

Our landscapes

Project Kit description

Schools prepare a leaflet or online brochure for their partner schools on the local landscape. Using eTwinning web tools pupils prepare lessons to explain what they have learned.

Objectives

Understanding the formation, role and value of landscapes is a fundamental geographical approach. Teachers must be able to use local features to explain the origins and activities of people and places in their local region. So, the investigation of topics such as water, rocks, land features, weather and ecology are essential to enhance geographical understanding and awareness. This can be further enriched by sharing or comparing contrasting localities. The locality study is thus the basis of many excellent geographical lessons. Working actively to gather and collect scientific information on landscapes and features can provide a lot of data to work with so that pupils are able to examine scientifically relevant results.

Teachers and pupils can examine their own locality and compare it with those of other places, so international collaboration can be encouraged.

Process

Each partner school

Setting the scene - Introduce landscapes and processes involved in their formation (water, wind, ice and seas).

Discuss other influences (weather and weathering, climatic change, rock formation and strength, earth movements and volcanic eruptions etc.).

Focus on local landscapes. Gather digital photographs of local landscapes. For example, the pupils should be able to recognize and explain the origin of the local landscape seen from the classroom window (including the human landscape). This will also be a good opportunity for them to annotate (make notes about) the digital photographs or sketches made from the area. They could use Google Earth for this.

A class visit to local features would also be useful.

Getting started - Teachers from the partner schools get in touch with each other and check their availability (days, times, contact addresses, etc.). Together with your pupils and your partner school, decide which language you will use to communicate with each other. It is easiest to use the language you teach in, but it might not be understood by your partner. Your pupils might refuse to be taught in any other language, so translation may be necessary. Try to find a pupil or some pupils to be in charge of translation. Find a language teacher to proofread, if necessary. Fortunately, scientific terms often are similar in different languages.

Preparing schools -Each partner should

- Identify landforms and landscapes they want to concentrate on, suited to their own needs.
- Check for curricular requirements and needs.
- Make a list of materials they will use.
- Plan and prepare fieldwork if needed.

Collecting and processing information

- Pupils should explore the Internet for the examples of landscapes in their region. They can use local web sites and relate to other places with similar landscapes. Keep a collection of web addresses (URLs).
- Pupils can collect further information on the formation of these types of landscapes. The online books might provide some useful explanations.

Subjects

Environmental Education, History, Social Studies / Sociology

Level

11-15

The class should be organised into groups of 3-4 pupils.

- Google Earth and World Wind should be explored and images can be captured and emailed to the twinned groups or classes. Geolimages can also be used to find images similar to the landscapes under study from other locations.
- If a field visit is possible, photographs and video can be taken by pupils and then edited to be used in explaining the formation and for the travel brochure. Rocks and specimens can be collected and used.
- The groups of pupils should produce an illustrated travel brochure on the landscapes of their (home) region for a class of geography pupils of their own age. They should plan a tour of the places the class should visit and explain how the landscapes were formed. This tour can be made using Google maps

Exchanging information and learning with and from others

Pupils upload their leaflet to the TwinSpace.

Pupils discuss and explain to their partners about how their local landscapes and landforms were created, using chat/forum or videoconference. This means the pupils would have to prepare a 'mini-lesson' to teach their partner twinned group or class. This makes sure that they understand the topics so they can explain it to others. They can practice their mini-lesson on their own classmates. They could present their class to their partners using Elluminate Virtual Classroom.

Finally all the materials can be gathered from both twinned schools and presented as a class project on for example PowerPoint, a webpage or as a classroom display.

Evaluation

There are various ways to evaluate the experience.

On a peer-to-peer

level, you could reflect on how this collaboration improved the quality of your own teaching (methodology, material, etc.). Your findings could encourage other teachers at your school to do their own collaborative project.

Peer to peer:

- Think about the interactions between the classes and groups. What worked and what did not?
- Which advice was the most relevant and why?
- What could have been better and why?
- Which alternative activities could you have done?
- How else could you have organised the class?
- To which extent did the cooperation improve your skills?
- Would you recommend this project to other teachers - why or why not? etc.

Teacher to pupil:

On a teacher-to-pupil level, you could focus on evaluating the content. In particular it will be important for each pupil to reflect on what they have learned. Groups of pupils can reflect together on what they learned and instruct one another. You could also examine to which extent pupils profited from the collaborative work.

- What were the most significant outcomes of the project?
- What was learned and which gaps remain?
- Which other areas in an international context would they like to explore?
- What are the conclusions and consequences you can draw from them?

Pupils learn how to:

- Explore physical landscapes.
- Recognise and understand the formation of features.
- Gather and investigate information.
- Measure and collect information (scientific data, landscape sketches or photographs).

Describe landscapes, carry out an analysis of information and draw inferences about the physical landscape and impact of people on the environment.

- Compare landscapes and lifestyles use different ways of presenting information.
- Analyse and evaluate data.

Follow-up

Follow up options

There are other possibilities for the partner schools to

Exchange information and learn with and from others

- Share photographs and URLs (Web site information) with partner class.
- Match groups of pupils so they share only their own leaflets, on similar or different themes, then the class can share all the leaflets at a later stage.
- Organise a chat or videoconference on what the groups would see and do if they were to visit the partner school region. It may be useful for pupils to prepare their guided tour of the region and they can chat about it online.
- Organise a discussion forum about the importance of landscape to the way people live in their region. This discussion forum could have threads for them to contribute to like travel and transport, jobs, tourism, farming, buildings and where they are located, forests, water resources and the way we live for example.

Go on working once the partnership is over

Groups of pupils in the partner schools could continue to share their weekend/leisure experiences and other aspects of their lives through email. This will of course also be related to the landscape they live in.



is part of Erasmus+, the EU programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport