



## Geography A-Level: 2023-2024

Welcome to A-Level at Spalding Sixth Form. These transition tasks are designed to prepare you for Year 12 in two ways. First, they outline what studying GCE Geography will be like, and second, they guide you through several new concepts and skills that are intrinsic to geographical thinking at A-Level.

### Supplementary Reading

There is a huge amount of literature that will help you get to grips with your geographical studies. Below is a list to help you get started (some more complex than others), and over the next two years we expect you to become autonomous readers and study aspects of the subject that interest you.

- The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/science/geography>
- The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) <https://www.rgs.org/geography/what-is-geography/>
- The Geographical Association <https://www.geography.org.uk/GA-Manifesto-for-geography> and <https://www.geography.org.uk/Preparing-for-A-level-geography>
- Geography in Government <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/geography-skills-across-government-recognised-by-new-role> and <https://governmentscienceandengineering.blog.gov.uk/2018/02/27/meet-gses-new-head-of-geography/>
- Geographical Concepts and GIS <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=19daf0d08b294e2fb38de3980613e03e>
- Professor Peter Jackson's Key Concepts [https://people.uwec.edu/kaldjian/1Courses/GEOG401/401Readings/Thinking\\_Geographically\\_Jackson\\_2006.pdf](https://people.uwec.edu/kaldjian/1Courses/GEOG401/401Readings/Thinking_Geographically_Jackson_2006.pdf)
- Geography and Technology [https://www.economist.com/sites/default/files/20121027\\_technology\\_and\\_geography.pdf](https://www.economist.com/sites/default/files/20121027_technology_and_geography.pdf)
- Open University <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/society-politics-law/geography/geography-matters-collection>

### Tasks

The following tasks are designed to help you understand Geography as a way of seeing and understanding the world. Complete these and then file your work in a folder in preparation for Year 12. However, *look carefully at the instructions- 3 of the tasks require you to bring specific, completed work with you on your Induction Day.*

### **Place**

The purpose of this task is to consider how an area changes over time and space, to investigate techniques used by A-Level Geographers to understand, compare and classify areas, and to experience how areas are represented by different media.

#### **Task 1**

Please read the Prologue to Capital by John Lanchester. This represents the history of change in a fictional area of London. Once you have read this, write up a summary of how Pepys Road has changed and why you think these changes have occurred. ***This should be hand-written on paper, no more than 1 side of A4 and should be brought with you to your first lesson.***

THE TOP TEN BESTSELLER



'A TREAT TO READ.'

THE TIMES Book of the Week

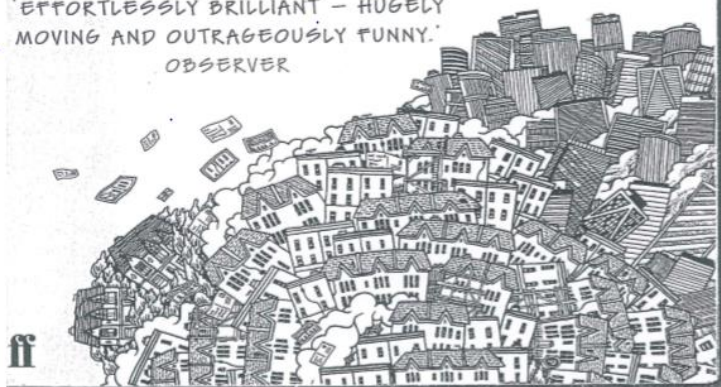
'WONDERFUL - WARM, FUNNY, SMART.'

SPECTATOR

# John Lanchester Capital

'EFFORTLESSLY BRILLIANT - HUGELY  
MOVING AND OUTRAGEOUSLY FUNNY.'

OBSERVER



noticed, it is pleasing to look at the buildings and detect the small differences. Four of the houses in the street were double-fronted, with twice as much space as the others; because space was at such a premium, they were worth about three times as much as the single-fronted properties. The young man seemed to take a special interest in filming these bigger, more expensive houses.

