

Thinking activity: Mostly likely to

This activity presents students with a list of options and they have to identify which they think is most likely to represent a situation. The activity requires statements which can be on cards, or in a list of jumbled up statements. They have to sort them into two groups on the basis that they are *most likely to* conform to the characteristics. In other words this is a classifying activity, but without cast-iron answers! The activity needs to be for a topic where there are viable alternatives and it helps students to look for generalizations and understand patterns and processes at work.

Some hints on managing this activity

- Include some obvious and some ambiguous statements to give some confidence and some challenge.
- Decide if students need to record their decisions – if they do, make the recording simple so it does not distract from the discussion.
- The timing is elastic – it depends on the amount of debate the statements generate.
- Discuss the characteristics and classifications they found in a debrief, and then go on to consider generalisations and any hypotheses they suggested.
- Watch that the tasks do not engender or reinforce stereotypes and prejudices; think carefully about the statement and look out for any points where this might occur. Be prepared to challenge any stereotypes in the debriefing, by asking ‘is this the only circumstance where this occurs?’
- It is possible to move from classification to a comparison in some themes.

Reference

- Nichols, A. and Kinninment, D., (2001) *More Thinking through Geography*, London: Chris Kington Publishing

Case studies to illustrate this activity

- Nichols’ examples are: ecotourism or mass tourism, farming in the UK
- Example in urban geography from Leat, D. and McAleavy, T, ‘Critical thinking in the humanities’, *Teaching Geography*, July 1998
- Examples from Pupilvision (www.geoworld.co.uk): [Climate – countries](#) and [Climate – Britain](#).

(Last updated May 2017)