

Ten Top Ideas for getting your students out of the classroom during the summer term

1. Doorstep Geography. Why not do geography in or near the school grounds? Students can engage in activities such as:
 - You have just arrived here from outer space and you have no idea where you are. What visual, non-verbal clues would tell you: Which country are you in? Which town you are in?
 - Close your eyes and listen to the noises in the environment. Which is most dominant, the one you hear before all others? What do you hear next? What does this tell you about this environment? You could record the noises on your mobile phone.
 - Imagine you are homeless. Identify a suitable place in the environment where you will sleep tonight. Why did you choose that place?

There are more than 20 ideas from the Secondary Phase Committee's 2009 Conference Workshop 'Doorstep Geography' on the GA website. Check out the resources at <http://www.geography.org.uk/cpdevents/annualconference/manchester2009>

The activities use some ideas from '8 Way thinking' – download a presentation from Steve Rawlinson from The University of Northumberland about ways of looking at places: http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_Conf08Rawlinson.ppt

2. There are lots of suggestions for fieldwork activities on the RGS-IBG website www.rgs.org/OurWork/Schools/Fieldwork+and+local+learning/

If you are planning a visit to the Olympic Site, the Jurassic Coast or the Lake District check out the information on the key locations at:

www.rgs.org/OurWork/Schools/Fieldwork+and+local+learning/Planning+your+fieldtrip/Fieldwork+locations/

3. Design a school brochure for Y6s. Using a map of the school grounds and a digital camera, walk around the grounds and take photos. Students could design a walk for the new Y6s on their induction day. Also perhaps take some photos that would not be included and suggest how these areas need improving.
4. Emotional mapping. Use map work to develop and explore students' personal perceptions of the school grounds, annotating or colouring maps of the grounds with pleasant and unpleasant areas. Highlight favourite areas and areas associated with different feelings or activities. The students could identify where individuals feel safe in the grounds. What can be done to alter intimidating areas? They could also conduct a questionnaire survey amongst other pupils and staff to gauge individuals' perceptions of the grounds and how they might be improved.

5. Get students into the local area with video cameras, cameras or phones. Students could:
 - Create a teenage guide book to their local town using lots of images. They could incorporate free OS maps by giving grid references.
 - Students could create a promotional video of their local area using video and images. The finished work could be offered to local TV news programme or paper or to a tourist board!
 - Plan a walking tour of the local area for geography teachers and fellow students. The tour could have a set of criteria which has to be included and met, for example: it must include safe and accessible places to visit. The outcome might be a map with annotations of the tour, points of interest and photo points (places where students can take photos when they take the tour, and there could be follow up work associated with it). Teachers and students go on the winning tour and the creator wins a prize.
6. Mission Explore is a project created by a group of geography teachers which provides lots of fun ideas to encourage students to get outside. <http://www.missionexplore.net>
7. In the school grounds turn the kids into human 'sat navs'. Mock up a sat nav device, record the directions and someone else has to follow the instructions from one part of the school campus to another - do they get lost?
8. Get students to plan their own field visit to a place. Ask students what data they might collect and why (primary and secondary). What geographical questions they might answer or be asked to do? How would they present the information? What risk assessment would they need to conduct?
9. Do some fieldwork on safe routes to school. Ask your LA person responsible for school travel plans if they have information and maps available on journeys to school at your school. Take a look at the Sustrans website <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/what-we-do/safe-routes-to-schools> and in particular their Free Range Kids Project for inspiration.
10. Make your own 'Urban Earth' walk. Have you seen this website? <http://www.urbanearth.co.uk> Photos were taken every eight steps across some of the world's largest cities (London, Mumbai) and then put into an animation. Get students to take photos every eight steps across the school grounds or an urban transect and put them into Movie Maker or PowerPoint.

Check out the GA's manifesto 'A Different View'. Section 6 'Geography and the real world' is all about the value of fieldwork See: <http://www.geography.org.uk/adifferentview>

This document was prepared by the GA's Secondary Phase Committee. Visit the GA website for more 'Top Ten Ideas', and information about who we are and what we do:
<http://www.geography.org.uk/aboutus/committeesworkinggroups/secondary/>