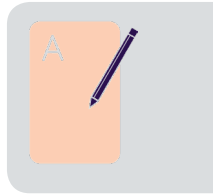


# Right to the City



\_TEACHERS NOTES  
RIBA KS4 | **Citizenship Activity**

## INTRODUCTION /

This project is about introducing Key Stage Four students to activities of engaging with their social and spatial environment. It aims to develop foundations for further involvement with local environments and communities, by first involving them in gathering information about their local area through participatory mapping practices, such as walkabouts and transect walks, followed by activities of engagement with local community groups they have identified.

## AIM /

“To develop understanding and awareness of how to be an active and engaged citizen, able to participate in the conversations that shape our built environment”



## \_Curriculum Links

### Key Stage 4 Citizenship

At key stage 4, teaching should build on the key stage 3 programme of study to deepen pupils' understanding of democracy, government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Pupils should develop their skills to be able to use a range of research strategies, weigh up evidence, make persuasive arguments and substantiate their conclusions. They should experience and evaluate different ways that citizens can act together to solve problems and contribute to society.

### Pupils should be taught about:

- diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
- the different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of their community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity

# VOCABULARY/

## ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP /

'is about how people behave towards one another, whether they help and support each other in their communities and work together in groups to improve things for everyone. Active citizens are people who have opinions and want these to be heard. They use democratic processes to make things happen, in their school, college, workplace or community.'

## COMMUNITY /

- A group of people who live in a particular geographical locality
- a group whose members share common interests and values'

## EMPATHY /

'Imagining and understanding other people's point of view' and 'the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner'

## HUMAN RIGHTS /

'Rights that are held to belong to any person. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, sets out a full list of the rights that all people should have. These include the right to life, liberty, education, freedom of movement and equality before the law'

## AGENCY /

'the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power'

## CITIZENSHIP /

- 'the legal status attached to being regarded as a citizen of a country
- the rights, responsibilities and obligations that people have in their local community or country'

## DEMOCRACY /

- a system said to be 'of the people, by the people, for the people'
- 'a system of government where people regularly elect their leaders and have a say in a way a country is governed'

## GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP /

- A global citizen has an ethic of care for the world or an Amor Mundi (love of the world) (see Hannah Arendt)
- Oxfam say in 1997  
'We see the Global Citizen as someone who:
  - is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen
  - respects and values diversity
  - has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally
  - is outraged by social injustice
  - participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from the local to the global
  - is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place
  - takes responsibility for their actions

## RIGHT TO THE CITY /

- A concept introduced by the urban theorist Henri Lefebvre in 1968 *Le Droit à la ville*, which is a 'demand...[for] a transformed and renewed access to urban life'.
- Anthropologist and Geographer David Harvey goes further by saying: 'The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city...the freedom to make and remake our cities.' He also says 'The right to the city is interdependent to all other existing human rights, integrally conceived and internationally recognised, and includes civic, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. It includes also the right to liberty of assembly and organisation, the right to the full exercise of citizenship and to participation in the planning, construction and management of the city; the socially-conscious development of the habitat; the respect for minorities and for ethical, racial, sexual and cultural plurality; respect for immigrants and guarantees for the preservation of the historical and cultural inheritance.'

## GRASS ROOTS /

Grass roots means 'by the people for the people'. Grass roots community groups have been started by local inhabitants to remedy a local issue with local means independently, and often informally.

One of the earliest uses of the term grassroots was by Albert Beveridge who said 'This party [the Progressive Party] comes from the grass roots. It has grown from the soil of the people's hard necessities.'

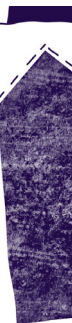
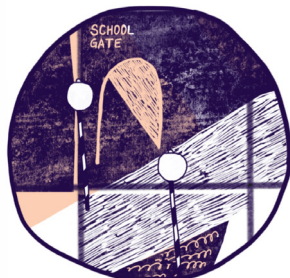
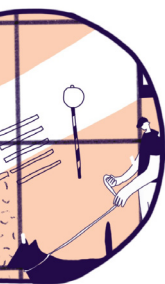
## PLACE /

- Geographic characteristics of a locality
- Feeling or perception of a space or series of spaces

'The perception of place

Although there is a clear physical correspondence between people and spaces, the relationships also involve a strong psychological component. People feel better in certain spaces. In other words, certain spaces stand out within the greater Space in which people circulate and, by standing out, are perceived differently. These are generally spaces perceived to contain certain qualities. Thus it can be said that these spaces are perceived as places by their users. They possess qualities that allow them to be perceived as a place, defined within the greater space of the city as a whole. Which means: they allow a place to be distinguished from a space.

