

Google Earth – Ideas for use in the classroom

These are just a few ideas for using Google Earth in the classroom. Please feel free to add more ideas.

You may wish to prepare suitable placemarks for any work being covered. It is not always straightforward to locate the places required. Some placemarks are included with this resource. Simply save them to a suitable location and use ‘file, open to load the placemarks.

General map work

- Zoom in and out centred on a particular locality. Observe the relationship with other places, seas, borders and features.
- Fly from one locality to another. What seas are crossed? How far is it? Which direction was the flight in?
- Look at famous sights round the world. How would we travel to them? What country are they in?
- Measure distances between places.
- Overlay the latitude and longitude grid. Use to practice grid references.
- Use the rotate feature to look at the Earth with North in different positions. Use the ‘view’ menu to remove the compass. Guess when north is at the top of the page.
- Construct a quiz to be answered using Google Earth –
 - How many borders do various countries have?
 - What are the capitals of various countries?
 - Which countries have no coast?
 - Where are the continents and which countries are part of them?

Rivers

- Follow the course of a river (local, linked with a locality study or famous) beginning in one location and tracing it both ways. Zoom in and out along periodically.
 - What settlements are observed?
 - What crossings are they? Are they road, railway, footpath or canal?
 - Are any tributaries observed?
 - Does the river diverge at any point?
 - Does the river meander?
 - Is there evidence of a floodplain?

Seaside Holiday

- Use the ‘add placemark’ feature to plot seaside places visited by the children.
- Measure the distances, as the crow flies, from the school locality.
- Copy images of each seaside and use them in a display.

Locality studies

- Measure the distance from the school’s locality.
- Investigate geographical features nearby.
- Observe transport links.
- What are the main towns and cities?

Mountains

- Locate mountain ranges and peaks.
- Tilt the view to see the mountains in 3D.
- Rotate the tilted image to see the mountain in context.
- Move the cursor around and compare the elevation measurements.

Coasts

The detail needed for much of the work on coasts is not contained in these images. However there may be some aspects which can be useful.

- Look at contrasting localities, built up areas, sand dunes, cliffs, rocky coasts, etc..
- Put known coastal features into context by zooming in and out from them.