

Support units: Fieldwork

Illustration 1: Selecting a fieldwork site

Selecting a fieldwork site: Years 5 and 6

Students in Years 5 and 6 are typically from 10 to 12 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. With greater confidence, students should be able to seek opinions from the public.

Specified concepts to be covered

- place
- interconnection
- environment
- space
- scale.

Conceptual understandings to be extended

- sustainability
- change.

Possible sites

- The school grounds. Areas around the school can be used for the study of a local planning issue, such as a survey as to where a basketball court should be built or the designation of a school drop-off zone.
- Nearby. A short walk to town or a shopping strip to explore the location of businesses and services can be undertaken to consider if specific activities tend to locate within the same vicinity by choice or by zoning requirements.
- Further afield. Visit diagonally different suburbs of a large city (not commonly known to the students) to show the inequalities of wealth, health and education. Interviews may be considered as an appropriate form of data collection. Another possibility is a visit to a food processing plant or distribution centre to discover the interconnections through export. These fieldworks may require the organisation of transport and specific administrative requirements at your school.

Fieldwork activities

These should include observation, collecting data 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?

- What data can be gathered to support an understanding of a local issue?
- What interconnections can be found between this environment and other global environments?

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 well-selected material to support the enquiry
- counting and collating data, creating tables, graphs and models to show patterns
- interpreting graphic and tabular data
- presenting summarised points of view taken from interviews and surveys
- introducing secondary data to add value to student analysis
- producing a poster, a media report or action plan on an environmental issue or a report on an investigation, utilising geographical terminology.