The properties in Pepys Road were built for a specific market: the idea was that they would appeal to lower-middle-class families willing to live in an unfashionable part of town in return for the chance to own a terraced house – a house large enough to have room for servants. For the first years they were lived in not by solicitors or barristers or doctors, but by the people who worked or clerked for them: the respectable, aspirational no-longer-poor. Over the next decades, the demographics of the street wobbled up and down in age, up and down in class, as it became more or less popular with upwardly mobile young families, and as the area did well or less well. The area was bombed in the Second World War, but Pepys Road was unaffected until a V-2 rocket hit in 1944 and destroyed two houses in the middle of the street. The gap stayed there for years, like a pair of missing front teeth, until a new property with balconies and French windows, looking very strange amid the Victorian architecture, was built there in the fifties. During that decade, four houses in the street were lived in by families recently arrived from the Caribbean; the fathers all worked for London Transport. In 1960 a small irregularly shaped patch of grass at one end of Pepys Road, vacant since the previous structure was destroyed by German bombs, was concreted over and a two-up-two-down corner shop was built there.

It would be hard to put your finger on the exact point when Pepys Road began its climb up the economic ladder. A conventional answer would be to say that it tracked the change in

## Prologue

At first light on a late summer morning, a man in a hooded sweatshirt moved softly and slowly along an ordinary-looking street in South London. He was doing something, though a bystander would have been hard put to guess what. Sometimes he crept closer to houses, sometimes he backed further away. Sometimes he looked down, sometimes he looked up. At close range, that bystander would have been able to tell that the young man was carrying a small high-definition video camera – except there was no bystander, so there was no one to notice. Apart from the young man, the street was empty. Even the earliest risers weren't up yet, and it wasn't a day for milk delivery or rubbish collection. Maybe he knew that, and the fact that he was filming the houses then was no coincidence.

The name of the place where he was filming was Pepys Road. It didn't look unusual for a street in this part of town. Most of its houses were the same age. They were built by a property developer in the late nineteenth century, during the boom that followed the abolition of the tax on brick. The developer hired a Cornish architect and Irish builders and the houses were built over a period of about eighteen months. They were three storeys high, and no two were identical, because the architect and his workmen created tiny variations in them, to do with the shape of the windows, or the chimneys, or the detailing of the brickwork. In the words of a guidebook to local architecture: 'Once this is

Britain's prosperity, emerging from the dowdy chrysalis of the late 1970s and transforming into a vulgar, loud butterfly of the Thatcher decades and the long boom that followed them. But it didn't seem quite like that to people who lived in the street – not least because the people who lived in the street changed too. As house prices slowly rose, the working classes, indigenous and immigrant, cashed in and moved out, usually looking to find bigger houses in quieter places, with neighbours like themselves. The new arrivals tended to be more middle-class, with husbands who worked at decently paid but not spectacular jobs, and wives who stayed at home and looked after the children – because these houses were still, as they always had been, popular with young families. Then, as prices rose and times changed, the new arrivals were families in which both parents worked and the children were in childcare either in the home or out of it.

People began to do up the houses, not in the ad hoc way of previous decades but with systematic make-overs in the knocking-through, open-plan style that became fashionable in the seventies and never really went away. People converted their lofts; when the council veered to the left in the 1980s and stopped giving permission for that, a group of residents banded together and fought a test case for the right to expand their houses upwards, and won it. Part of their argument was that these houses had been built for families, and that loft conversions were entirely in keeping with the spirit in which they were built – which was true. Someone in the street was always doing up a house; there was never a time when there weren't skips outside, builders' vans hogging the street, and all the banging, crashing, drilling, pounding, roaring, and turned-up transistor radios of builders and scaffolders that came as part of the package. The activity slowed down for a little after the housing crash of 1987, but began to pick up again ten years later. By late 2007, after many more years of a new boom, it was usual for two or



three houses in the street to be undergoing some sort of major renovation at the same time. The fashion was for people to install basements, at a cost usually starting around £100,000 a time. But as more than one of the people digging out the foundations of their house liked to point out, although the basements cost hundreds of thousands of pounds, they also added at least that much to the value of the house, so looked at from a certain point of view – and because many of the new residents worked in the City of London, this was a popular point of view – the basement conversions were free.

