

PLACE AND LIVEABILITY

SOME TEACHING IDEAS

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In Lima, Peru, a water park attracts children and adults improving social connectedness and people's quality of life

<http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photo-of-the-day/water-park-peru/>

Place and Liveability

Lorraine Chaffer

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The following pages are a selection of slides from a presentation I gave to the Australian Geography Teachers Association Conference in Auckland 2015.

When I first heard the term liveability and discovered it was the main theme of a unit in year 7 of the Australian Curriculum (Stage 4 NSW Syllabus) I was a little overwhelmed. On further investigation, the "What on earth would I teach" became "there is way too much to choose from" – the question became 'What on earth will interest year 7?'.

Investigating liveability in Year 7 is well placed as the concept is connected to other Geography units – Landscapes, Water, Changing Places (Urbanisation), Interconnections, Sustainable Biomes, Environmental Change and Human Wellbeing.

The concept of liveability can be examined at a variety of scales from a local street (liveable streets), to nations and regions (wealth and poverty / developed/ developing, rural / urban, Asia) and global (Earth, ecological footprints, biocapacity). Students should investigate a range of places.

Part 1 looks at activities to introduce liveability and factors that influence people's perceptions of liveability. Any one of these activities can lead into an investigation of factors influencing the liveability of places and ways of measuring and assessing the liveability of places.

Part 2 in the next edition will look in more detail at the integration of geographical tools and enhancing the liveability of places at a range of scales.

Content focus NSW Syllabus

Students:

- **discuss** factors that influence people's perceptions of the liveability of places.
- **investigate** features and characteristics of places across a range of scales that support and enhance people's wellbeing such as community identity, environmental quality and access to services and facilities.
- **assess** the liveability of places
- **propose** strategies to enhance the liveability of a place in Australia.

NSW Geography Syllabus K-10 Page 62

Liveability

An assessment of what a place is like to live in, using particular criteria such as environmental quality, safety, access to shops and services and cultural activities.

Liveability Criteria

Characteristics used to assess the liveability of places or their contribution to people's quality of life
e.g. safety, healthcare, education, infrastructure and environment.

Liveability Index

A measure of liveability/quality of life based on a set of criteria and used to rank places. Used principally to rank the world's largest cities by the quality of life they offer. (Syllabus Glossary)

Liveability – a new languagebut nothing new at all

Liveability is a human construct and it is not new. When we make judgements about places e.g. "I couldn't live in this street" or "I wouldn't mind living in this suburb" – we are assessing / evaluating liveability – we just never called it that before.

Liveability, sustainability, walkability, 'quality of life', 'human well – being' and many other concepts have become the new language of planning better **places** to live

The Challenges of “Place and Liveability”

- **Choosing content** – just about anything can influencing perceptions of liveability
- **Integrating key concepts and cross curriculum priorities** – make them integral
- Using **Geographical Inquiry and Geographical tools** including the use of **fieldwork**
- **Programming to avoid repetition** of content with Geography topics in 7 – 10 eg. Water, landscapes , urban places, biomes, global connections, environmental change and wellbeing ... all of these influence the liveability of places
- **Engaging 12-13 year olds** – use ICT , visual images, interesting places and relevance to teenagers

Introductory Activities

1. Opposites

- What don't you want the place you live in to be like ? – turn this into a list of factors that influencing liveability
- All places are liveable to some degree. Why do people live in places with low liveability characteristics? Use examples eg extreme climates, place prone to hazards, war zones, slums

Rather than begin with a definition of liveability and a discussion of factors influencing where people live



Brainstorm the things students do **not want** in the places they live eg noise, pollution, lots of traffic, crime, danger, drug dealers, emptiness, isolation, extreme heat or cold. Answers will depend on students location and experiences.

But people do live in places with these characteristics – Why?

Use examples - integrate geographical tools and skills eg. maps,



This can lead to a discussion of the features they want in the places they live and the development of personal liveability criteria.

