

Support units: Fieldwork

Illustration 1: Selecting a fieldwork site

Selecting a fieldwork site: Years 3 and 4

Students in Years 3 and 4 are typically from eight to 10 years of age. As such they are capable of extensive periods of time outside the classroom and should be encouraged to measure and collect data, photograph and sketch at the fieldwork site.

Specified concepts to be covered

- place
- interconnection
- environment
- sustainability.

Conceptual understandings to be extended

- space
- interconnection
- scale
- change.

Possible sites

- The school grounds. Areas around the school can be used for a waste management activity or a tree planting program.
- Nearby. A short walk to a park can be undertaken to study and test soils, classify vegetation types, identify the presence of animals by studying scats, and explore interconnections between people and their local environment. Consider becoming involved in an educational program established in the park.
- Further afield. A number of options for visits to less familiar environments can be undertaken. For example:
 - A farm. Any type of farm would be suitable for urban students and a niche farm, such as lavender, pig, llamas, could be selected for rural students.
 - A production site, such as a dairy, cheese-making, knitting mill or foundry.
 - A region where different types of settlements are influenced by the environment, such as coast, river, valley or mountain.

Parents may be able to provide contact into different environments such as food, fibre, timber or metal production. This fieldwork may require the organisation of transport and specific administrative requirements at your school.

Fieldwork activities

These should include observation, measurement and use of the senses based on an enquiry approach. Some possible questions to explore include:

- Where is this place?
- What happens here?
- How do I rank this place against a set of criteria – aesthetic, emotional, spiritual?
- Why do we need this place?
- How attached to this place are we?
- How can this environment and its habitats be protected?
- What ought to happen here in the future (10 years)?

Reporting on the fieldwork

A few suggestions include:

- identifying and labelling places that identify data collection sites on a map using geographical conventions, compass direction and distance, and annotating the map with drawings or photographs of environmental and constructed features
- counting and collating data, creating tables, graphs and models to show patterns
- interpreting graphic and tabular data
- comparing with other places by using Google Earth
<<http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>>
- producing an action plan on an environmental issue, utilising geographical terminology.