All this was part of a big change in the nature of Pepys Road. Over its history, almost everything that could have happened in the street had happened. Many, many people had fallen in love and-out of love; a young girl had had her first kiss, an old man had exhaled his last breath, a solicitor on his way back from the Underground station after work had looked up at the sky, swept blue by the wind, and had a sudden sense of religious consolation, a feeling that this life cannot possibly be all, and that it is not possible for consciousness to end with the end of life; babies had died of diphtheria, and people had shot up heroin in bathrooms, and young mothers had cried with their overwhelming sense of fatigue and isolation, and people had planned to escape, and schemed for their big break, and vegged out in front of televisions, and set fire to their kitchens by forgetting to turn the chip pan off, and fallen off ladders, and experienced everything that can happen in the run of life, birth and death and love and hate and happiness and sadness and complex feeling and simple feeling and every shade of emotion in between.

Now, however, history had sprung an astonishing plot twist on the residents of Pepys Road. For the first time in history, the people who lived in the street were, by global and maybe even by local standards, rich. The thing which made them rich was the very fact that they lived in Pepys Road. They were rich simply

because of that, because all of the houses in Pepys Road, as if by magic, were now worth millions of pounds.

This caused a strange reversal. For most of its history, the street was lived in by more or less the kind of people it was built for: the aspiring not-too-well-off. They were happy to live there, and living there was part of a busy and determined attempt to do better, to make a good life for themselves and their families. But the houses were the backdrop to their lives: they were an important part of life but they were a set where events took place, rather than the principal characters. Now, however, the houses had become so valuable to people who already lived in them, and so expensive for people who had recently moved into them, that they had become central actors in their own right.

This happened at first slowly, gradually, as average prices crept up through the lower hundred thousands, and then, as people from the financial industry discovered the area, and house prices in general began to rise sharply, and people began to be paid huge bonuses, bonuses that were three or four times their notional annual pay, bonuses which were big multiples of the national average salary, and a general climate of hysteria affected everything to do with house prices – then, suddenly, prices began to go up so quickly that it was as if they had a will of their own. There was a sentence that rang down the decades, a very English sentence: 'Did you hear what they got for the house down the road?' Once, the amazingly big figure under discussion involved sums which just crept into the ten thousands. Then they were in the multiples of ten thousand. Then they were in the low hundred thousands, and then in the high hundred thousands, and now they were in seven figures. It began to be all right for people to talk about house prices all the time; the topic came up in conversation within the first minutes of people speaking to each other. When people met they held off the sub-

ject of house prices with a conscious sense of restraint, and gave in to the desire to talk about them with relief.

It was like Texas during the oil rush, except that instead of sticking a hole in the ground to make fossil fuel shoot up from it, all people had to do was sit there and imagine the cash value of their homes rattling upwards so fast that they couldn't see the figures go round. Once the parents had gone off to work and the children off to school you saw fewer people in the street in the daytime, except builders; but the houses had things brought to them all day. As the houses had got more expensive, it was as if they had come alive, and had wishes and needs of their own. Vans from Berry Brothers and Rudd brought wine; there were two or three different vans of dog-walkers; there were florists, Amazon parcels, personal trainers, cleaners, plumbers, yoga teachers, and all day long, all of them going up to the houses like supplicants and then being swallowed up by them. There was laundry, there was dry-cleaning, there were FedEx and UPS, there were dog beds, printer ribbons, garden chairs, vintage film posters, same-day DVD purchases, eBay coups, eBay whims and impulse buys, mail-order bicycles. People came to the houses to beg and to sell things (towels for the homeless, utility company salesmen). The tradesmen and trainers and craftsmen disappeared into the buildings and came out when they were finished. The houses were now like people, and rich people at that, imperious, with needs of their own that they were not shy about having serviced. There were builders in the street, all the time, servicing the houses, doing up lofts and kitchens and knocking though and adding on, and there was always at least one skip parked in the street, and at least one set of scaffolding. The new craze was for doing up basements and turning them into rooms – kitchens, playrooms, utility rooms – and the houses going in for this craze had conveyors of dirt flowing into skips. Because the earth was compressed by the weight of the houses above it,