Example

Features not wanted	Factors influencing liveability
Dangerous, violence, crime, natural hazards, war, drugs	Safety from natural and human dangers eg natural hazards, war, crime
Pollution, noise, old or run down buildings,	Environmental quality
Too hot, very cold, deserts/ lack of water	Environmental quality
Isolation / too far away / no Internet/ No TV / No phone connection /	Connectedness – to services and facilities
Slums	Environmental quality, services and facilities
No places to meet, play or socialise	Social connectedness
English not spoken, racist	Cultural identity

Refer to examples

- Why people do live in these places
- What trends are apparent
- How are these places made more liveable

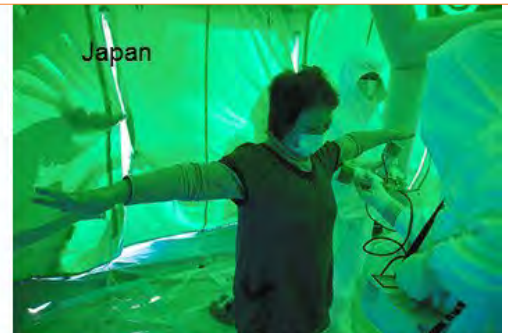
Indonesia



<http://thewatchers.adorraeli.com/2011/08/07/18-indonesian-volcanoes-on-alert-status/>

People live in dangerous and extreme places.
Why?

Japan



<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/gallery/2011/mar/15/japan-nuclear-plant-fukushima#?picture=372735447&index=16>

War zones, near volcanoes & nuclear power stations.

Afghanistan



<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39036#UFM1215zr0c>

Remote, arid & cold climates

Ethiopian highlands



<http://www.volcanodiscovery.com/things-to-see-in-danakil/salt/photos0208/image11.html>

Pacific & Indian Oceans



Sea gypsies

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ramdiboy/4151693456/>

Location factors

Cultural – Moken - sea gypsies, Indonesia
Environmental e.g. resources
Economic - poverty, no choice, livelihood

Example: Living in Indonesia's volcanic zones

Ash clouds, mudflows, poisonous gases, lava flows and tsunamis threaten lives, and livelihoods in Indonesia every year yet millions continue to live under volcanoes



<http://www.corbisimages.com/Search#p=1&q=volcanoes+indonesia>
<http://www.corbisimages.com/Search#p=1&q=volcanoes+indonesia>

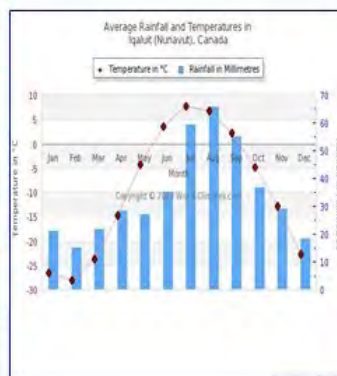
Poverty restricts people's ability to move
(economic factor)

- The factors that influence the decisions people make about where to live and their perceptions of the liveability of places
- Influence of environmental quality e.g. danger vs. resources (economic)
- Influence of community identity & social connectedness – religious beliefs, family traditions and perceptions of safety
- The strategies used to enhance the liveability of places

Example: Living in polar climates



NUNAVUT home of the Inuit who have occupied the arctic for over a thousand years living on environmental resources and developing a unique culture based on seasonal cycles of the land and sea.



