

I am a regular reader of Mary Beard's blog - 'A Don's Life', and have read the two books that have been published with excerpts from the book. The 'It's a Don's Life'. If you don't read the blog I recommend you do: [http://timesonline.typepad.com/dons\\_life/](http://timesonline.typepad.com/dons_life/)

"I kicked off the very first lecture by handing round a skeletal map of the Mediterranean - and asked them to mark several key places (including Athens, Sparta, Troy, Crete, Rome and Pompeii). The results are collected in for scrutiny, but entirely anonymously. No names are required.

The idea is to demonstrate to the freshers that they really need to get an atlas out before they start sounding off about the Peloponnesian War, or whatever... The don ... have enjoyed shaking their heads at the very ideas that a student with straight As at A level still doesn't know where Sparta is"\*

As a geography teacher this idea is important - how much locational knowledge do our pupils know. This is the underlying grammar of our subject - and if pupils don't know the underlying locational knowledge they will struggle to see the big picture. Ways to teach locational knowledge is possibly an idea for a future post!

\*Page 55 - Beard, M. (2009). It's a Don's Life. London, Profile Books Ltd.