Beijing: a contrasting locality in China

a unit of work for 5 to 8-year-olds

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Introduction
This unit aims to develop five to seven year old pupils’ understanding of Beijing as a place that contrasts with where they live, in particular to develop their knowledge and understanding and sense of place in relation to the city. It is intended as an introduction to looking at a distant locality and that throughout pupils should explore similarities and differences between Beijing and the locality where they live. While geography is at the core of the learning outcomes, links with other curriculum areas give children a more rounded view of a place. The unit also provides the potential to link with other areas of the curriculum, such as art and design, music, ICT and literacy. A number of weblinks are provided on page 7 which enable teachers to place the city within a broader geographical and cultural context.

Rationale
The Beijing Summer Olympics provide an excellent opportunity for developing pupil learning in a range of areas. This unit is specifically designed to address geographical learning outcomes but the opportunities for cross-curricular learning are vast—a wealth of ideas are indicated by the sources provided at the end of the unit. The unit is designed to support:
- the geographical enquiry process through the use of secondary sources
- development of geographical vocabulary and skills
- pupils’ exploration of geographical questions such as ‘Where is Beijing?’, ‘What would it be like to be in Beijing?’ and ‘How is Beijing changing?’
- pupils' developing ability to describe what places are like, where they are and make comparisons between places
- pupils' developing understanding of human and physical geography
- pupils' developing understanding of environmental change and improvement.

How to organise the activities
Suggestions are made as to activities which can be teacher led and those in which pupils should be able to work independently. Ultimately it will be down to your professional knowledge of your pupils and your particular context as to how you develop the ideas and how pupils respond—verbally, drawings, maps, etc. A useful strategy with this age of pupils is to make the topic real by introducing a character who is visiting the distant place. Jing Jing the panda is one of the Olympic mascots and the teacher could develop the activities through the eyes of Jing Jing who is visiting the city from rural China. If children have their own toy panda’s they could bring them in for the journey! Use the weblinks provided at the end of the unit to access a wealth of visual material to make this topic come alive for the pupils. On a practical note, it is recommended that for durability maps and photographs are laminated.

Getting started
A useful tool to begin any unit with is a KWL exercise (see Activity Resource Sheet A1). This is a formative assessment tool that allows the teacher to find out what pupils know—or think they know!—about a topic or place. At this point pupils should
complete the K (What I know) and the W (What I would like to find out) columns. The K allows the teacher to make an assessment of prior learning and will also allow possible misconceptions or stereotypes to emerge. The teacher can then plan to engage with these through the unit. The W is important in scaffolding pupils asking geographical questions. It is possible that, for younger pupils in particular, the teacher can provide a number of questions which they can select from but they should always be provided with the opportunity to come up with their own. At the end of the unit the L column (What I learned) should be completed—this allows the teacher to assess what has been learned and celebration of learning with pupils.

Activity 1: Where in the world is Beijing? (Where is Jing Jing visiting?)

Resources required
- Activity Resource Sheet A2: Outline map of China with bordering countries
- Activity Resource Sheet A3: China facts
- globes
- atlases
- world maps
- place name cards.

These activities provide pupils with a locational framework in relation to Beijing and China, e.g. City of Beijing, within China which is part of Asia. They also help pupils to develop understanding of the distance from where they live.

Teacher led
1. Using a world map and/or globe teacher to ask children to locate (or show them) where they live. Then help them to find China and Beijing within China. If you have access to Google Earth it can vividly make this come alive. Discuss whether they think that China/Beijing is near to where they live or far away.

2. Using the maps/globes trace a route to China and locate Beijing. Have pre-prepared cards with the names of countries, seas/oceans, etc. that you would cross en-route. Ask individual children to come out to the front of the class to hold the cards up to indicate route. Use geographical vocabulary such as the points of the compass (north/south/east/west) to describe the route.

3. Can pupils use the scale on the map to work out approximately how far it would be from where they live to Beijing? How big is China compared to the country where they live (it is nearly 40 times larger than the United Kingdom—Appendix 11 provides a visual approximation)?

