

The United Kingdom – Comparing places

Lesson plan

In this lesson pupils focus on two settlements as case studies (Blackpool and Birmingham) and discover how they have changed and developed through time. They consider the causes and consequences of city growth and decline, and the challenges facing these urban areas.

Key Questions and Ideas

- Why is Birmingham/ Blackpool the city it is today?
- What were the original sites of Birmingham and Blackpool? How were they influenced by physical and human geography?
- What caused each of the cities to grow?
- Historically, what were the main economic activities?
- How have functions changed over time?
- What do the city centres look like today?
- What are the current problems facing the cities?
- What are the current population totals and characteristics of the cities?

Subject Content Areas

Locational Knowledge: name and locate cities of the UK and understand how their characteristics have changed over time.

Place knowledge: understand geographical similarities and differences through a comparative study of two settlements. Identify the origin, patterns of growth and economic and social challenges of large settlements.

Human and Physical Geography: describe and understand physical and human influences on the growth, development and functionality of cities.

Geographical Skills and Fieldwork: interpret a range of sources of geographical information including maps and aerial photographs. Methodology of fieldwork, data presentation and analysis; graphical representation of data, grid references, direction, keys, symbols, sketch maps.

Downloads

Cities of Contrast (PPT)

Resource pack for Birmingham PDF | MSWORD

Resource pack for Blackpool PDF | MSWORD

Settlement Fact File Template PDF | MSWORD

OS Maps: (not provided):

Birmingham: Explorer 220

Blackpool: Explorer 286

Additional resources

Post-it notes (for starter)

City guides for Birmingham/Blackpool (or access to a child-friendly search engine for additional research).

Flip chart / large poster paper and pens for each group

Learning Objective

To gain detailed geographical knowledge of two UK cities (Birmingham and Blackpool) as case studies.

Teaching

Use the *Cities of Contrast* PowerPoint presentation (see downloadable resources) to guide the lesson and display images and maps.

Explain to pupils that in this lesson they will gain detailed geographical knowledge about the two cities of **Birmingham** and **Blackpool**.

Ask pupils to have a go at 'pinning' the location of each of these cities on the map of the UK on the first slide of the PowerPoint presentation, posing the questions:

- In which UK country are they located?
- Which city is larger?
- Which city is further north?

Reveal the location of **Blackpool** and compare its location to the guesses made by pupils. Blackpool is located in **North West England**, in the county of **Lancashire**.

Display the range of images of the city, and highlight Blackpool's seaside location and tourism industry. Ask pupils to compare the images of Blackpool beach in 1959, and Blackpool beach now, asking: what is different? What is the same?

Reveal the location of **Birmingham** and compare its location to the guesses made by pupils. Birmingham is located the centre of the **West Midlands** region of England. It is further south than Blackpool.

Discuss the images displayed in the PowerPoint, including Birmingham Town Hall; a Grade I listed building that opened in 1834. For more than 180 years, the Town Hall has been a centre of civic and cultural life in Birmingham, it is described as 'Birmingham's most iconic historic building'.

Industry in Birmingham: it was once known as the 'City of a Thousand Trades', and was a world leader in the production of pens, buckles, buttons, jewellery and guns. Over the last 30 years, the city's focus has shifted from the manufacturing industry to the service industry. Former industrial properties have been transformed into art and nightlife venues.

Transport in Birmingham: it is a major transport hub, due to its location in central England. Many railway lines meet at Birmingham New Street railway station, which is a hub of the UK rail network. There is a network of local rail services within Birmingham, as well as buses and the metro.

Business/architecture in Birmingham: two striking buildings in Birmingham are the Selfridges building and The Cube. Ask pupils if they like the facades of these buildings, why/why not?

Main Activity

Pupils, in groups of four, are presented with maps and information on the physical growth, land use and changing functions of Birmingham and Blackpool over time. Ensure that half the groups have the *Resource pack for Birmingham* and the other half have the *Resource pack for Blackpool* (see downloadable resources).

Pupils analyse resource pack and prepare a presentation (visual and written) to give to the rest of the class at the end of the lesson. Things to include:

1. An annotated map
2. Graphs to represent changes
3. Key facts and figures
4. Fun facts

Groups can use the *Settlement Fact File Template* (see downloadable resources) as a starting point.

Pupils can also use Birmingham/Blackpool city guides and/or carry out online research to add greater detail to their presentations.

Plenary

Each Birmingham group joins with a Blackpool group and they peer-teach their case study through their presentation. Pupils give two stars and a wish, and check that each group have included the four key aspects.