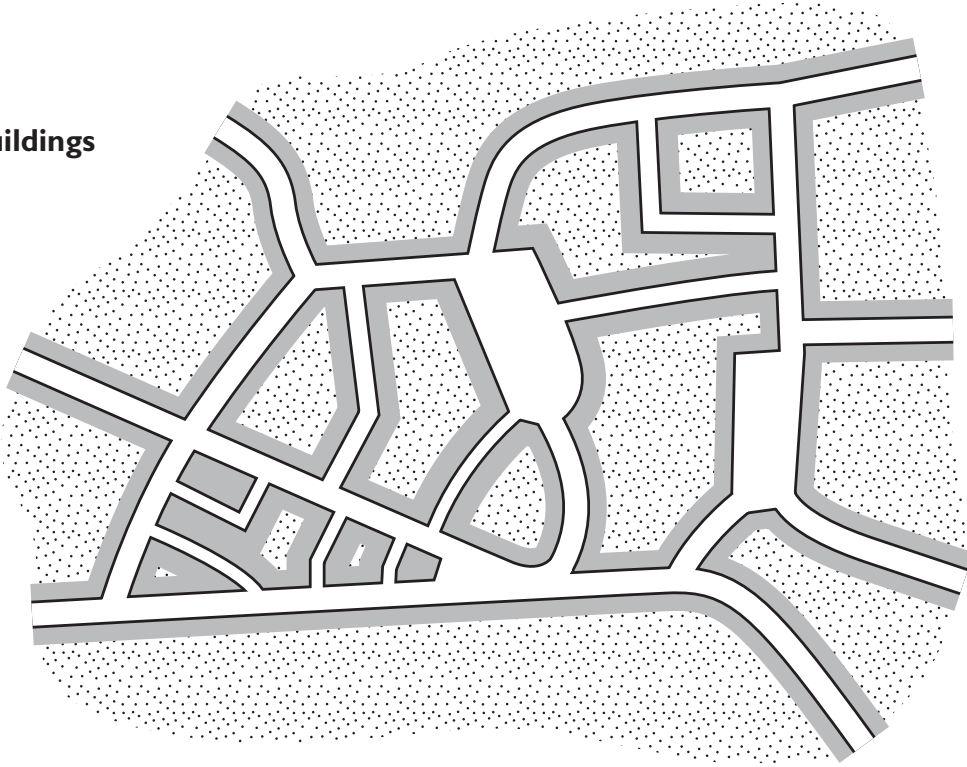


Where routes meet: market towns

A market town is a small or medium-sized town where many of the jobs are in buying and selling rather than in making goods or working in offices. This picture shows the road plan of the centre of a market town.

 = buildings



Q1. Mark on the diagram where you think the centre of this market town is. Write a sentence to explain the reason for placing your mark.



Q2. There were once three markets in this town. Mark them 1, 2 and 3.

Q3. The town no longer holds markets. Where do people now get the things they want?



Q4. Colour the part of the picture where you think the main shops might be.

Background

Most small to medium-sized towns are market towns. They are only known to the people in the area they serve, whereas larger, industrial towns and cities are known to many people in a wide region.

The key to a market town is showing that it is closely linked with its local trading area – called hinterland, and also showing that its crossroads location is important.

It is also important to know, for this and subsequent spreads, that most towns owe their development to several factors. Thus many market towns may also be at the bridging point of a river.

In general, the more factors that are important, the more useful and attractive the site, and the more it is likely to grow beyond simply market town status.

What students can be asked to look for is the market place, or a street name that suggests that a market once took place there. Markets can be broad, main streets or special sites, sometimes circular, sometimes square or rectangular, sometimes triangular. Often, all the sites have been used for specialist markets, for example, vegetables might have been sold in one market area, animals in another and corn in a third. This is often signified by the name of the market, for example, cornmarket, cattlemarket, buttermarket.

In this worksheet a town centre has been drawn with a number of possible open spaces that could be used as market areas so that students can think about which sites are, or were, suitable for markets.

Answers

Q1. The centre of town is where the largest market place is.

This has been marked with the word 'centre' on the picture below. By standing back from the diagram, the way roads focus onto this place is easier to see.

Q2. Apart from the centre there may also be markets at the triangular and rectangular areas just outside the centre. 1, 2 and 3 are shown below.

Q3. Shops

Q4. The main shops line the centre of the main roads in the town centre. It is important that students do not put shops in side streets because few people walk past there and so trade would be poor. You can make this point by comparing the placing of town centre of shops in your own locality.

It is also important to note that shops do not spread out indefinitely because the number of customers is limited and so there is a limit on the number of shops needed to serve them.