as it was dug up it expanded to five or six times its original size, so there was something bizarre, even sinister, about this digging, as if the earth was spreading, vomiting, rejecting its own excavation, and far far too much of it seemed to come out of the ground, as if it were fundamentally unnatural to reach down into the earth to take up more space, and the digging could go on for ever.

Having a house in Pepys Road was like being in a casino in which you were guaranteed to be a winner. If you already lived there, you were rich. If you wanted to move there, you had to be rich. It was the first time in history this had ever been true. Britain had become a country of winners and losers, and all the people in the street, just by living there, had won. And the young man on the summer morning moved along the road, filming this street full of winners.



## Task 2

Although Pepys Road in the book is fictional, it represents the kind of changes that have been experienced by Portland Road in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. This area of London is generally considered to be wealthy and fashionable. However, not all of this area is well off; Grenfell Tower sits in the north of the borough. Read the article which talks about how varied this borough is:

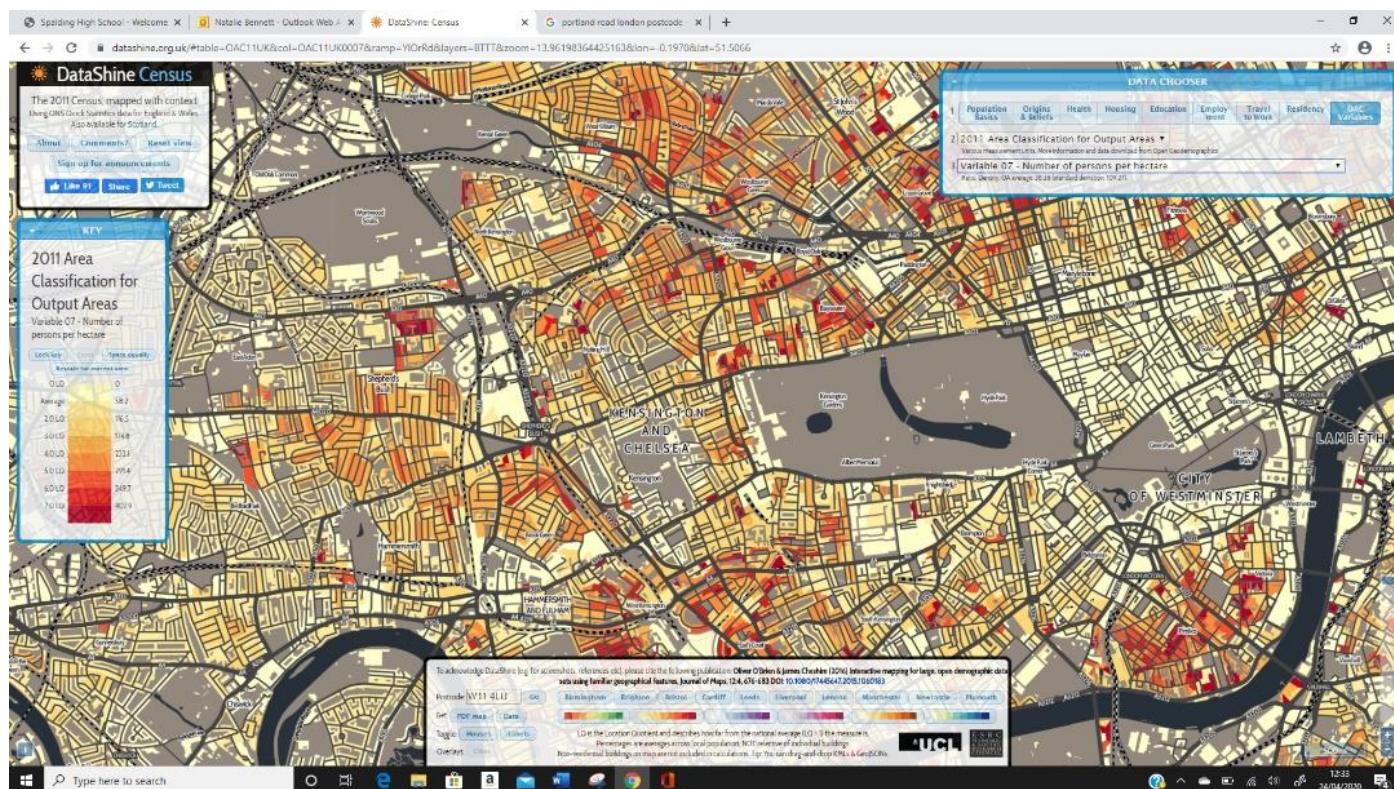
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/15/wealth-and-poverty-sit-side-by-side-in-grenfell-towers-borough>

