

Suggested Fieldwork enquiries for Common Entrance and Scholarship Candidates

The following 12 topics for Fieldwork are suggested as examples of what can be done with this age group.

1. Rivers: 'How does a river change as it flows downstream?'

Suggestion is 3 sites and that width, depth, gradient and velocity and that possibly for more able candidates discharge, sediment size and wetted perimeter could be included.

2. Coasts: 'How do the physical features of a particular beach vary?'

Suggest simple transects along a stretch of beach. 4 transects should be enough. Study gradient, pebble sizes and note down other physical features or human features such as groynes.

3. Rural Settlements: 'Are there enough services for the local people?'

They should plan and collect questionnaire responses. They should map the village's services. Collect data on bus routes and look for changes in the village.

Sustainable Development

Two suggestions here:

4. 'What are the effects of a Sewage Works (Industrial Unit) on a river?'

This study of river pollution can be easily set up if you have a local river that has a sewage works or industrial site close by. Four sites are recommended: one above the outfall, one at the outfall and two below the outfall. Abiotic (oxygen saturation, temperature, pH, dissolved and suspended load, nitrates, phosphates and ammonium) figures can be collected and biotic data can be collected by sampling the living creatures in the water. This is a good fieldwork enquiry for the more able pupil.

5. 'How is a National Park (or a beach/honeypot) affected by tourism?'

Questionnaires, car park and litter counts, examples of land use conflicts and the visual effects of planning and management can all be studied. This builds on the sustainability topic and allows the link between tourism and the environment to be studied.

6. Microclimate Enquiry: 'Why are there variations in temperature in a small area?'

The ideal area is the School Grounds or a park. You will need to choose your sites depending on the size of the area. A good way is to set up transects from what you expect is the warmest area outwards and put sites on these transects. At each site temperature readings should be taken and the time noted. Observation of the vegetation, slope angle and land use should also be noted at each site.

7. A Farm study: 'What affects the land use on a farm?'

This allows some study of land use, soils, temperature, and human factors including diversification. Can lead to a study of a flow diagram of a Farm as a system. Questionnaire for farmer can be prepared and diversification looked at. Can be linked to sustainable development.

Impact Studies: These are for those who wish to extend their pupils and give them a challenge in a local area. You could include:

- 8. The impact of a bypass on a village**
- 9. Major changes in traffic management in a small town**
- 10. The impact of park and ride schemes or segregated bus lanes**
- 11. The impact of a new Shop to an area.**
- 12. The impact of excluding traffic from an area of a town.**

For all five of these you need to get information about the impact on the local community, the built and physical environment, existing traffic, parking and pedestrians, effect on shops, journey times and quality of life. Other impacts might occur in specific examples. It is always important to keep it to a local area and therefore an achievable scale. You need to collect both primary and secondary data by surveys, questionnaires and observation. Secondary data from the local newspaper, the library or local parish council can be obtained.

These are different but allow the children to pick up many skills that are included in the skills section of the Syllabus.

Finally

The suggestions for Fieldwork enquiries are not binding but whichever enquiry you do please follow the points below:

- a) Keep the Fieldwork simple.
- b) Include a variety of collection, presentation and analytical skills.
- c) Do not spend too long on this enquiry. A total of 4 weeks is easily enough for children to collect data and write up the work.
- d) If you need to talk to your Senior School Colleagues do so. They would rather have relevant and straightforward fieldwork enquiries which show them the skills the children have gained.
- e) Look carefully at the detailed marking scheme and other suggestions in the new syllabus.
- f) If you want further advice I am always available to help.
- g) The message that Fieldwork is a vital ingredient of the geography that is taught in our schools and teaches the children a wide variety of both geographical and life skills.

Good luck!

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