

Key topic areas	Equipment and resources required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place and Space Culture and Character Urban design Settlements 	Blank map of the school site Urban design score card Mood survey chart
<h3>Context</h3>	
<p>Geographers study the urban fabric of a place not just for its practical functionality as a site of work, recreation and housing - urban design also has a profound impact on people's well-being, their behaviour and how they feel about a place in both the short and long term, as visitors and as residents. Elements of urban design such as the amount and position of greenery, textures of building surfaces, viewpoints and street furniture can all develop one's feeling of belonging and understanding of a place.</p> <p>By examining more closely the factors within urban design that can make an individual feel happy and safe, town planners can create towns that not only function economically, but ones which aim to be socially sustainable too. Individuals who feel happy and safe in an urban space are equally more likely to behave like responsible stewards of the town and have a deeper connection to it as a place. This is often something that is fostered and forged over a longer period of time and therefore not always present in people who visit the town fleetingly such as tourists, or those who have a temporary connection such as university students. One would say that longer term residents who see change in their towns over time develop a stronger sense of place and therefore may not feel the same level of connection elsewhere despite, on the surface at least, the two places being very similar.</p>	
<h3>Classroom set up</h3>	
<p>To introduce the idea of how urban design can affect us, create a photo montage showing images of a city that the students are unlikely (as a result of geographical proximity) to know well. The bank of images should be sourced from city council websites or tourist board websites and show the city at its best, portraying the view of the city that officials would most like others to remember. As the montage of images is shown, ask students to describe them and to pick out summary adjectives and finally to say whether they would like to visit that city. Ask students to consider what it was in the images that made them feel that way and separately collate a list of urban design features that the students favour.</p> <p>Once this list is at around 10 to 15 in number, use it to create an urban design scorecard (see overleaf), with the design elements in a column against which students can score for impact. Design elements might include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> green space, trees, flower beds and planters public art installations ornate or interesting architecture cleanliness of streets and features noise and resonance viewpoints and vistas street furniture such as benches and litter bins wide pavements and pedestrianisation schemes building façade and use of materials building height and density signage and information <p>Leave space for 'Other' rows in the scorecard so that students can add in additional elements if they come across these in the field.</p>	

Urban Design Feature	None (0)	Limited (1)	Extensive (2)
Green spaces, trees, flowerbeds, planters etc.			
Public art installations			

Students can hypothesise which of the design elements might have the greatest impact on mood and well-being of people using the spaces that have those elements.

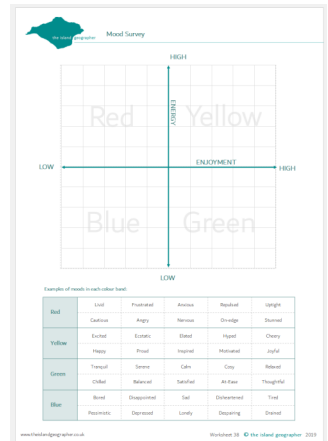
In the field

Choose ten to twelve points around the school site, such that each has a different feel, look or viewpoint. Splitting the class so that they are working in small groups, send each group to two or three of the sites. At each designated site, the students first complete their urban design score card, noting all the features they can see from their chosen spot.

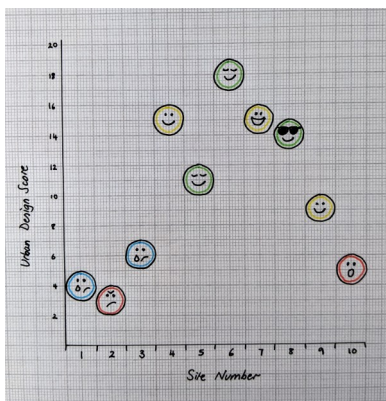
Students should then note separately how the place makes them feel, if necessary using a mood survey chart to guide them. This can be noted on the map of the school site using a colour code (red, yellow, green, blue as per the mood survey) or an emoji icon if more nuance is needed.

On return to the classroom, students should collate their data together so that their individual maps are complete.

A mood survey chart



Suggested data presentation



Though the map of the school site only shows the mood survey results, students could also add onto the map the total scores recorded at each site through the urban design score card. This could be presented as a sited bar chart or proportional shape map.

Alternatively, students could plot the urban design scores on a simple chart but add a pictogram element by making their emoji icons their plotted points. This should allow students to see if the places with the highest urban design scores were also the places with the most positive moods.

Key questions for reflection and analysis

- Which were the most common / least common urban design features?
- Which places invoked the most positive and negative feelings?
- Did the places with the highest urban design scores have the most positive moods?
- Which particular features tended to create the most positive moods?
- Was the mood survey an accurate way of measuring sense of place?
- What other ways could we measure sense of place?
- How might the results have been different if we had asked first-time visitors to the school?
- How might the results have been different at a different time of year?

Taking it further

Students could look at the areas of the school grounds that tended to invoke the most negative feelings and make suggestions (based on the elements of urban design that created most positivity) for how they could be redesigned.