

Unit 18 What was it like to live here in the past?

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit, children are introduced to an enquiry-based approach to a local study. It is best to focus on an aspect of the local community in the immediate locality. It might also be part of a field visit, particularly a residential field trip. Children compare two or three periods of time. A house or group of houses, a shopping street, the school, a workplace, a place of worship, civic or service buildings, or an historic site such as a local castle could be selected as the focus of the unit. It gives opportunity for direct access to historical sources and is an excellent chance to develop fieldwork and research skills. The unit also provides an opportunity to consider citizenship issues such as planning for change, conservation, local identity and social responsibility.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This local study can provide links with the geographical local study, Unit 6 'Investigating our local area'. It may also have links with one of the British history studies, such as Units 6A, B, C 'Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past?'; Unit 8 'What were the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times?'; Unit 12 'How did life change in our locality in Victorian times?'; Unit 13 'How has life in Britain changed since 1948?'; and in this way provide a local dimension to a study of national events.

ADAPTING THE UNIT FOR A DIFFERENT AGE GROUP

Year 5 and 6 children could:

- explore more than one period in the past
- focus on why the locality changed and the consequences of this
- take responsibility for finding and selecting sources suitable for the enquiry
- use a more extensive range of sources, synthesising information from more than one source, and comparing and contrasting different sources
- use more challenging sources, transcribing some of the documents or using ICT to store the information on a database
- present their findings using a wider range of communication techniques

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have:

- worked with sources from the past such as artefacts, pictures and buildings
- started to develop observation and recording skills
- asked and answered questions about sources to find information about people's lives

VOCABULARY

In this unit, children will have opportunities to use:

- words associated with historical sources, *eg census, trade/street directories, oral history, documents*
- words associated with historical research, *eg decade, century, generation, ancestor*
- words associated with buildings, *eg factory, industry, storey, semi-detached, detached, gable, lintel, arch, sash window, casement window, bay, dormer, barge board, finial, pediments, lychgate, churchyard, tower, steeple, gargoyles, corbel, nave, aisle*

RESOURCES

- local history books and booklets
- a range of old maps, including large-scale Ordnance Survey maps
- copies of old photographs, postcards or paintings
- documentary sources such as census returns, parish records and trade/street directories
- modern photographs of buildings and features in the area
- help may be available from staff at your library, local museum and the borough or county record office. Parents and older residents may give information from different perspectives
- English Heritage produce many valuable teachers' guides. The *Teachers' Guide to Local Studies* will be very useful in this context

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

some children will have progressed further and will:

recognise buildings and features in their local area and know that the locality has changed over time; demonstrate factual knowledge and understanding about the history of the locality or about some of the main events and people linked to the area; recognise some of the similarities and differences in living conditions at different times in the area; ask and answer questions and make deductions about the area by using historical sources in a variety of ways

understand that their area was different in the past; make some comparisons between their area in the past and today; begin to ask and answer questions about the local area describe and compare features of the local area and identify changes within and across the periods; select and combine information from several sources to find out about aspects of the past in the locality

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- that a map is a representation of an area
- to recognise some features in the local area, and to locate them on a map
- that an area may contain a mixture of old and new buildings

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- that the area has changed at different times in the past
 - to sequence maps in chronological order
 - to use maps to help describe some of the characteristic features of the past

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- that there are different sources of information for their area in the past
 - to develop skills of accurate observation and recording
 - to make deductions from physical evidence
 - to recognise that some questions can be answered by looking at buildings and others cannot

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- to find information about the area from studying pictures
 - to question pictures as interpretations of the past

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

What is our area like today?

Prepare a large simplified map of the area, with a picture of the school as its central point, and collect photographs of nearby buildings or features that the children will recognise. Ask the children what they know about the area and mark on street names. Put the photographs in their correct places on the map.

Use the pictures as a basis for an introductory discussion about how the buildings are used and who uses them. Ask the children to sort the buildings into 'old' or 'new', giving reasons for their choice. Use this as an opportunity to discuss what is meant by 'old'.

How can we use maps to explore how our area has changed?

Divide the children into small groups and give each group copies of two maps of the same area – one from the present and one from a chosen period in the past. Ask the children to look for and record changes by comparing details shown on the maps, such as roads, railways, housing, open spaces and amenities.