Pupil led
1. Using an outline map of China (see Activity Resource Sheet A2) and bordering countries pupils to add location of:
   - Beijing
   - Russia, India, Mongolia, Nepal and Vietnam
   - Yangtse River, the Yellow River and the Pearl River
   - Pacific Ocean and South China Sea
   - Mount Everest.

2. Pupils interrogate atlases to find out whether given facts about China (see Activity Resource Sheet A3) are true or false. Note: it is intended that some of these will not be in the atlases—this is to stimulate further discussion/enquiry.

Extension
The previous ten Summer Olympics have been held in Tokyo, Mexico, Munich, Montreal, Moscow, Los Angeles, Seoul, Barcelona, Atlanta, Sydney, Athens. Using their atlases can pupils discover which countries these cities are in?

Activity 2: How could I get to Beijing? (How could we travel to meet Jing Jing?)

Resources
- travel brochures with Beijing as a destination
- globes
- atlases
- world maps.

These activities provide pupils with opportunities to develop understanding of how they could travel to Beijing, the distances involved and time taken.
Teacher led
1. Discuss the different ways (modes of transport) that pupils use to travel—walking, cycle, car, bus, ferry, aeroplane, etc. Compare forms of transport used on a day-to-day basis and those used to travel to holiday destinations. Create a table comparing day-to-day and holiday travel.
2. Using the maps and/or globes trace a route to China and locate Beijing (recap from last activity). Ask pupils what is the main form of transport they think they would need to use to travel to China and why.
3. Discuss what types of transport they would have to use to travel to Beijing, e.g. get bus to train station, train to airport, fly to Beijing. Each pupil to imagine their journey.

Pupil led
Using the travel brochures can pupils discover:
• What forms of transport could they use to travel to Beijing?
• Where is the nearest airport to where they live that they could use to fly to Beijing?
• How long would the flight take and which airline could they use?
• How much would it cost? Would this be the same all year round?
• What are the brochures suggesting that they should see when they are in Beijing?
• What would they like to see if they went to Beijing?

Note: travel brochures are intended for an adult audience and can prove complex to younger children. Teachers may wish to highlight particular pages relevant to the task or remove pages relevant to task to create mini brochures.

Extension
Using the information from the travel brochures pupils to create a poster to advertise Beijing as a holiday destination.

Activity 3: How is Beijing/China connected to where I live? (How am I connected to where Jing Jing lives?)

Resources
• Activity Resource Sheet A4: Looking for connections
  Note: it would be beneficial if this was completed as a homework exercise before these activities

These activities provide pupils with opportunities to develop understanding of the interdependence of their locality with Beijing.
Extension

Pupils to use maps at a range of scales/atlas to try to work out routes that goods would take to reach their homes.

Activity 4: What might it be like to be in Beijing?
(What might Jing Jing see/do?)

Resources
• Activity Resource Sheet A5: Weather in Beijing
• Activity Resource Sheet A6: Transport in Beijing
• Activity Resource Sheet A7: Some things to see
• maps of Beijing
• photographs of Beijing
• see in particular <www.china.org.cn/features/photos/beijing/bjview.htm#a>

These activities provide pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding of the human and physical features of Beijing. There is a wealth of possible activities that could be carried out in this area—below are a few suggestions. It is recommended that maps and photographs are used to develop pupil knowledge and understanding. There is a wealth of digital images available online that can be used to support teaching and learning in this area. See for example <www.china.org.cn/features/photos/beijing/bjview.htm#a> and <www.chinatoday.com>.

For durability it is recommended that photographs are laminated—also great to use with an interactive whiteboard.

1. Weather/Climate

Teachers may find the annual weather averages for Beijing useful to extract data from to support teaching and learning points (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average high °C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average low °C</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precipitation mm</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative humidity %</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Beijing has a distinct climate and weather pattern; China has climate zones that range from desert to tropical and subarctic.

Teacher led
1. Using the pictures in Activity Resource Sheet A5 look at the clothing people are wearing in each image. This can be done either by using an interactive whiteboard or printing off the pictures and laminating them for pupils to examine. Pupils to suggest what the temperature is like in each of the pictures and how they know.
2. The summer games will take place in August … What will temperature and rainfall be? How does this compare to where the pupils live? How will this feel for the competitors?

