



Core units: Inquiry and skills

Illustration 2: Contemporary geographical issues and the media – Year 6

Contemporary geographical issues

The study of geography, by its very nature, covers a range of contemporary issues and events. These are the issues and events that are 'in the news'. They are issues and events that are discussed and debated widely in the community.

Contemporary geographical issues and events have both a spatial and temporal dimension. This means that they occur in a particular context and timeframe. They might, for example, be a local community-based issue (such as a development proposal) that is a focus of peoples' attention for just a short period of time, or an environmental issue that affects the whole planet (for example, global climate change) which may be of concern for generations.

Because people have different perspectives or points of view on issues, they will often disagree on how they should be addressed. Disagreement is often healthy as long as we respect the rights of others to express views that we might not necessarily agree with. Being able to identify and evaluate such points of view greatly enhances our own decision-making processes. This is what makes the study of geography so interesting.

As their geographical awareness develops, students are better placed to:

- appreciate the ever-changing nature of the world in which we live
- empathise with the experiences and circumstances of other people
- form opinions
- evaluate alternative responses
- develop as global citizens.

Some examples of contemporary geographical issues and events include:

- air and water pollution
- child labour and exploitation
- coastal erosion
- coal seam gas extraction
- drought
- endangered species
- famines
- flooding
- food security
- global climatic change
- global inequalities
- global terrorism
- habitat loss (eg. deforestation)
- human rights
- impacts of tourism
- management of river catchments (eg Murray-Darling Basin)

- mining
- natural hazards and disasters
- population growth
- population movements (eg. refugees)
- poverty
- refugees
- rights of Indigenous people
- salinity
- soil erosion
- unemployment
- urban developments
- waste disposal
- water quality
- whale hunting