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Overview of the pack

Local Studies is a topic that is likely to be revisited throughout a pupil's school career. This pack provides an introduction to studying the local area, around the classroom and nearby canals and rivers.

National Curriculum links

- **History** – understand historical concepts such as continuity and change; and changes within living memory.
- **Geography** – human features in the local environment; field sketches; and interpret geographical information including maps and diagrams.
- **Art and design** – record observations.
- Links with **English, Maths and Science** will be indicated where they occur.

Other resources

- Canal & River Explorers' 'Travel and Transport' resources ([link to website](#)).
- Canal & River Trust news ([link to website](#)).
- Local newspapers and magazines.
- Photographs of the local area (from teachers, children, local guide books).
- Local maps such as Ordnance Survey maps and streets maps.

Learning objectives

- Understand the wide variety of features that make up their local area.
- Understand the part people play in developing and changing that area.

Success criteria

- All will be able to annotate maps and plans of their local area and give simple explanations about changes that have occurred.
- Most will understand what has influenced the current features of the place where they live.
- Some will have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the development of their local area.

Prior learning

- A general introduction to reading local maps and diagrams.

Follow up

- Design a new local area with all of the features that pupils would like it to have.

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Additional teacher information and discussion points on each slide to help you:

Slide 1 Key words

- Print out for a wall or table display as a reminder to pupils while they work.
- Other words include:
 - Year 1 & 2 – snow, pool, boat, air, plant, high, green.
 - Year 3 & 4 – improve, squirrel, enormous, curious, accept, except, happily.
 - Year 5 & 6 – observant, changeable, independent, cemetery, recognise, persuade.

Slide 2 Sensory words

- These words support descriptive writing and are useful for writing about the local community and history of the area. Pupils could discuss and write their own list thinking about smell, sight, sound, touch, and taste.

Slide 3 Your classroom – draw what you see

- Pupils should draw the first six things that they notice when they look around their classroom, not people. Pupils must not communicate with anyone else. The quality of the drawing is not important at this stage and therefore it might be useful to set a time limit.
- Compare results amongst pupils, and make a list of all the similar items pupils select. Is there any significance in these?

Slide 4 Just a plastic bottle?

- In order to encourage the thinking skills of your pupils and to ensure they use their creativity and imagination throughout this resource, show pupils an empty plastic bottle and ask them to discuss its uses with the pupil next to them.
- Give them a few starter ideas:
 - A flower vase
 - Cut off the bottom and use it as a funnel
 - Fill with sand and use it as a doorstep

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Slide 5 Your classroom – draw what you would like to see

- Pupils should draw six things that they would like to see in their classroom, that they don't have already. Pupils must not communicate with anyone else. The quality of the drawing is not important at this stage and therefore it might be useful to set a time limit.
- Answers might include:
 - Pets corner
 - Bean bags
 - A dressing up box
 - Food/drinks machine
 - Bigger windows to see outside
 - A 'tablet' for every desk
- Compare results amongst pupils, and make a list of all the similar items pupils select. Is there any significance in these? This is in preparation for pupils to be able to critique their own local environment.

Slide 6 Your classroom – sketch a plan of your ideal classroom

- Pupils should use some of the ideas already discussed to sketch a plan of their ideal classroom, or create an annotated picture.

Slide 7 Your school – cross-section drawing

- You should introduce the concept of a cross-section drawing and why the Grand Union Canal Company may have produced a cross-section drawing of a Lock Keeper's Cottage.
- Pupils should create their own cross-section drawing of the school.
- You could focus groups of children on different areas of the school, and compile all of the drawings into one large display.

Slide 8 Your local area

- Pupils should sketch a map of the local area surrounding the school. Landmarks or features should be noted in preparation for a walk.
- You should talk to pupils about landmarks or features that they might walk past everyday and not take much notice of.

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Slide 9 Your local area – take a walk

- Talk to your pupils about the route that they will take when they go outside of the school. Trace it with your finger or mark it carefully on a map.
- You should discuss the things that pupils will see on their walk. Inform pupils that they must use their powers of observation and write down the most significant landmarks.
- Pupils could take plain paper, a pencil and clipboard with them. Some pupils may be able to take photographs of what they see. The photographs can be used later on in this resource.

Slide 10 Your local area – important features

- You should choose the most significant landmarks from your walk, and each pupil needs to write a short explanation about why they are important.
- Answers could include:
 - It is used by older people.
 - Beautiful.
 - Ancient, and part of our history.
 - Important to exercise.
 - Children like it.
 - Boats use it.
 - It gives us electricity.
- You should focus the next discussion about how these features and the local area has changed over time.

Slide 11 Your local area – the beginning

- Many towns have something to do with water or rivers in their name.
- You should ask the children to use their imagination to make up the meaning of the place name. Ask them to tell their story to the rest of the class.
- Research the real story of their school's town or village name and its meaning.
- You should link this with the relevant period of time, and any key historical facts for the local area.
- Pupils could further this research through use of ICT facilities in your school.

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Slide 12 Your local area – in the past

- You could show pupils a map or photo of the local area, and compare it to the maps that pupils have created.
- What has changed? Why? What has happened to the landscape, canals or rivers over time?

Slide 13 Your local area - improvements

- Pupils need to consider three things that would improve the place where they live. Pupils need to think creatively and give reasons why it would improve their local area.
- Do the improvements need to be located close to a landmark or feature i.e. river bank?

Slide 14 Your local area – canals and rivers

- Pupils need to consider three things that would improve the local canal or river. Pupils need to think creatively and give reasons why.

Slide 15 Your local area – fact or opinion

- Pupils need to look at the difference between fact and opinion. You could relate this back to a key development that may be due to take place in your local area.

Slide 16 Your community – in the past

- Through research, pupils should look at old photos and consider the lives of previous members of the community. Relate this to history of the local area i.e. working with boats pulled by horses on the canals.
- Compare their lives with the lives of pupils and their parents.

Slide 17 Your community now – interview a local person

- Having had a look at the local area, and its history, you could invite a visitor into school who has lived in the area for some years. The visitor could answer questions about how the area has changed over time.

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Slide 17 Your community now – interview a local person (*continued...*)

- Pupils need to think about the following:
 - Who will meet/greet the visitor?
 - Will someone need to hang up their coat?
 - Should the visitor be provided with tea or a snack?
 - Where should they sit in the classroom?
 - How should the classroom be organised?
 - Should the visitor give a talk or be asked questions?
 - Should they be asked to bring photographs if possible?
 - Who should ask any questions?
 - Who should thank the visitor at the end?
 - Who would show them out?
 - How will pupils write down all of the information?
 - Will someone write a thank you letter afterwards?

Slide 18 Your community – the future

- If your local area has not been affected by flooding, you could focus on the areas of England and Wales which have been. Show the pupils images and video footage from news stories about flooding on the internet.