unique differences and demonstrating geographical knowledge and understanding of connections through the consideration of similarities and differences between these places.

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We **do not** have a preferred style for submissions. We are looking for eye-catching, innovative, informative and accurate submissions which will encourage students to think geographically and explore connections between places.

The deadline for receipt of all Rex Walford Award entries is **Friday 3 October 2025 at 5.00pm**. Entries received after this time will not be accepted.

All entries must be emailed to competitions@rgs.org with 'Rex Walford Award' as the email title. Please provide all documents, plus details of your name, address, contact details and where you are teaching or training.

We cannot accept or judge any entries submitted by post.

Due to the volume of entries, we regret that we are unable to contact unsuccessful entrants or provide individual feedback.

The winning entry will be hosted as a resource at www.rgs.org/resources.

Important notice

By taking part in the Rex Walford Award and submitting your entry to the RGS-IBG, you are providing agreement that the RGS-IBG may post your materials on our website and agree to ensure that all images used are copyright free.

Use of AI

AI checks may be used to determine whether the work is the teacher's own and presented 'in the spirit of the competition'. Students applying to university are given the following guidance by UCAS about the use of AI for personal statements. [A guide to using AI and ChatGPT with your personal statement | UCAS](#). Teachers may follow the same guidance when entering this competition. For example, they must not use an AI system to generate all or a large part of the text submitted as their own. Teachers can also consult DfE guidance [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK](#). There are age limits associated with the use of AI tools.

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