

British Cartographic Society Organises Restless Earth Workshops for Schools



Restless Earth is a two-and-a-half-hour disaster relief mapping workshop organised by the British Cartographic Society. The workshops are for Year 9 & 10 pupils studying GCSE-level geography. They are for groups of 20 to 70 students and are held at the school or a venue of the school's choosing that has enough space for several large wall maps to be spread across the floor.

The workshops look at the 2011 Japan earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster and its impact on the Sendai region.

The workshop starts with a short presentation about the chain of events that happened on 11 March 2011 and the destruction that was caused. The students are then given instruction on how to go about creating their two disaster relief maps: one at a regional scale, and the other at city scale. The students are divided into groups of 5 and given a resource package that includes an instruction booklet, seven reference maps at different scales of the Sendai region annotated in Japanese, and role cards. Each student in the group takes on a role of coordinator, search & rescue, military, medical or humanitarian. Each member gathers information about the disaster and the geographic area affected in relation to their roles. For example, the medical person might look to see what hospitals are outside the damaged area and what roads are open to get to them. The information from each role is collated and placed on the two base maps (city scale and regional) in the form of points, lines, polygons and annotation. These are symbolised intuitively and with consideration to cartographic conventions. At the end of the session, the volunteers assisting in running the workshop mark the maps and the winners are announced.

What's the benefit?

All students receive academic credit for their participation in the workshop. The exam boards require a level of Cartography and Restless Earth contributes to the GCSE Geography, Natural Hazards Modules, and Geographic Skills criteria.

The winning teams receive a prize donated by Global Mapping and their submissions continue on to be entered into the School Annual Award competition judged by the BCS Awards Council. The teacher from the winning school will be invited to the Symposium Gala dinner to collect the award for their school.

A BCS educational membership for the School is included with the cost of the workshop. Volunteers are awarded 4 accredited CPD (Continuing Professional Development) points for helping with a Restless Earth Workshop.

And for everyone it is a lot of fun, and a practical way of learning using a real-life event.

Who runs the workshops?

Jennifer Johnston runs the workshops on behalf of the BCS. Jennifer has 9 years of industry experience working for companies like the Atlas of Canada, Lonely Planet, and Explore Australia. She is currently designing custom maps through Inspirit Cartographics.

If you are interested in having a Restless Earth Workshop at your school or you are interested in volunteering please contact Jennifer Johnston at restlessearth.coordinator@gmail.com.