Pupil led
Pupils to pack an imaginary suitcase for a holiday in Beijing either in August or January and provide an explanation for their choices.

Extension
Give pupils weather figures for August and January. Can they describe the differences in weather between those two months? Which of the pictures used at the start of the activity do they think was taken in August and which in January?

2. Transport

Teacher led
Teacher to provide a range of photographs showing the different forms of transport used in Beijing—pedestrian, bicycle, bus, metro, car, etc. See for example Activity Resource Sheet A6 and China Internet Information Center website at <www.china.org.cn/features/photos/beijing/bjview.htm>. Discuss with pupils which forms they use frequently or rarely.
Encourage careful observation and draw out similarities and differences with transport locally.

**Pupil led**

Using photographs provided, pupils to create an information book of forms of transport they could use to travel around Beijing. Use the title: Transport in Beijing.

**Extension**

Pupils to conduct a survey on which forms of transport would be most popular in the class.

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**3. Settlement**

**Teacher led**

Teacher to provide a range of photographs showing the different types of housing and land use in Beijing. See for example <www.china.org.cn/features/photos/beijing/bjview.htm>. Using this evidence, discuss with the children what Beijing is like. What do they think the different buildings are used for? It would be useful to select images of old Beijing and the modern city to develop pupils' understanding of how the city has changed. Images can also be selected to show how Olympic developments have changed the city.

**Pupil led**

1. Provide pupils with photographs showing different types of land use. For example:
   - different types of housing
   - transport
   - leisure and recreation
   - shops
   - schools
   Ask them to place photographs under the selected headings and provide reasons for their choices.

2. Using the pictures and the map (Activity Resource Sheet A7) ask pupils to label pictures of Beijing. Provide pupils with key vocabulary that they can select from (see, for example, Activity Resource Sheet A8). A useful and easy way of achieving this is to use post-it notes as a way of enabling younger pupils to do this—they can actually place ‘labels’ on the photographs. Again encourage careful observation—get them to take a multi-sensory approach—what would they see, hear, smell, how would they feel? Then using the words they have generated, pupils to write a description of the place in their photograph. The pupils to share ideas to develop a ‘bigger picture’ of what Beijing is like.

**Extension**

Using Activity Resource Sheet A9 pupils to match photographs of tourist sights to locations on the map. Which place would they most like to visit?

**Activity 5: What are the main similarities and differences between Beijing and where I live?**  
*(How are Jing Jings’ place and where I live alike/different?)*

**Resources**

- Activity Resource Sheet A10: Comparing primary school life
- photographs of Beijing—see weblinks on page 7
- photographs of school locality.

These activities provide pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding of how Beijing contrasts with the place where they live. Pupils may implicitly have been considering these ideas during previous units—the purpose here is to draw these together. Another important purpose is for the teacher to support pupils in seeing the similarities between the different localities—good geography provides a balanced view. Left unaided pupils may focus solely on differences, thus creating the notion of ‘the other’ and entrenching stereotypes.

**Teacher led**

1. Teacher to recap on learning about Beijing—weather, transport, land use, etc. Divide class into groups based on different aspects covered. Each group to come up with local examples and share them.

2. Ask the children to suggest what they remember about life in Beijing, using headings above—photographs as stimuli would be useful here. Ask the children to do the same for their own locality and then to decide which aspects of life might be the same for both places.

**Pupil led**

1. Given photographs of the school locality and aspects of Beijing pupils place them in pairs which illustrate similarities between the two places.

2. Pupils to write sentences comparing the two localities. A useful strategy to support making comparisons is to write ‘and’ and ‘but’ sentences, e.g. I live in a village, but Beijing is a big city; we study maths at school and so do children in Beijing.
3. Pupils to complete Activity Resource Sheet A10 and consider similarities and differences in school life between the two localities.

**Extension**
Pupils to write about how their school day is similar to that of a child in Beijing.

**Activity 6: How have the Olympics changed Beijing?**
(Jing Jing looks at changes in Beijing)

**Resources required**
- Activity Resource Sheet A11: Are the Olympics good for Beijing?
- pictures of new stadia/facilities.