## Task 3

Data Shine is a mapping site that uses 2011 census data to show how areas of the UK vary. It allows you to look at Kensington and Chelsea in more detail:

<https://datashine.org.uk/>

Open the digital map and look for the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (central postcode is W11 4LU). You should end up with a map that looks something like the one below. Locate Portland Road and Grenfell Tower (this is on Grenfell Road so you may need to toggle between Datashine and Google maps to locate these accurately).



Using the Data Chooser tabs on the top right of the screen, examine the variation across the area; you could for example look at how deprived households are (4 dimensions being the most factors measured).

***Make a note of three differences between Portland Road and Grenfell Tower and bring this data with you on Induction Day.***

#### **Task 4**

Using Google maps and street view, look around the area, in particular Portland Road and Grenfell Road (Grenfell Tower is on Grenfell Road).

What additional evidence can you see for the variation in wealth?



▲ Grenfell Tower before and after refurbishment work. Photograph: Grenfell Tower Inquiry/PA

#### **Task 5**

If you wish, watch the film 'Notting Hill', which is set in this borough. It is an interesting representation of this place.

***Please make sure you complete the tasks above as they will provide you with a good understanding of the first topic we will tackle in September. Please ensure that you complete and bring the two identified tasks with you for the first lesson.***



## Key Geographical Skills

### Task 1

Study the image below.



Where in the world would you expect this to be? What can street art tell you about a place?  
***Bring your answers to these questions with you to your first lesson.***

