

# **LOCAL STUDIES**

## **Local streets**

**How to teach local  
street names and  
patterns**

# Basic resources

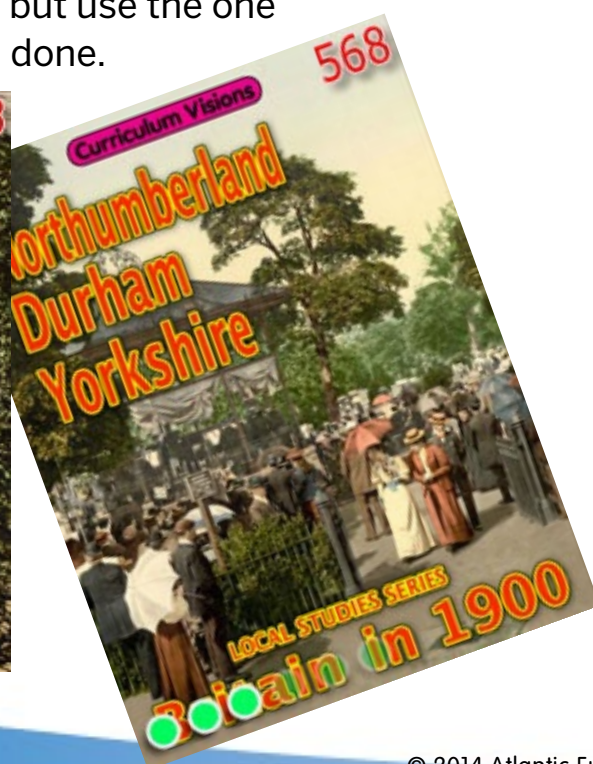
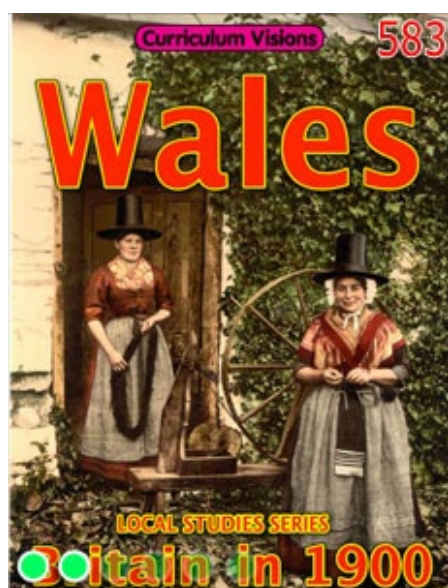
## 1. The Local names book

- ▶ This is the main book to use. It contains an explanation of common names and therefore acts as a pointer to how your class should think about local names. They should all be shown this book and where to find it. Download the cloud livebookmark for them and put it on your website or similar (but don't put the username or password online!)



## 2. Britain in 1900

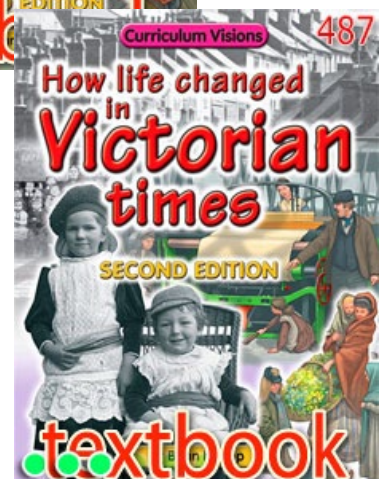
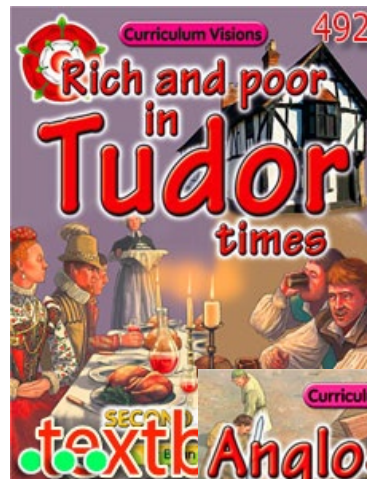
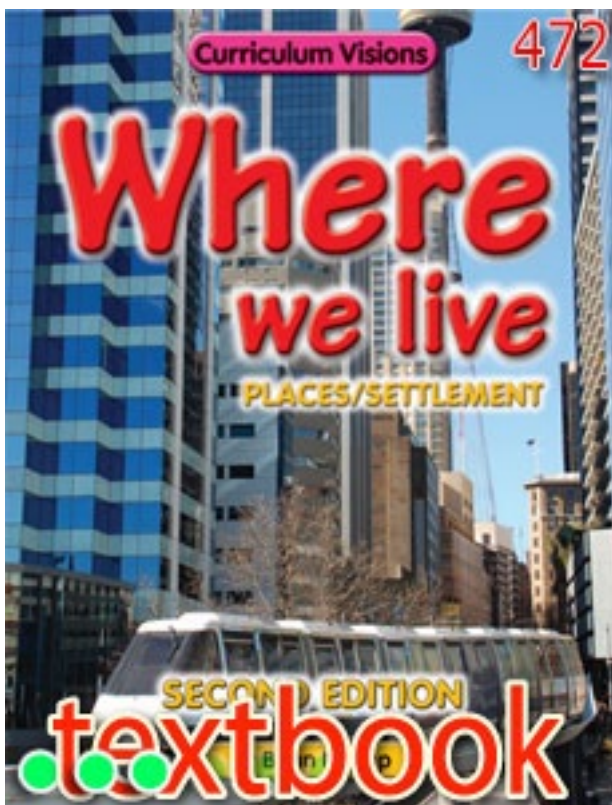
- ▶ We are gathering pictures of Britain in 1900. This takes time and is a long project, but use the one covering your area if it has been done.





