

Developing a piece of 'waste land'.

Context	In all local areas there are sites which might be considered 'waste land'. Some of these have never been significantly developed, while others are abandoned residential, industrial or commercial 'brown field' sites. Investigating one of these sites can develop pupils' fieldwork and mapping skills, facilitate their understanding of change in the local area, and engage them in critical thinking about potential future developments.		
Length of time	Flexible	Suitable location	Local area
Equipment needed	Satellite images of the local area (e.g. from Google maps) Contemporary maps of the local area (e.g. from OS Digimap) Historic maps of the local area (optional) Camera for taking pictures (optional)		
Suggested delivery			Objectives (2 -3) Key Skills
<p>In class, ask pupils what the term 'waste land' means, and whether they can think of any patches of waste land in the local area. List these, along with any informal names for them used by pupils.</p> <p>Study a satellite image of the local area (e.g. from Google maps) to locate pieces of waste land named by pupils. Discuss what the satellite images of the waste land show, using appropriate vocabulary – vacant buildings, abandoned industrial plant or equipment, derelict gardens, dumped rubbish, scrub vegetation, lying water, etc.</p> <p>Choose a piece of waste land near the school which is accessible or where you can see it from a safe place. Use a map of the local area to plan a safe route to the site.</p> <p>Provide pupils with large scale maps of the site and visit it to observe its features first hand. Encourage pupils to name and describe what they observe, and to record their observations. They could make notes, label drawings or sketches, or annotate their maps. If pupils have cameras, they can take photographs to show the features of the site.</p> <p>In the classroom, discuss what you observed at the site. Ask pupils what they think should happen to the site. Does it have value as 'waste land', e.g. as an informal play area, a green space for wildlife or a remnant of past industrial activity? Or could it be put to better use through development? If so, what? What is needed in the local area – housing, a park, new employment opportunities, community facilities, etc? Could any existing buildings be re-purposed for new uses?</p> <p>Ask groups of pupils to create development plans for the site, drawing on the field visit and subsequent discussion. Each group could present their plan as a leaflet, poster or PowerPoint presentation, incorporating drawings, maps, etc as appropriate.</p> <p>Conclude the investigation with an event where each group presents and justifies their plan, and take a vote to decide the best proposal.</p>			<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop knowledge and understanding of features of the local area. 2. Consider potential development options for a local piece of 'waste land'. <p><u>Key Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fieldwork skills in observation and recording • interpretation of satellite images, map reading and recording information on maps • skills in critical engagement with debates about the potential development of 'waste land'.
Potential risks to consider	Some pieces of waste land are relatively safe sites (e.g. informal green spaces), but derelict sites may prove more hazardous. Before any site visit assess the site, and the route to it, yourself. Involve pupils in thinking ahead for any potential risks and planning how to avoid them.		
Possible follow-up activities	Pupils could forward their development proposals to local Planning Officers or politicians. Pupils could investigate the history of the site through old using historic maps, and for ex-industrial or commercial sites, other historical sources such as local directories.		
Resources	The Everyday Guide to Primary Geography series includes several examples of pupils investigating change and development in the local area.		

These resources have been created by the Fieldwork and Outdoor Learning Special Interest Group.