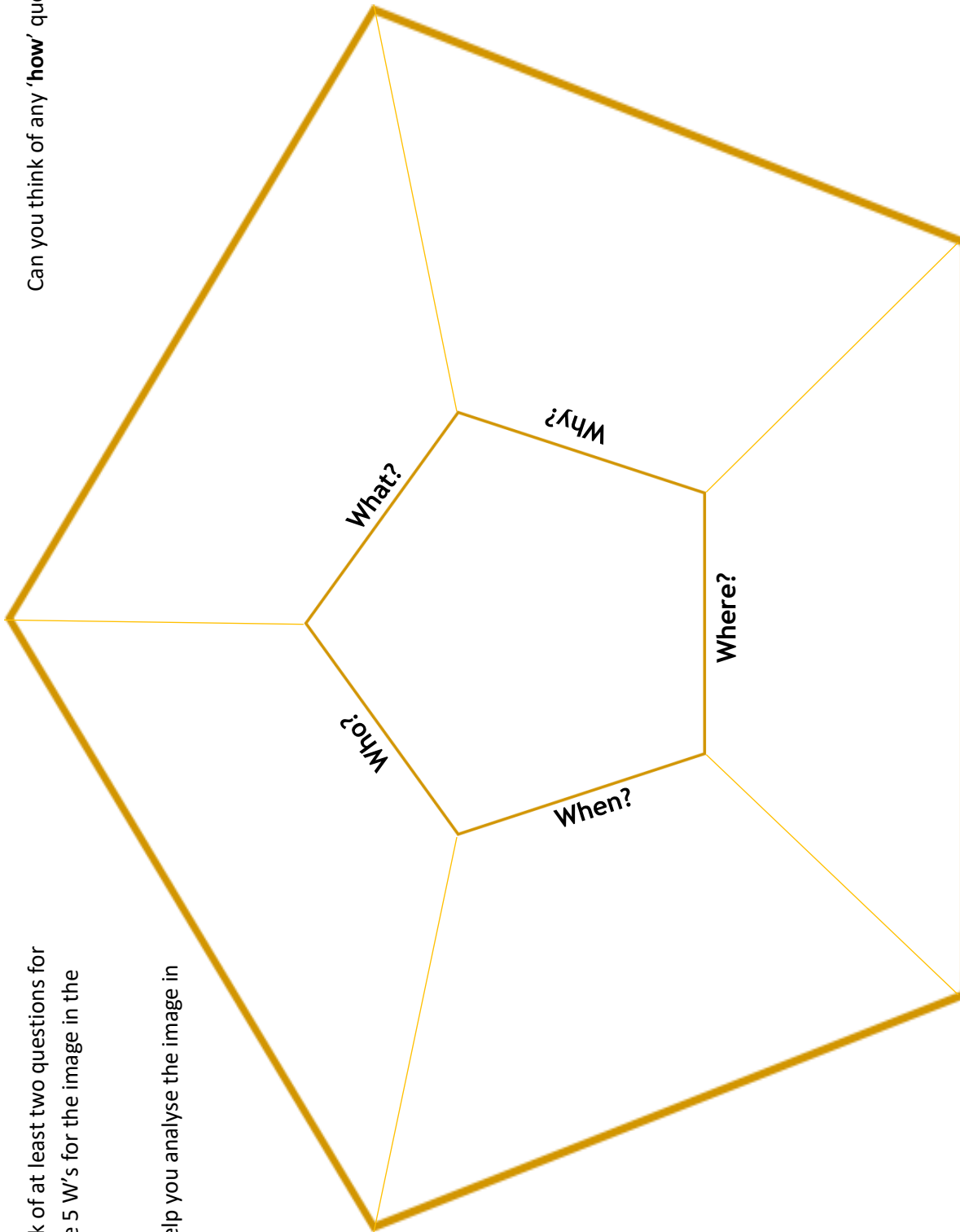
### Task 2

Study the image below and then complete the 5Ws worksheet on the next page.



Can you think of any 'how' questions?

- Try to think of at least two questions for each of the 5 W's for the image in the centre.
- This will help you analyse the image in



Now watch the following YouTube clip - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfkkVGycdM8>  
Is this what you expected?

### Task 3

Choose two contrasting places (these can be at any scales, from the local to the global) and use the 8-way thinking framework to record their differences (found toward the end of this booklet). The aim is to build a 'sense of place' about each. This will be the focus of a discussion about *space* and *place* in Year 12.