The aim of these activities is to develop pupils’ understanding that the Beijing games will have (and have had) an impact on environment (nature), as well as human (everyday life) and economic (jobs) consequences—and that these may be positive or negative.

**Teacher led**
1. Show pupils pictures of the stadia, the Olympic village and other facilities available at <http://photo.beijing2008.cn/subject-214047920.html> and discuss what they think of them—do they look nice, would they like to go there, etc.
2. Share these figures with pupils:
   - 10,500 athletes will take part in the Beijing Olympics
   - they will travel from 205 countries around the world
   - 20,000 people who work in television and the media will cover the event
   - there will be two million spectators.

The games will have an impact on the environment (urban and natural), the economy and people’s everyday lives. Can pupils suggest ways in which all these visitors will impact on peoples’ lives in Beijing? Ask them what would happen if all these people came to their area. Share their ideas and get them to say whether their suggestions will be good or bad things.

*Note: the Games are not limited to sixteen days of the events—there is a prior impact and a legacy, a point which the 2012 hosts are keen to stress.*

**Pupil led**
1. Pupils to be given copies of Activity Resource Sheet A11. These are statements by people on what they think about the games (They cover environmental, social and economic issues in a form this age of pupil can relate to). They need to discuss each in small groups and decide whether each statement highlights a good (positive) or bad (negative) point about the impact of the games.
2. Pupils place the statements into a table of good/bad points and those which could be both. This allows them to see the complexity of the situation and how also the notions of good/bad may depend on viewpoint.
3. For each of the things which pupils feel is a bad point can they come up with possible suggestions as to what actions could be taken to try and reduce its impact?

**Extension**
Pupils to create a poster depicting how the games have had a positive impact as well as a negative one.

**Conclusion**
Return to the KWL framework (Activity Resource Sheet A1), which was introduced at the start of the unit. Pupils to complete the L column (What I learned). As noted previously this allows the teacher to assess what has been learned and celebration of learning with pupils.
Supplementary resources and weblinks

Useful websites for teachers to access information in relation to Beijing include:

- <www.china.org.cn/english/features/beijing/30552.htm>
- <www.ebeijing.gov.cn/Life/default.htm>

Background information on China is available at <www.chinatoday.com>.

Activities for pupils on China can be found at <www.enchantedlearning.com/asia/china/>.

Online interactive tour of Beijing and games venues

Beijing and the Olympics

A range of geographical and cross-curricular teaching ideas is available at <www.afssse.asn.au/>
Click the geography unit link to download the acrobat file

Photos of Beijing

National Geographic <www.nationalgeographic.com/places/photos/beijing-gallery-1.html?source=G1732>
NEN Gallery <http://gallery.e2bn.org/image76689-.html>

Maps of China and Beijing

- <http://geography.about.com/od/findmaps/u/maps.htm>
- <www.chinahighlights.com/beijing/map.htm>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I KNOW</th>
<th>What I WOULD like to find out</th>
<th>What I LEARNED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity Resource Sheet A2: China outline map and bordering countries
**Activity Resource Sheet A3: China facts—true or false**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True or False?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China is the largest country entirely in Asia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A famous landmark in China is the Grand Canyon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China is the fourth largest country in the world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China has the largest population of any country in the world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China is part of Europe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing is the capital of China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The highest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas, forms part of China’s border</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China’s flag is red with five golden-yellow stars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing is in the west of China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The highest point in China is Mount Everest in the Himalayas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 2008 Olympic games will be held in Beijing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Activity Resource Sheet A4: Looking for connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connection</th>
<th>Example/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What we buy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What we eat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport/leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A special connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity Resource Sheet A5: Weather in Beijing

Picture 1

What is this child wearing? What time of year might this be? Does this make Beijing a warm or a cold city? What might it be like in summer?

Use Google to search the internet for pictures of people in Beijing in winter and in summer for the other two boxes on this page. Try typing in ‘Beijing in summer’ and ‘Beijing in winter’ ...

