

## Canadian Geographic Education launches online initiative to reach millions of self-isolating students

OTTAWA, March 31, 2020 – In response to an urgent need for online educational resources, The Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS) is launching Canadian Geographic Education’s #OnlineClassroom, which will offer its free, bilingual learning tools to all Canadians to support teachers, parents and students isolating at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Our new #OnlineClassroom provides Can Geo Education with a great opportunity to reach more students, parents, teachers and everyone else through dynamic resources that educate and entertain at the same time,” says John Geiger, CEO of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

Adds Paul VanZant, Chair of Can Geo Education and Governor of the RCGS: “While we’re launching our new virtual classroom, we’ll also be hosting Google Hangouts, where participants can join explorers for video chats on a variety of topics, and other activities such as trivia challenges and mapping exercises. We want to keep students engaged by having them visit the website [onlineclassroom.cangeoeducation.ca!](https://onlineclassroom.cangeoeducation.ca/)”

The #OnlineClassroom is starting off with a bang by launching The Anthropocene Education program, which will take students on adventures through augmented and virtual reality. Geared toward grades 4 to 12, this initiative develops student’s understandings of our world’s most pressing environmental challenges, such as plastic waste issues, species extinction and climate change.

Can Geo Education partnered with [The Anthropocene Project](#), an internationally celebrated Canadian project created by renowned photographer Edward Burtynsky and award-winning filmmakers Nicholas de Pencier and Jennifer Baichwal. Through evocative photography, a documentary, 360-degree cinematography, and captivating augmented-reality installations, this multimedia project explains the emergence of the Anthropocene epoch, distinguished by human-caused changes to our planet.

“As students begin to navigate a virtual learning environment in response to the COVID-19 crisis, we are excited by the possibilities for the Anthropocene Education program to enable a continuation of studies of important global topics,” says de Pencier. “We hope that the photographs, videos and new media included in the program will offer a window onto the world at a time when we need to catalyze awareness of our global village in ways that inspire positive change.”

Students need only a smart phone or tablet to explore a 3D model of Big Lonely Doug, a 1,000-year-old Douglas fir in a clear-cut forest in British Columbia, or to learn about issues such as urbanization in Lagos, Nigeria, or resource extraction in Italy’s marble quarries. And students can also watch [360-degree virtual reality films](#) online or download them to a VR headset. All these resources, and many more, include lesson plans. [Check out this video](#) to witness the sheer wonder and joy students experience while immersed in this innovative educational tool.

Can Geo Education, the educational arm of the RCGS, supports a network of more than 23,500 educators in more than 600 elementary and secondary schools across the country, offering Kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum-compliant classroom resources for subjects such as outdoor learning, social sciences, geography, environmental science and more.

The Anthropocene Education program was undertaken with financial support from the Government of Canada through Environment and Climate Change Canada and the RBC Foundation, and it was produced with the participation of the TELUS Fund. The #OnlineClassroom is supported through generous donations provided by The Royal Canadian Geographical Society's College of Fellows and other supporters.

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Twitter: [@CanGeoEdu](https://twitter.com/CanGeoEdu) Instagram: [@CanGeoEdu](https://www.instagram.com/CanGeoEdu)

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#OnlineClassroom