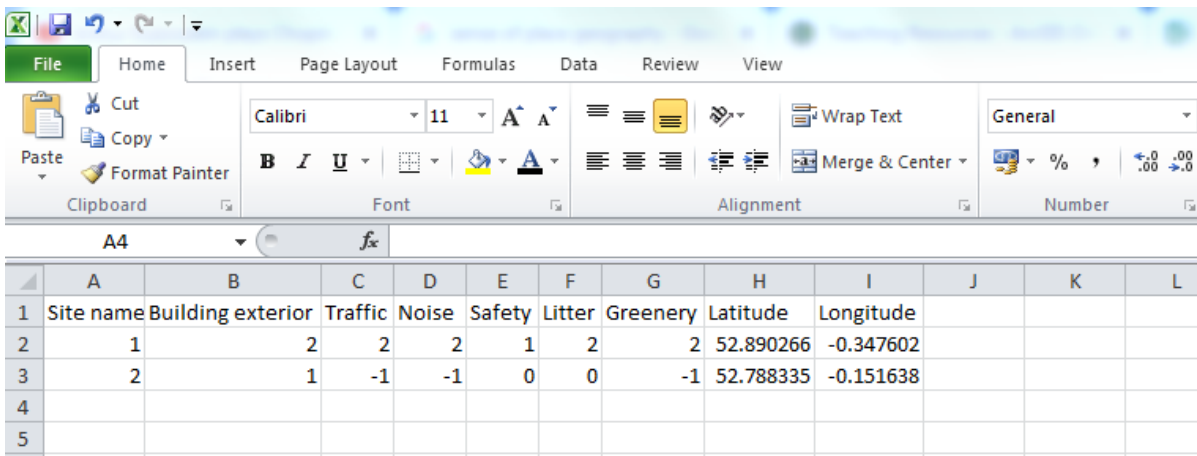
In addition, conduct research on environmental quality using a bi-polar survey (found at the end of this booklet) Make sure you record the latitude and longitude of your sites (you will need these for the next task).

### Task 4

Gain an understanding about Geographic Information Systems using Esri's ArcGIS programme <https://www.esri.com/en-us/what-is-gis/overview>.

Read how to create a GIS using this resource <https://sway.office.com/rjfVAUJogaXonDC5y>.

Create your own. First, record the environmental quality data you collected as a spread sheet in Microsoft Excel (see example below), and import to ArcGIS (this MUST be saved as a .csv file). NOTE: you can have more / different categories, but the latitude and longitude must be clear for ArcGIS to 'read'. Set out your spreadsheet in a similar way.



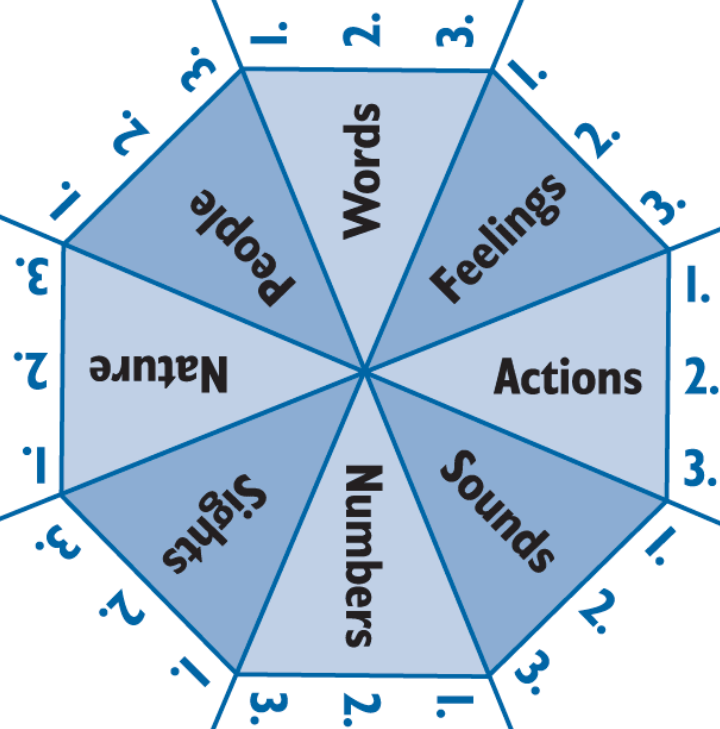
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	Site name	Building exterior	Traffic	Noise	Safety	Litter	Greenery	Latitude	Longitude			
2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	52.890266	-0.347602			
3	2	1	-1	-1	0	0	-1	52.788335	-0.151638			
4												
5												