### 3. Textbook support

- The most useful books are *Where we live* (for the theory of places) and then the various history textbooks for diagrams of what streets looked like in the past. For example, if you use the Tudor textbook, and look at a village or town close by a river, it should be easy enough to point out to students why a road might be called ford street or bridge street. Remember that many fords were replaced by bridges and other things may have changed, but the names often remain to tell you what it was like in the past.



# Start with a map

## 1. Whole class instruction

**Objective:** To find out all about a place that we know by using a book and a map.

### Mapping

#### “Where are we?”

- ▶ This is a lesson that can combine looking at a local area with mapping on many different scales. So we begin with some simple orientation.
  - ▶ Open an atlas of the British Isles showing a full map of the whole country. Ask students where we live, then get them to try to show you where that is on the map.
  - ▶ If the place where you live is not on the map, don't ask them to find it directly, or that might cause some to stumble, whereas we want them to succeed and find looking at maps easy. Instead, think of a nearby place that you know is on the map and ask them to locate that (but see below).
  - ▶ Now you can go over where the place is with respect to other parts of the country. 'We are in southwestern England, northern Wales, southern Scotland etc.
  - ▶ Once they are comfortable with the general location of where you are, explain that they are now going to look on an online map. Put this on the whiteboard, and usually the starting point will be a globe or a national map. If you have location service switched on you may find it shows a closer area. In this case click the - sign until you get back out to at least the national region. Again, do your orientation by clicking to where your school is in steps. Ensure that students understand that on a small scale map you cannot get all of the places and names on, so
- ▶ Atlas with map of British Isles, connection to online mapping, such as Google Maps.

you need a larger scale map for that. Get them to understand how different scales are useful for different things. Stop at a regional scale (showing other nearby large places and main roads).

- ▶ Now get students to find nearby towns and cities. For example 'Who can tell me of the names of some towns near to us?' Make sure they understand what a town is. One useful rule of thumb would be to get students to think of a town as having at least a street full of shops. See if you can point out where you are and these other places are connected by roads. Does anyone know what their names are? (explain road numbers as well as any that might have names). Why don't they have names in the countryside?
- ▶ Now they are ready for their local study because they can put local into context of regional.

## 2. Plenary session

- ▶ Review the way that maps help us to know where we are, but they are a bird's eye view. We normally see things from the ground, which is what we are going to do with the local study. Maps do, however, show the pattern of roads, which is invaluable.

## 3. Further work/homework

- ▶ Get students to investigate some other place that they know, for example, where their grandparents live, or where they have been on holiday in the UK. Get them to see that places are often a compound of two words that might help us to understand how they were founded.

# Romans, Saxons, Vikings, Victorians, Modern times

## 1. Whole class instruction

**Objective:** To understand when some of the main street naming and street layouts occurred and link to periods you might be studying in History.

