

Shajiyah Begum

Teacher of Geography

**Royal
Geographical
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning



Job title: Teacher of Geography

Location: London, UK

How did you get to where you are now?

After doing my GCSEs, I studied biology, chemistry and geography at A Level. During this time, I realised I was really passionate about geography and so I went on to study geography at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL). I achieved a First Class for my degree and went on to do a PGCE at the Institute of Education. During this time, I gained a scholarship from the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) who further supported me in my journey to becoming a qualified teacher. Following my PGCE, I obtained my current job as a Geography Teacher at an Academy in South London.

Was there anything particularly useful that helped you get into this role?

What was extremely useful in helping me become a teacher was the experience I had gained throughout university. Within the School of Geography at QMUL, I was involved in the 'Stepping Stones' programme. This involved me mentoring and tutoring a small group of geography

A Level students at a local school nearby, which allowed me to gain an insight into what it is like working with young people in a school environment. This further motivated me to apply for a PGCE course after finishing my degree. Alongside my studies, I was also a course representative and a geography ambassador at QMUL. Both of these roles allowed me to develop my communication, organisation, time management and leadership skills - all of which are vital for a teacher.

What do you do as part of your role?

I am currently a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) and I teach geography to Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. I also teach history to Key Stage 3 pupils. In addition to teaching, I also have pastoral care responsibilities within the wider life of the school.

Day to day I contribute to the planning of lessons and resources in the department, which are shared amongst the Humanities team, and set assessments, monitor pupil progress and record data on the system according to the Academy guidelines. I ensure books are marked with regular feedback so that pupils make progress, and I communicate effectively with parents about pupil progression and behaviour when appropriate. I also undertake regular break and lunch duties, as well as participate in school events and professional development trainings within the Academy.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

What I enjoy most about my job is that every day is different. Teaching can be tough, especially in London, but it is definitely rewarding!

What advice would you give to someone wanting to go in to this career?

I would say that you should gain some experience within a school environment. This is

W: www.rgs.org/iamageographer

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essential as it gives you a feel of what it is like to work with young people on a daily basis. Observing a primary and a secondary school can also help you decide which school environment you are more suited to. In addition, it would be helpful to shadow a member of teaching staff and observe the additional responsibilities teachers have within the school.

Why did you choose geography? Why should others choose geography?

I chose geography because it allows you to gain a better understanding of the world we live in, and how human and physical interactions shape our landscape. I personally believe studying geography will make you a well-rounded person as the subject contains aspects of different subjects such as science and history. In addition, geography provides you with a range of skills such as critical thinking and analytical skills, which makes geographers highly employable when it comes to job hunting!

One of a series of profiles of staff and students from Queen Mary University of London.