Use OHT acetates on top of the maps of the locality in the past to record roads and the use and range of buildings. Compare this OHT with one from the present. *What buildings have appeared or disappeared? How has the type of building changed over the period?*

Help the children to build up a 'picture' of the past: choose the same two points for children to 'walk' between on each map, and ask them to describe what can be seen, heard or even smelt today. Ask them to describe what might have been seen, heard, smelt on the same 'walk' at different times in the past.

What can local buildings or sites tell us about the past?

Arrange a visit to a local building(s). Ask the children to observe and record information to help answer questions such as *What does it look like? How big is it? What is it made of? What is it used for now? What was it used for in the past? Has it always been used for this? Is there anything unusual about it? What are the surroundings like? Why do you think it was built here?*

Lead a discussion on what sort of people the children think might have lived/worked/visited here. Ask them to look at size, number of rooms, decorative features and layout as clues to its use. Encourage them to ask questions about the place as it was in the past – even if it is not possible to find the answers!

Back in the classroom, ask the children to use reference materials, *eg books, ICT* to help them find out what it might have been like to have lived and worked in that building in the past.

What do pictures and photographs tell us about past life in our area?

Give the children pictures (paintings, sketches, photographs, postcards) showing how the area has changed. Challenge the children, working in pairs, to ask each other questions about each picture. Help them to ask open-ended questions, such as *What does it tell us about the area and people in the past? What has changed and what has stayed the same? Why might this be so?* Encourage the children to look closely at the details and compare them with a modern photograph. Ask pairs of children to look at different aspects, *eg buildings, transport and roads, street furniture and people*.

Lead a discussion about why people have pictures made of the local area. Questions on interpretation might include *Why and how do you think the picture was made? Who might it have been made for? Do you think it is natural or posed?*

If there are people in the picture, discuss what may have been happening before the picture was made and what may have occurred afterwards. This could lead to role-play or freeze framing as children recreate the story around a picture. Ask the children to write the instructions that may have been given to the photographer or artist who created the picture (*eg make it look grander, bigger, tidier*).

Lead a discussion to sort the pictures into a chronological sequence and then make a visual time line for the classroom.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- identify features in their area on the large map
- use features of buildings to infer their use and who owned them
- categorise buildings as 'old' or 'new'

- record changes shown on maps in table form
- contribute to making a visual time line
- produce a description of the area that contains appropriate historical detail

- identify some features of a building through observation and asking and answering questions
- record their observations by annotating drawings or by labelling and completing a prepared outline
- write a short, accurate description of the place suggesting who might have used it

- identify features of the area from pictures
- record their ideas in a table using the categories as headings
- suggest how, why and for whom a picture was made
- demonstrate what they have learnt about the area through role play

POINTS TO NOTE

Identify an individual building or a group of buildings, such as a street or row of shops. Select buildings which are easily and safely accessible from school, which will interest children, and which have a range of available supporting material for a particular date or dates in the past, *eg old photographs, maps, newspaper cuttings*.

Take photographs of local buildings, using digital technology if available. Make sure they include a variety of different types of buildings that the children will recognise, *eg shops, schools, churches, garages*.

If possible, lay the large map out flat on the floor or on a table, rather than upright.

Remember when looking at 'old' and 'new' that some buildings are multi-period.

These activities have important connections with a geographical local study.

The teacher could help the children use maps from different periods by selecting reference points (such as a river, church or school) to look for on all the maps.

Have a selection of reference materials relating to the period available.

Teachers need to select reference materials that are accessible and relevant to the chosen locality.

Focus on what is special about the building. Develop a storyline for the investigation, and keep it in mind as sources are introduced and questioned.

This activity could be focused around a case study of a particular family or group of people linked with a house or workplace in the area; or on an interesting character who lived locally in the past; or on an event from the past, *eg How were national events such as jubilees celebrated? How did the Second World War affect people in the local area?*

It is helpful to use two or more pictures of the same place from different periods, including the present, to show change over time.

Magnifying lenses would help children to focus on the details in the pictures.

Children's questions are likely to be closed: teacher-directed questions should be more open ended to encourage greater deduction.

Pictures are not neutral, factual sources of information. They are people's interpretations of the past. Using visual sources provides the opportunity to discuss this with the children.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

- to find out about the local area in the past from different written sources
- that different kinds of written sources provide different information about the local area

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- to initiate and pursue specific lines of questioning
 - to develop listening and note-taking skills
 - to differentiate between fact and opinion
 - that historical accounts are often influenced by personal opinion

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- to synthesise what they have found out about the local area
 - to put their findings into chronological context
 - to contribute and cooperate as part of a group
 - to organise information and communicate it in a variety of ways appropriate to the audience

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Which written sources can we use?

