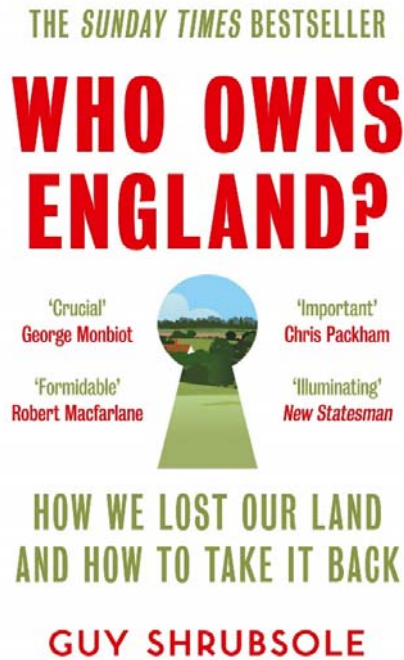


# The Literacy Lowdown: Who Owns England?



A level geography students, remember, you should:

- undertake wider reading
- use factual texts, discursive / creative material

## Summary

Guy Shrubsole follows in the footsteps of the revelatory 1996 publication of *Who Owns Scotland*, by Andy Wightman. His book is an exposé of the major landowners in England, highlighting both historic injustice and modern inequality.

The book devotes a chapter to high land-owning individuals, many of whom can date their ancestral claim back to William the Conqueror and examines how groups like the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Defence have bought and changed England's green and pleasant lands.

With occasional moments of optimism as Shrubsole states towards the end "much about land ownership in England remains a mystery" due to the social taboo of asking questions about land and private property.

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## Specification links

AQA 3.2.2.1 The nature and importance of places.

Edexcel 4B.3 How past and present connections shape the characteristics of your chosen places.

OCR Topic 2.1 1.a. Places are multi-faceted, shaped by shifting flows and connections.

WJEC Unit 2 Section A – Changing Places.

## Key quotes

"Get land reform right, and we can go a long way towards ending the housing crisis, restoring nature and making our society more equal." (p5)

"A Right to Roam was established by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act in the year 2000, but open-access land still only makes up around 10% of England and Wales." (p17)

"The enforcement of male primogeniture has clearly influenced patterns of land ownership across much of England, keeping estates large. In Wales and in Kent, by contrast...the older practice of *gavelkind*...continues to hold sway." (p80)

"London is littered with 'ghost houses'. Council figures show that 60,000 properties across the country have stood empty for more than two years." (p111)

"5 million acres of land – worth a staggering £400 billion – has been sold doff by the public sector over the past forty years. The public water boards own large swathes of England's uplands." (p179)