**Take a screenshot of your completed GIS and email it to your teacher when requested.**

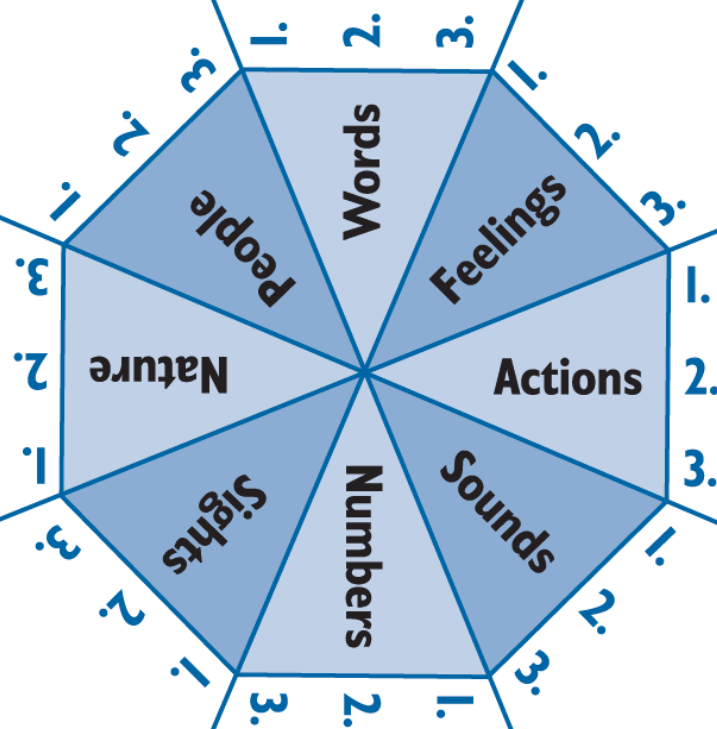


Place 1:

# 8Way Thinking



# 8Way Thinking





Place 1:

	2	1	0	-1	-2	
<b><u>BUILDINGS</u></b>						<b><u>BUILDINGS</u></b>
Exterior in good condition						Exterior in poor condition
Buildings are pleasing to the eye						Buildings are ugly
Well maintained outside space						Poorly maintained outside space
No evidence of vandalism						Clear evidence of vandalism
<b><u>TRAFFIC &amp; VEHICLES</u></b>						<b><u>TRAFFIC &amp; VEHICLES</u></b>
No traffic congestion						Congested/busy with traffic
Easy parking with off-road space available						Difficult parking with no off-road space
No traffic noise						High volume traffic noise
Safe for pedestrians						Potential danger for pedestrians
<b><u>GENERAL QUALITY</u></b>						<b><u>GENERAL QUALITY</u></b>
Area feels safe and unthreatening						Area feels unsafe and threatening
Area is clean with little or no litter						Area has lots of litter and other debris
Well maintained roads and pavements						Poorly maintained roads and pavements
Pleasant greenery and landscaping						No greenery or landscaping

Place 2:

	2	1	0	-1	-2	
<b><u>BUILDINGS</u></b>						<b><u>BUILDINGS</u></b>
Exterior in good condition						Exterior in poor condition
Buildings are pleasing to the eye						Buildings are ugly
Well maintained outside space						Poorly maintained outside space
No evidence of vandalism						Clear evidence of vandalism
<b><u>TRAFFIC &amp; VEHICLES</u></b>						<b><u>TRAFFIC &amp; VEHICLES</u></b>
No traffic congestion						Congested/busy with traffic
Easy parking with off-road space available						Difficult parking with no off-road space
No traffic noise						High volume traffic noise
Safe for pedestrians						Potential danger for pedestrians
<b><u>GENERAL QUALITY</u></b>						<b><u>GENERAL QUALITY</u></b>
Area feels safe and unthreatening						Area feels unsafe and threatening
Area is clean with little or no litter						Area has lots of litter and other debris
Well maintained roads and pavements						Poorly maintained roads and pavements
Pleasant greenery and landscaping						No greenery or landscaping