Geography Local Study

What is my local area like?

A fieldwork investigation of my local area’s human and physical geography

Learning Objectives   
• To identify and describe the main human and physical features of your local area.   
• To explore changes in the geography of your local area.

Key vocabulary   
• Capital city: the primary city in a country which is usually a focus for a country’s political, economic and cultural activities. The four capital cities of the constituent nations of the UK: Belfast (Northern Ireland), Cardiff (Wales), Edinburgh (Scotland) and London (England).   
• Function: the main activities or purpose of a settlement. E.g. residential, industrial, commercial and recreational.   
• Housing types: such as terraced, semi-detached, detached, flats or bungalows. • Inner city: an area next to the city centre. Many inner-city areas are characterised by older and often terraced housing, although a number have been recently redeveloped with more modern buildings.  
 • Land use: the way in which land is used by people. Examples could include housing, industry or green spaces (such as parklands or farming).  
 • Market: the place where goods are sold.   
• Rural: relating to the countryside.   
• Service industry: work such as retail, administration, education, healthcare or tourism.   
• Settlement pattern: the shape and spacing of settlements, settlements might be linear (such as following the path of a road or river), dispersed (such as a number of farms), or nucleated (such as a densely settled village or town).   
• Settlement: a place where people live, which can be categorised into villages, towns and cities.  
• Shopping centres: shopping areas that are characterised by being undercover and having ample parking.   
• Site: the location of where a settlement first started.   
• Situation: the location of a settlement in relation to the surrounding area.   
• Suburb: the residential and commercial development at the edge of a city.   
• Urban: relating to a town or city.   
• Urbanisation: the increase in the percentage of people living in cities

Activity 1: Key geographical questions   
Discuss or make notes on the follow questions about your local area.   
• What is the name of this place?  
 • Where is this place and which other places are near it?  
 • Is it a village, town, suburb or part of a city?   
• What types of buildings can we find and what are they used for?   
• What different types of land-use can we find?  
 • Are there any green spaces and what are they used for?   
• Who lives here and what do they do?   
• How do people use this landscape in different ways?   
• Are there any local ‘landmarks’?   
• What types of transport links can we find?   
• What evidence is there of connections to other places?   
• What was this place like in the past?   
• How and why is it changing?   
• How is it similar or different to other localities that are being studied?

Activity 2: Map annotation

Use the map provided to label and annotate.

• What information can you find e.g. are there green spaces already marked on a map? From the map symbols, can you see whether the housing is terraced, detached or semi-detached?   
• Can you identify places on your local map that you already know about, such as your homes or places of local interest?  
• What physical features can you identify from the map e.g. streams and rivers, hills and valleys, woodland or fields?   
• Can you identify areas where pupils should be particularly aware of issues to do with safety e.g. crossing a road, near the edge of a water course or railway?

Activity 3: Recording data in the field

You can record your data from your fieldwork in many different ways including one or more of the following:  
• Annotating a base map with information

• Field sketches of different scenes, street-scapes or views that you see   
• Taking photographs and recording the location and information you are collecting.

The following table could be adapted and used for this.

|  |  |  |
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| Can we find the following in our local area? | Evidence | Location |
| Terrace house | Field sketch/photograph | Street name/grid reference |
| Semi-detached house |  |  |
| A detached house |  |  |
| A river |  |  |
| A park |  |  |
| A shop |  |  |
| A restaurant |  |  |
| A protected green space |  |  |
| A school |  |  |
| etc |  |  |

* Collecting the views of people you might meet during your fieldwork such as local shop keepers or office workers (it can be useful to ‘prime’ a couple of friendly local contacts before visiting them) or people who might be in the local area.
* Completing tally charts to record the number of certain types of features e.g. different types of housing, land-use or shops.
* Adapt the following key to design appropriate symbols to identify the different types of shops and other uses found on your high street.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Building Use |  |
| Restaurant or café |  |
| Bank or post office |  |
| Office or estate agent |  |
| Chemist or dentist |  |
| Clothes or shoe shop |  |
| Food shop |  |
| Sports facility |  |
| Hair and beauty salon |  |
| Place of worship |  |

Activity 4: Presenting your results

There are many creative ways you can choose to share the information you have collected through your fieldwork.

Choose one or more of the following:

* Create a land-use map of your local area with a key and symbols and annotated sketches or photos (including aerial photographs) to record the information from your field notes.
* Build a model of the high-street or other local place using your information to identify key buildings and their uses.
* Write a tourist guide (and do include a map) to advertise your local area to other people.
* Create a pie chart/graph using the information gathered in tables and charts. For example, a pie chart to show building use in your local area.
* Route planning locally. Write routes (using correct geographical terms for direction and using coordinates etc.) for a different range of routes e.g. the journey to school, visiting family and friends, a place of worship or to attend a club or sporting activity.
* Plan and publish a geographical walk as a guide to your local area. This should be based on your local map and include key points of local interest and land-marks.

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