

## Living graphs

Students are often asked to draw a graph and then describe it or respond to questions set by the teacher. This is quite a sterile activity if it is confined to closed questions with little debate. The idea of living graphs is to get students to *interpret* the graph in an interesting way through a story. Suitable graphs are those that have time on the x axis. Students are given statements of events which they have to place on the graph when they were likely to have happened. The activity encourages students to discuss and argue in small groups.

## Reference

- Leat, D. (1998) *Thinking through geography*. London: Chris Kington Publishing, p 24 onward – this includes an excellent section on Living Graphs with a good evaluation of a debriefing which threw up some surprises!

## Case studies to illustrate some living graph activities

- King, S. 'Using questions to promote learning', *Teaching Geography*, October 1999 – includes an example of a temperature graph.
- Leat's examples: demographic transition; daily energy consumption; the stage model of tourism.
- Thomas, S. and McGahan, H. 'Geography it makes you think', *Teaching Geography*, July 1997. Example of a seismic trace and a mountain climate.
- Holbrey, C. and Parkhurst, L. 'Can engaging teaching survive the knowledge revolution?' *Teaching Geography*, Vol 45, issue 2, Summer 2020

(Last updated July 2021)