It can therefore be accepted that behind the identification of a place lies a whole process of appreciation of the space, which may well be attributed to the perception people have (or will acquire) about the space. But from what basis does this perception develop? From the presence of environmental stimuli. From the widest range of stimuli of environmental features retaining a relationship not just with the objective and material nature of the elements of the environment, but also with its subjective nature - immaterial and imponderable. And - substantially - expressed as a product of people's interactions with the environment.



## MATERIALS /

**Students handouts are printable to A4 landscape, double sided, colour, and to be folded in half.**

- Large sheets of paper (A1) for each group and each activity, and at least a coloured pen per student

## OUTPUTS /

- Diagrams of local communities
- Debate about what makes a community, both tangibly and intangibly

## OUTCOMES /

- Awareness of the different communities in the local area
- Greater understanding of different groups' needs

## ACTIVITY /

### INTRODUCTION:

- Introduce the project as a whole - session structure, aims, methods and projected outcomes. (5 mins)
- Introduce the terms as you see fit, with explanations and illustrations relating to the built environment. (5 mins)

### ACTIVITY 1: Politics of place (10 minutes)

**1. Think about how these terms relate specifically to your local environment. To the streets, parks, buildings and green spaces near you. Can you think of an example for each term?**

#### **Politics of Place /**

- Brainstorming diagrams - in groups (sizes of your choice) students start with a different word from the glossary in the centre of the page, and can simultaneously write answers to surround the root word. Students can think about as many words as they can within the glossary.

#### **Active citizenship /**

- Shopping for a neighbour, setting up a public garden, starting a local club...

#### **Agency /**

- Having the ability to engage in a given environment, to combine forces with others...

#### **Community /**

- Religious activities in the mosque, church, synagogue etc., sports activities in the park, local pub, graffiti/street art

### **Democracy /**

- Voting, communicating with MPs about public realm issues...

### **Empathy /**

- Checking in on a friend/neighbour if you haven't seen them outside for a while, not doing construction work on holiday mornings, not complaining about fireworks on Diwali...

### **Global citizenship /**

- Thinks about recycling rubbish and composting as well as living sustainably more broadly (renewable energy, ethical fashion for instance)

### **Grass roots /**

- Local grass roots groups? Music groups, 'friends of' type groups for public spaces...

### **Human rights /**

- Equal access to public spaces to everyone, emergency services...

### **Place /**

- Why do some places feel different? What defines this? The park, a quiet residential street, busy high street? The buildings, the people, the noise, smell, traffic, all contribute to create a sense of place.

### **Right to the city /**

- Extension of human rights to include the right to partake in the decisions about our urban environment. Grass roots urban community groups, guerilla gardening, mural painting...

## **2. How can the (built) environment be (more) democratic? What would democratic design decisions/activities look like and how would they be implemented? (5 mins)**

- Public, free spaces (parks? streets?) that cater for everybody
- Options for all types of mobility
- Ability for people to contribute to environmental changes
- Option for comments/votes on public amenities and improvements

## **3. How can we increase our right to the city? (5 mins)**

Using - Active citizenship

- Empathy: noticing groups that are being under-catered for
- Democratic practices: including all communities in activities and catering for all groups
- Opportunity for expression: provide opportunities for people to express themselves
- Grass roots community groups: start a group that engages with a local issue and provides opportunities for activities and change.

**Each group presents their findings to the class (10 mins)**

## ACTIVITY 1: Community Agency (20 minutes)

### 1. Communities

- On large sheets of paper, brainstorming exercise as before
- Which different communities can you think of that are local to you or your school area? What makes them communities? Why? Are there community crossovers?
- What are the (formal and informal) boundaries of the area the communities focus on? are there informal boundaries to the communities or the areas the groups focus on? What are these? Why? Where do communities cross over? How are communities visible in the public realm? (high street, residential streets, buildings, public spaces)

### Grassroots community groups - Local agency /

- Using computers/ipads if available and/or by memory
- Which community groups can you think of that are active in your area?
- What particular activities do these communities or groups carry out? For whom? Why?
- Do they engage with singular or multiple communities? If yes, how do the community groups engage with a variety of communities?

### Each group presents their findings to the class (10 mins)

(all presentations can be done at the end of the lesson if preferable)

## EXTRA ACTIVITY / (optional)

### Local citizenship research

- Choose one group that interests you. Why does it interest you? What do they enable/produce? And why is there a need for that?
- Meet with them and find out more about the group. How did it start and why?
- What spaces do they use? What is lacking? How can you help? Could you design something to help the community group in some way?

## PREP FOR NEXT SESSION /

Prepare groups of 3 for following week's activity. The more groups there are the wider an area that can be covered.

If people live in a different place from the school, they can group together and do another transect walk (walkabout) out of school hours near their homes.

If the school does not allow students to leave the grounds, the walkabout can be carried out within the school, and communities can be identified within the school itself.

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