



EduTrend Contents

W4C · HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Local History Detectives

Track change and continuity with old maps and photos

Ages 12–14

Level: Intermediate

60 minutes

Groups of 3 · up to 30

Activity 04

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 04 · AT A GLANCE

Local History Detectives

Students compare an old map or photograph of their local area with a modern map or street view. They identify what has changed and what has stayed the same, measure changes such as new roads or lost fields, and suggest causes using a short set of written sources. The session develops the concepts of change, continuity and causation using evidence close to home.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- identify changes and continuities by comparing historic and modern sources;
- describe the scale and pace of change using evidence;
- suggest causes of change and link them to wider historical developments;
- recognise the strengths and limitations of maps and photographs as sources.

KEY WORDS

change · continuity · causation ·
historic map · land use · settlement
· source · reliability

CURRICULUM LINKS

History: a local history study (England National Curriculum, Key Stages 2 and 3). Geography: map skills and land use. C3 Framework, Dimension 2: change, continuity and context.

1

QUESTION

What do we want to know?

2

FIND

Gather sources

3

OBSERVE

Look closely

4

INFER

What does it suggest?

5

CHECK

Compare sources

6

EXPLAIN

Tell the story

Materials (per group)

- A historic map of the local area (many national libraries and mapping agencies offer free historic map viewers) printed at a similar scale to a modern map
- A modern map or printed satellite view of the same area
- 2–3 old photographs of local streets and modern photos of the same places
- A short fact sheet with dates of local events (railway, factory, housing estate)
- Tracing paper, coloured pencils, rulers
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Find and print a historic map and a modern map at matching scales; mark the school on both.
- Check local library or archive websites for old photographs of nearby streets.
- Write a short fact sheet of 6–8 dated local events from a reliable local history source.
- Prepare a key for land use colours: housing, industry, fields, transport, green space.

SAFETY

If you take students to photograph streets today, follow your school's off-site procedures and keep away from traffic.

ACTIVITY 04 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

The richest discussion comes from things that did not change. Push students to explain continuity as well as change.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Show an old and a new photo of the same street side by side. Students spot differences in one minute.	<i>"What has stayed exactly the same?"</i>
10–25 min Compare maps	Groups trace key features from the old map and overlay them on the modern map, colouring by land use.	<i>"Where has the biggest change happened?"</i>
25–35 min Measure	Groups measure or count changes (new roads, lost fields, new buildings).	<i>"How fast did this change happen?"</i>
35–50 min Explain	Using the fact sheet, groups link changes to causes on Worksheet 2.	<i>"Which cause mattered most? Why?"</i>
50–60 min Evaluate	Groups discuss what maps and photos show and miss, and complete Worksheet 3.	<i>"Whose lives do these sources leave out?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Use an old and a modern map of your area to identify three changes and one continuity, and explain the most important cause of change using evidence.

ACTIVITY 04 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The history in brief

Change and continuity are key historical concepts. Comparing sources from two points in time shows what changed and what stayed the same, but not why. To explain change, historians look for causes, such as new transport, industry or population growth, and consider which were most important.

Maps are selective: map makers choose what to show, and older maps may not record small or temporary buildings. Photographs show one moment from one viewpoint and may be staged. Using several sources together, and asking who made each one and why, gives a more reliable picture.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Change always means progress.” Some changes brought losses, such as green space or local jobs.
- “The map shows everything that was there.” Maps are selective and reflect their purpose.
- “Places changed all at once.” Change often happened in stages over decades.

Adapting the activity

Support

Provide a pre-traced overlay and a list of five features to look for.

Stretch

Students interview an older resident about how the area has changed and compare the oral account with the map evidence.

WORKSHEET 1

Spot the change

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Compare the old and modern sources.

Changes and continuities

Feature	Then	Now	Change or continuity?

WORKSHEET 2

Explaining change

Link each change to a cause from the fact sheet.

Causes

Change	Likely cause	Evidence
1		
2		
3		

The most important cause was... because...

WORKSHEET 3

Judging the sources

How reliable and useful are maps and photographs?

What these sources show well

What they leave out

Another source that would help

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Identifies change and continuity	Explains causes with evidence	Evaluates maps and photos

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Local History Detectives is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C History & Archaeology programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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