

OUR LOCAL AREA:

What's it like where we live?

Unit overview

This unit focuses on the immediate locality where your class live. The children will develop locational knowledge based on the view from the school and local walks. They will build place vocabulary to define where they live, which is deepened through fieldwork experiences and using maps. Consider the varying 'scales' of their experience: in an urban school, your locality will be different to that of a rural school.

Maps you have drawn as examples are important to model the job of a map-maker for the class. The base map for the Big Finish in Lesson 6 will have a key and symbols created by the children. The children will also use and add to a classroom plan (Lesson 2) and practise sequencing events on a journey. Look up children's addresses, mark them on a map and use parents' local expertise and community insight. Reinforce their vocabulary through looking at photos and sketches.

Knowledge, skills and concepts

In this unit, the children will:

- identify the significant features (landmarks) of their local area and consider viewpoints in relation to this
- compare journeys and landscapes and understand near/far, often/rarely
- learn about maps, map-making and symbols.

Background information

Our starting question is: What is it like where we live? The focus is the locality, the place your children live in. Consider the different 'scales' of your children's knowledge: in an urban school your locality might be very different to a rural school's, which could be down to transport links, population density and distances children regularly travel. You might live, for example, in a city but you need to narrow it down for young children. Is it North or South of a river the settlement was built on? What borough, council ward, parish or group of streets is your catchment area? Where do the local boundaries lie? Do geographical features such as a stream/river/park make a difference? Is the school on a housing estate, near a landmark; is it named after a notable person or near a major road? All these might make up the locality. Research and reflections you could do to build your own knowledge of the local area include looking at transport links, population density and distances of travel. You can find statistical information about who lives locally from council census data, local newspapers and online, a local studies archive or the Office of National Statistics (www.ons.gov.uk). Look, too, for local area maps on the Internet. Use online resources such as: www.geograph.org.uk; Google™/Bing™ image search; Google Maps Explore feature; Google Street View; local authority or tourism websites.

Cross-curricular links

- **English:** developing oral and listening skills through using geographical vocabulary; writing short descriptions or captions when recalling places visited; composing lyrics for a song (Lesson 5).
- **Maths:** asking and answering questions about totalling and comparing categorical data when recording statistics of modes of travel to school (Lesson 1); interpreting simple pictograms and tables (Lessons 3 and 4); sequencing events in chronological order using language, recalling their fieldtrip (Lesson 5).
- **Art & design:** developing a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, through map-making and creating 3D models; exercising skills with charcoal, pastel, crayon or paint, cutting, sticking and collage (Lesson 6).
- **Music:** learning to sing and using their voices to create and compose music on their own; making a song about their fieldtrip to an existing melody (Lesson 5).

The Big Finish

WE BUILT OUR JOURNEY!

The children will make individual or group 3D models of homes, local landmarks or even physical aspects (e.g. hills, rivers and woods) that they saw on their fieldtrip. These will be placed on a larger, paper 'base map' that the class can draw, paint and fill in with additional detail. Alternatively, children can produce a collaborative picture or photo collage, based on a previous fieldtrip in the locality.

Map work

The National Curriculum has a focus on using and making maps. You should use this to your advantage in this unit. The children will come to know the differences between a map, plan and aerial photograph. They will have the opportunity to use locational and directional language to describe the location of features and routes on a map. Maps you have drawn as exemplars are important to model for children the job of a map-maker. They should see themselves as mapmakers – making their view of their world – as an important role. The base map for the Big Finish should have a key (and symbols) created by children in Lesson 6. There are also opportunities for the children to use and add to a classroom plan (lesson 2) and practise sequencing events on their journey. Treat their emergent mapping with some care – it is not the role at this stage to get it 'right'; it is important we allow them to form views of their world and for us to try to capture some spatial awareness through how they record what they do. It is an intensively creative act and the larger the paper and bigger the scale we can support their developing graphicacy, the better! Find out where children live, mark it on a map and remember to use parents' local expertise and community insight. Childrens' vocabulary can be reinforced by adding photos and sketches to make multimedia maps.

Fieldwork

The children will have the opportunity to use simple fieldwork and observational skills in the school, its grounds and surroundings. Between Lessons 4 and 5, the children will go on a fieldtrip. Look through your school fence, climb to the top of your building (if you can) to look down or walk round the perimeter: school grounds studies and local walks are essential. Before you start work, consider what you will have as a focus for these six lessons. Speak with the children about which places you feature: your idea of what's local and significant, near and far and considered a landmark may be different to theirs. Virtual fieldtrips using images from websites can be alternatives. Prior EYFS learning will have given children some locational and place knowledge; childrens' previous teachers can advise if they have visited a farm, park, high street or market. Local maps can be stuck in the independent learning area to support you and other adults: if a child mentions somewhere you haven't heard of you can identify where it is! Street names, local rivers (however built around or culverted) and any green space should be looked at, considered, understood and put into a context – how long has it been there? Who cares for it? Is it worth keeping? Why?

Independent learning area

As suggested in Lesson 3's Extension activity, using everyday objects and equipment (abstract objects) to elicit and build 3D map worlds can be very motivating and will help develop childrens' geographical imagination. You might also have basic map symbols from which children can practise making maps with once they get the idea of them. Laminate images of the local area and make jigsaws for children to sort (number separate picture pieces on the back!). Display local maps in the independent learning area to support you and other adults: if a child mentions a place you haven't heard of, you can identify where it is!

Assessment

All children can:

- know about the local area and name key landmarks, such as the nearest local green space (e.g. from a vocabulary list of features of the local area, identify which are human or physical and describe these features)
- talk about a natural environment, naming its features using some key vocabulary
- locate places on a map of the local area using locational and directional language (e.g. after a walk to a nearby green space, describe the route taken on a simple base map using everyday directions and locational language prompted by their journey stick).

Most children can:

- know about the local area, and name and locate key landmarks (e.g. create a vocabulary list of the human and physical features of the local area and describe these features and locate them on a map using images or drawings)
- recognise a natural environment and describe it using key vocabulary
- describe a journey on a map of the local area using simple compass directions and locational and directional language (e.g. after a walk to a nearby green space, describe the route taken on a large-scale map using compass directions and locational language prompted by their journey stick).

Some children can:

- know the local area and its physical and human geography (e.g. investigate how other people view the local area, e.g. tourism websites, create a vocabulary list of the human and physical features of the local area and how people can use and change these and describe these features and locate them on a map using images or drawings)
- recognise different natural environments and describe them using a range of key vocabulary
- describe a journey on a map of the local area locating features and landmarks seen on the journey (e.g. after a walk to a nearby green space, describe with confidence the route taken on a large-scale OS map using compass directions and locational language prompted by their journey stick).