### Founding

#### “When were are local streets laid out?”

- ▶ You will need to give a lot of help here, but it is simple enough. The main street-founding times were Roman, Saxon, Viking, Victorian, interwar linear settlements along main roads, and post-World War 2 suburbs.
- ▶ Explain that streets are the most long-lasting of all the man-made features on Earth. Once they have been laid out and buildings put beside them, it is almost impossible to reshape them, and usually impossible even to widen them. Houses get built, wear out and get rebuilt, but street remain because houses are not all rebuilt at the same time. There are just a few times when this is not true, for example in some ports and large cities after the Second World War bombing. You may need to know if this applies to your area.
- ▶ Explain that there was no need for roads when there were few people about. Stone Age people were hunter-gatherers and moved with the seasons. Even after the Late Stone Age, when people beginning to live in fixed locations, places were not joined by roads, and homes tended to be placed fairly randomly. So roads only become useful when there is some kind of civilisation, or where people begin to trade on a regular basis.
- ▶ Your local roads, using a digital map, scaled to show about a mile) around your school.



- ▶ The Romans were the first to do this in Britain. They built completely new roads, both local and long distance. They were imposing a pattern of living that was quite different from the people who were native to the area, and they were thinking on a large scale, with city nodes set in a network of what were, at first military roads. Explain that the Romans built cities with streets inside a walled city and designed on a grid system. The location of the cities sometimes marked with places ending in 'chester' (if the Romans built a fort). Their roads gave a skeletal network of routes, not all of which were followed later on, but many were.
- ▶ When the Romans left, their civilisation and its roads could not be maintained by the local tribes who did not have the need, the skills or the resources. So Roman city streets largely disappeared. When Saxons came they often started on land nearby with locations suited to local needs, not national ones, but their villages have never been abandoned, simply extended. Even when Vikings took over from Saxons, they did not start new street patterns, although they did start some new villages. So their streets survive.
- ▶ Victorians were important in naming streets because of the population boom and also the radical change in transport systems (railway). But the only places they changed were on the margins of towns (which today are inner cities). The same with post-war, when cars became common and new greenfield sites were used. These are now our suburbs.

#### ▶ TEXTBOOK DRAWINGS

Use a combination of Saxon, Viking and Victorian textbooks to show street plans. You will find that the Medieval and Tudor books have villages and towns from different ages in them so you can make comparisons.

## 2. Plenary session

- ▶ Review the way that different kinds of people added to streets rather than replacing them, using the textbook diagrams to show what this looked like. The only exception was the Romans, whose main roads, but not city street plans survive.

# Local studies

# Names

## 1. Whole class instruction

**Objective:** To find out something about street names and their origins for places near to you. You will also get students to associate street names with an orientation exercise.

### The local streets

#### “What are our local streets called?”

- ▶ Allocate several names to each student group (they will need to work in pairs or small groups for discussion purposes).
- ▶ If possible, walk to each street. There are two reasons for this. One is to see if you can visually work out why the street has its name (Hillside being on a hillside etc), and secondly have a reason for walking locally to give students better orientation of their environment. You could easily combine this with the local stones lesson plan or a kind of i-spy, where they look out for specific things, such as pillar boxes, and count lamp posts (and measure distances between them). The possibilities of what you can do over a few hundred yards are almost endless.
- ▶ What you will need to do is to watch when you get to Victorian and Modern streets. Victorian streets are usually in grid-iron patterns and were named all at the same time, so often have themes. The same is true of streets with greenfield sites in more recent times.
- ▶ If you can walk to a street, and it does not seem to have a geographic or historical name, ask students to suggest what names they would give it from historical or geographical connections. For example, if there is a large beech tree, then Beech Road, or if it is on a slope, Hill Road, or Long Rise.

▶ This is based on page 7 of the “How did my street get its name?” Book (number 570).

Don't forget, the easiest way to get to it quickly (and any others you want) is to download the live bookmarks, put them in a new folder somewhere of your choice and just click those covers when needed.





Or perhaps Battlefield Street, or Rebellion Hill. This is a good moment to think up some dialect names as well, if dialect is an important part of your local culture. What local hero might you name a street for?

## 2. Plenary session

- Review what students have seen, and see how far they have got with thoughts about names and their meanings, or names and the group they are in (for example, if they come across streets labelled Lavender Street, and other similar words, it may be grouped for herbs, similarly Beech Road, Oak Drive etc. may be a group named for trees.

## 3. Further work/homework

- Get students to choose another town or area and guess which are old and new streets, or what happened in the place from the names and street plan. For example, if there is a Jamaica Road, it was probably a port linked to Colonial trade. This will help students to project their knowledge to other local areas, and not feel that what they have learned is only useful locally.