Picture 2

People’s clothes in summer

Picture 3

People’s clothes in winter
**Activity Resource Sheet A6: Transport in Beijing**

Ever heard of the song by Katie Melua ‘Nine million bicycles in Beijing’? Here’s a picture of just one of the bicycles. But can you find pictures of the other ways of travelling in Beijing? Use Google to find some pictures to put into these boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some of the 9 million bicycles in Beijing!</th>
<th>A train on the new Beijing metro</th>
<th>Buses in Beijing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Bicycles" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cars and traffic in Beijing</td>
<td>Pedestrian/walking in Beijing</td>
<td>Trolley buses and trams in Beijing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity Resource Sheet A7: Some things to see in Beijing

- Bird’s Nest Stadium
- Beijing Olympic Green
- Yumengyu Park
- Beijing University
- Kunming Lake / The Summer Palace
- Beijing Zoo
- The Golden Hill
- Bei Lake
- Tiantan Park / Temple of Heaven
- Tian’anmen Square
- National Grand Theatre
- Beijing West Railway Station
- Beijing Railway Station
- Beijing North Railway Station
- Beijing South Railway Station
- Beijing East Railway Station
- Bei Lake Beihai Park
- Yuanmingyuan Park
- Ditan Park
- Tiantan Park
- Ditan Park / Temple of the Sun
- Beijing Olympic Green
- Ritan Park / Imperial Palace Museum / The Forbidden City
- Zhaoyang Park
- National Grand Theatre
- Imperial Palace Museum / The Forbidden City
- Kunming Lake / The Summer Palace
- Beijing Zoo
- The Golden Hill
- Bei Lake
### Activity Resource Sheet A7: Some things to see in Beijing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Golden Hill</th>
<th>Beijing Zoo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kunming Lake/The Summer Palace</td>
<td>Beijing University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuanmingyuan Park</td>
<td>Beijing Olympic Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird's Nest Stadium</td>
<td>Ditan Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Forbidden City/Imperial Palace Museum</td>
<td>Zhaoyang Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritan Park/Temple of the Sun</td>
<td>Beijing Central Railway Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiantan Park/The Temple of Heaven</td>
<td>Tian'anmen Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Grand Theatre</td>
<td>Beih Lake/Beihai Park/The White Pagoda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity Resource Sheet A8: What is Beijing like?

Interesting

People

Flat

Dangerous

Natural

Trees

Man made

Buildings

Vehicles

Noisy

Safe

Countryside

Quiet

This strategy aids development of geographical vocabulary, supports observation and aids description. Different photographs can be used with different vocabulary provided. More able pupils may be able to provide their own vocabulary.
Activity Resource Sheet A9: Landmarks and tourist sites in Beijing
Activity Resource Sheet A10: Comparing primary school life

| Beijing                                                                 | Where I live ...
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------
| Children attend pre school from age three-and-a-half                   |                  |
| Children start primary school at age six-and-a-half                    |                  |
| Go to school five-and-a-half days per week                             |                  |
| Summer holiday: July and August                                        |                  |
| Winter holiday: January and February                                   |                  |
| Most lessons last forty five minutes                                   |                  |
| Chinese, Maths, PE, music, drawing, nature, history and geography are taught |                  |
| English is taught as a foreign language in some schools                |                  |
| Most time is spent on Chinese and Maths                                |                  |

Note: There is a great variety in schools in China, notably between urban and rural areas and different provinces. This comparison is not meant to be definitive.
Activity Resource Sheet A10: Comparing primary school life

What would you like to find out about school life in Beijing?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

What would you tell a child in Beijing about your school?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
Activity Resource Sheet A11: Are the Olympics good for Beijing?

I don’t have to drive to work because of the new underground line — Mum

There will be more jobs for people to do — Nan

We had to move so they could build a stadium — Auntie

More people means more cars, means more pollution — Grandad

We had an Olympic art competition at school and I won a prize — Jing Jing

They have built more recycling centres — Dad

All those people will leave a lot of litter — Nan

Lots of trees have been planted near the stadium — Uncle

The park I played in as a girl is now a car park — Mum

My teacher says our school can use the pool after the games — Jing Jing
Activity Resource Sheet A13: China political map