Liveability **changes** over time
Technology can overcome remoteness & improve connectedness

(economic, environmental social & cultural factors)

<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/province/lcolor/nucolor.htm>
<http://www.world-climates.com/city-climate-igaluit-nunavut-canada-north-america/>
<http://www.arcticphoto.co.uk/gallery2/arctic/peoples/inuitcan/ba9918-29.htm>

Curriculum links

- The factors that influence the decisions people make about where to live and their perceptions of the liveability of places
- Influence of environmental quality- resources, climate change
- Influence of accessibility to services and facilities
- Influence of social connectedness & cultural identity
- The strategies used to enhance the liveability of places, especially for young people

2. Photo interpretation / ranking activity

- Use a variety of images and have students rank them according to their perceptions of liveability – or where they would like to live most to least.
- Discuss / list the criteria they used to determine their rankings
- Identify features that cannot be shown in an image (Tangible & intangible characteristics / quantitative & qualitative data)



At the end of the discussion students (individually or in groups) can develop a set of liveability criteria to apply to a local place

Curriculum links

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3. Think of a Place: Assess liveability

BY THE CITY FOR THE CITY

SHARE AN IDEA | MAP OF IDEAS | LIST OF IDEAS | ABOUT

Wouldn't it be great if...

There were more street lights lights and footpaths

Characters left: 500

Where?

Example: Corner of 4th St & Broadway Manhattan, or All of the South Bronx

Between the shops and the new estate

Characters left: 200

So that people could...

Feel safer and more comfortable walking from home to shops and back.

Because I want the city to be...

Safe, walkable, healthier

ANY SCALE

World
 Country
 State
 Region
 City
 Town
 Suburb
 Neighbourhood
 Street

A simple activity easy to adapt to classroom use to develop students' ability to evaluate the liveability of their own place and to investigate whether it can be improved through planning


To complete this activity you have made an assessment about the liveability of your chosen **place**.

What criteria did you use?

Safety, access to services & facilities, environment, OR lifestyle, culture, community, family, employment.

HOW WOULD A TEENAGER RESPOND ?

A similar activity: Open question

Results – free associations 

Instructions:
I am interested in the kind of city you would aspire to live in the future. Please write or draw the different words and images that show this in the boxes below. Please give only one thought/image per box.

1 Not too crowded Space to be yourself	2 Friendly people
3 Lots of shops and amenities	4 Somewhere hot near the sea

Female, 55-67, lower SES, White, Birmingham

Instructions:
I am interested in the kind of city you would aspire to live in the future. Please write or draw the different words and images that show this in the boxes below. Please give only one thought/image per box.

1 No noise, no city, no cars	2 No noise, no city, no cars
3 Green, no noise, no city, no cars	4 Green, no noise, no city, no cars

Male, 55-67, higher SES, White, Southampton

<http://www.slideshare.net/UKCIP/arcc-20141bjoffesmithliveable-cities?related=3>

The kind of place I aspire to live in

4. Hypothetical

Choose a location and justify choice

Open question: If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you like to live?

Give options with selected information about each place for students to choose eg. maps, climate graphs, employment statistics, travel, recreational facilities etc.



Photo: L. Chaffer

Perceptions of liveability

Sydney



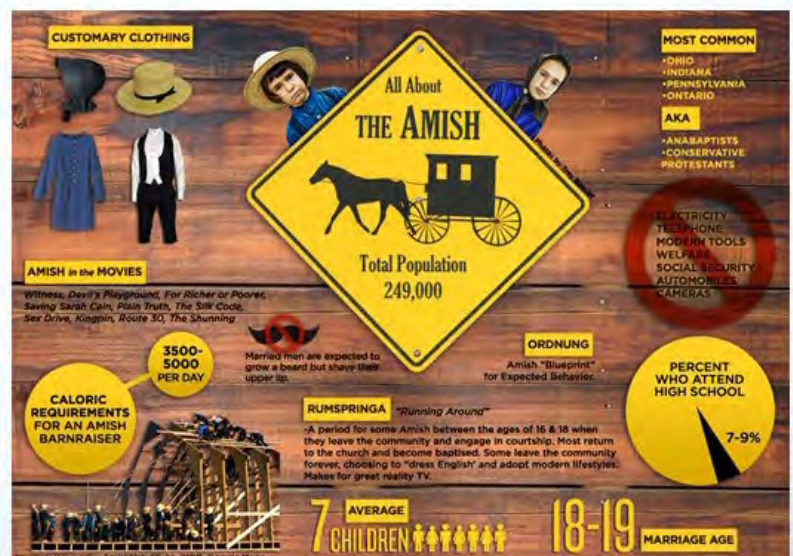
<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/travel/news/australian-open-of-surfing-draws-a-crowd/story-fn32891l-1226272775891>