Using different written sources, the class or groups of children could carry out a variety of activities to find out about the local area in the past and compare it with the present:

Census returns

Use part of a census form to find out about ONE local family in a particular house, their names, ages and jobs. Encourage the children to make deductions about the family structure, their lifestyle, home, where they went to work, school or shop.

Trade directories

Help the children to identify differences in a shopping street in the past by using extracts from a trade directory. Ask the children questions, eg *What shops/businesses were here? Who worked here? What could be bought here?*

School records

Choose an event from a school log book to provide background information for the children to write their own account of the incident, eg *from an eyewitness or participant's point of view.*

Inventories

Use inventory lists to help the children see what possessions people in the past owned and kept in certain rooms of a house. Discuss the contents of a particular room for which details are available and compare with the modern equivalent in the children's homes. Children could use ICT to sort information and present it on a database.

Discuss with the children what sorts of information they have found out from the different sources and compare life in the area then and now.

How can oral sources help us to find out about how people lived?

Identify a topic of interest about the local area and discuss possible questions that could be asked of a visitor to the school who is able to talk about changes over time in the local area. Encourage open-ended questions such as *Can you describe your day/house/work/journey/school? What was it like to...? How did you...? What do you remember about...?*

Compile a short list of agreed questions and make sure that the children are clear about the purpose of the interview.

Before the visitor comes into school to answer the questions, ask the children to practise interviewing teachers, family and friends. Collect information during the interview by taking notes or recording on tape, or by holding a follow-up discussion and summarising the main points.

Help the children to identify the facts from the visitor's opinions.

What was it like to live in our area in the past?

The results of the different activities can be organised and communicated to other audiences in various ways and children should consider the intended audience. For example:

Wall or table display

Ask groups to make detailed labelled drawings to surround a large picture or model of their chosen building, to show lifestyle, costume, transport.

Guide book

Decide, as a class, who the guide book is for, its format, content and length of text.

Tape/slide show

Plan a slide/tape presentation using a storyboard technique. Discuss with the children the best length for a presentation for a chosen audience and the number of slides that will be needed.

Oral presentation

What questions would the children ask if they became time travellers and visited their area in the past? Ask different groups of children to take on the role of experts on a particular place at a certain time, while the rest of the class ask them questions.

Drama

Give out a picture or an object associated with each building to small groups. Ask them to devise a story based on it and act it out.

Time line

Select a range of information from the presentation to create a class time line for the history of the local area.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

CHILDREN

- demonstrate knowledge about the way of life of people who lived in the area in the past, orally or in writing
- make comparisons between lifestyles today and in the past

POINTS TO NOTE

The local library, archive or record office will be able to assist in locating sources available for the local area. Teachers could focus on one or more of the different types of source.

There is a huge variety of other written sources, including advertisements, sale particulars, newspapers, parish records and personal documents such as diaries and letters.

Some of these written sources will need to be adapted to enable children to use them.

It is often useful to compare **trade directories** with **census returns** for the same street at around the same time.

School records include admission registers, log books, punishment and attendance records.

Inventories, often made after a person's death, usually list moveable possessions (see also Unit 8).

Use reference materials, dictionaries, encyclopedias and CD-ROMS to find out about unfamiliar occupations, merchandise, etc.

For further information on written sources, see the English Heritage publications *Using Documents* and *Using School Buildings*.

- collect information about the area from oral evidence
- summarise the information collected
- identify facts and opinions

This activity will need to be planned well in advance. Local history societies, the library, parents, governors and staff would provide a good source of suitable 'visitors'. The visitors will need to be briefed about the children and the teacher's expectations.

Questions might be linked to another source studied such as a map, photograph, building or artefact. Using this technique can help put visitors at ease.

Oral history is the only historical source that allows dialogue. This gives the opportunity for extracting answers to specific questions. Older children should be encouraged to pursue lines of enquiry in more depth to gain the detail they want.

- make a presentation showing the knowledge and understanding of the history of the local area developed through the unit
- present information in a way that is appropriate to the intended audience
- produce an accurate class time line

Ensure that the key questions that form the enquiries are made explicit by being used as headings.

Use ICT and links to other subjects, *eg geography, PSHE, English*, where appropriate to support the children's presentation.

This activity provides an opportunity to explore with the children their own interpretations and representations of the past – how they are similar or different and the reasons why.

Use the time line as a consolidation of what has been learnt. Use dates carefully, try to work in larger blocks of time if possible.



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