

Britain's shopping geography

Introduction and curriculum links

This resource accompanies Ordnance Survey's [Retail Areas: Britain's shopping geography](#) article which is useful for introducing pupils to the idea that geographical data can reveal patterns that are not immediately obvious.

This resource could be used as an introduction to a local fieldwork enquiry looking at the success of a local retail area or as a standalone piece.

It links to the Key Stage 3 Geography Curriculum as follows:

Human and physical geography

Understand, using detailed place-based exemplars at a variety of scales.

Key processes in Human Geography relating to: population and urbanisation; economic activity in the primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary sectors.

Geographical skills and fieldwork

Build on their knowledge of maps and atlases and apply and develop this knowledge routinely in the classroom and in the field

Use fieldwork in contrasting locations to collect, analyse and draw conclusions from geographical data, using multiple sources of increasingly complex information.

Key terminology

Accessibility: how easy a place is to reach.

Catchment area: the area from which a place attracts its customers.

Distribution: the way something is spread across an area.

High street: a traditional main shopping street in a town or city.

Land use: the way land is used by people.

Mixed-use: an area containing different types of land use, such as shops and housing.

Retail: the selling of goods and services to consumers.

Retail geography: the study of where retail activities are located and why.

Retail Park: a concentration of larger shops, often outside a town centre.

Shopping centre: a purpose-built area containing several shops.

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Questions

1. According to the resource, 54.5% of high-street addresses are residential and 26.4% are retail only. This suggests that a high street is not just simply a place where people go to shop, it's also a place where people live, work and carry out other activities.

- a. Complete the sentence 'shops on high street may benefit from nearby residents because...'
- b. Complete a table identifying the advantages and disadvantages of a high street with lots of residents.

Advantages	Disadvantages

2. Why do different regions of Britain have different types of shops and retail businesses?
Think about population, land, transport, history, planning and the structure of the urban area.



3. Rank these factors for reasons why people choose where they shop. 1 = most important, 6 = least important. Explain your choices for the most and least important.

Factor	Rank (1= most important, 6=least)	Reason (most and least only)
Accessibility		
Choice		
Distance		
Experience		
Price		
Quality		

4. Britain's high streets have changed over time. Some traditional shopping areas have experienced declining numbers of shops, partly because of factors such as the growth of online shopping and changes in the costs of running a business.

But the OS data reveals that about 99% of all people in Britain live within a 15 minutes' drive of a high street. Therefore, this raises an interesting question:

If high streets are still so accessible, why don't people always choose to shop there?

a. Give **three** reasons why a person might choose to shop online or go to a retail park instead of their local high street.

i.

ii.

iii.

b. Suggest **two** ways what could make the high street more attractive.

i.

ii.



5. Examination-style question.

Write a response to the following question:

The location of shops is more important than the shops themselves' Do you agree?

Use the following to help structure the answer:

- Clearly state your opinion;
- Use two pieces of evidence from the article;
- Explain why this evidence supports your answer;
- Challenge: consider an alternative point of view.

Potential answers

1. According to the resource, 54.5% of high-street addresses are residential and 26.4% are retail only. This suggests that a high street is not just simply a place where people go to shop, it's also a place where people live, work and carry out other activities.

a. Complete the sentence 'shops on high street may benefit from nearby residents because...'

Ideas such as: there is always a flow of people in the area or people are familiar with the shops, so they visit more.

b. Complete the table below identifying the advantages and disadvantages of a high street with lots of residents.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Provides local employment	Might put others off from visiting as they feel it's too local
More people to shop in the shops	Overcrowding from local residents
Income generated for the local area	New shops might not want to set up there because they don't feel they can bring something to the community that they need

2. The type of retail is not the same across Britain. For example, London has a high proportion of retail addresses on high streets whereas the East Midlands have more retail parks.

a. Why might different regions in Britain have different types of retail? Think about population, land, transport, planning and the structure of the urban area.

Population: there might be more people in some parts than others therefore more or less to support the retail area.

Land: some land is cheaper than others making the retail area more affordable to build on. There might be more available land in some places than others therefore, limiting where retail spaces can be built.

Transport: some places are more accessible by transport networks than others meaning they are more attractive to retail areas.

Planning: some places have councils in support of building new retail centres, others might not. This will affect what types of retail will be allowed and where.

Urban structure: some places have many large urban areas, others do not. This affects the amount of available space as well as the population to support the retail area.

3. Rank these factors for reasons why people choose where they shop. 1 = most important, 6 = least important. Explain your choices for the most and least important.

Factor	Rank (1= most important, 6=least)	Reason (most and least only)
Accessibility		Pupils make a reasoned decision based on their ranking There's no right or wrong answer here. It's more about the justification.
Choice		
Distance		
Experience		
Price		
Quality		

4. Britain's high streets have changed over time. Some traditional shopping areas have experienced declining numbers of shops, partly because of factors such as the growth of online shopping and changes in the costs of running a business.

But the OS data reveals that about 99% of all people in Britain live within a 15 minutes' drive of a high street. Therefore, this raises an interesting question:

If high streets are still so accessible, why don't people always choose to shop there?

a. Give **three** reasons why a person might choose to shop online or go to a retail park instead of their local high street.

Ideas could include:

Online might be cheaper;

There's more choice online;

You can use reviews from previous buyers to help you make a decision on your purchase online;

Your item is not available on the high street;

You can access the shops more easily in a retail park;

There are bigger shops in retail parks;

You can do all your shopping at once online / in a retail park.

b. Suggest **two** ways what could make the high street more attractive.

Ideas could include:

More localised/unique produce such as locally grown fruit or vegetables;

Products which reflect the history/culture of the place;

Small independent shops or services;

High-quality goods which people want to invest in.



5. Examination-style question.

Write a response to the following question:

The location of shops is more important than the shops themselves' Do you agree?

Use the following to help structure the answer:

- Clearly state your opinion;
- Use two pieces of evidence from the article;
- Explain why this evidence supports your answer;
- Challenge: consider an alternative point of view.

Example answer:

One reason I agree why the location of the shops is more important than the shops themselves is accessibility. If the location allows easy access to the shops, then people can visit them without worrying about where they need to go or park. The OS data shows that 99% of people in Britain live within a 15-minute drive of a high street. If they cannot easily park in the high street when they get there then they will not want to visit.