A variety of factors will influence our perceptions of the liveability of places
e.g. age, income, wealth, employment, aspirations, interests, location

What influences our Perceptions? : Age, lifestage & lifestyle

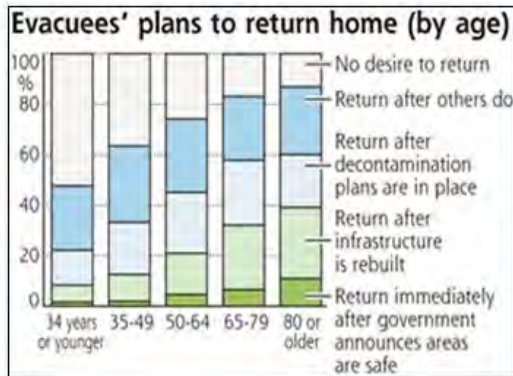


<http://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/a/ages.asp>



http://infographiclist.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/allabouttheamish_4ede99abdd59c.j

Age influences perceptions of liveability in Japan



<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T111109005814.htm>

The younger the respondents, the less likely they were to wish to return to their pre-crisis addresses. More than half of those aged 34 or younger said they would not return.

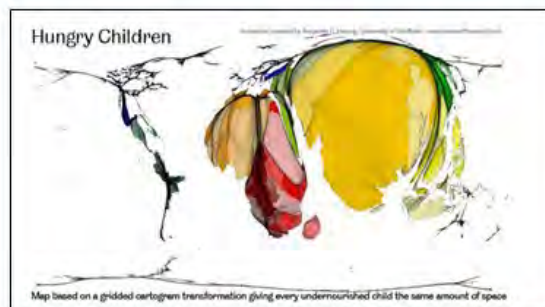
Millions of people live in close proximity to **nuclear power plants**

After the nuclear accident at Fukushima, Japan, in 2011, people questioned the safety of living adjacent to these sources of power.

For many people, the fear of a nuclear accident would prevent them from living beside a nuclear neighbour. In Japan, after the clean up of the area and the removal of topsoil, people evacuated from eight municipalities around the Fukushima plant, will decide whether to return or move.

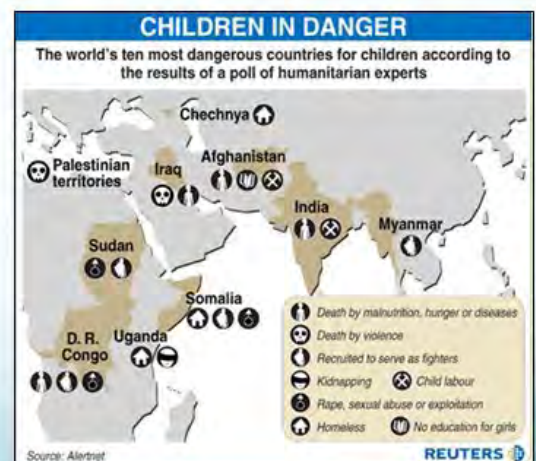
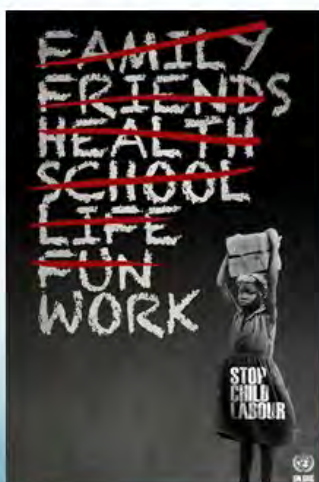
Source: GeoWorld 7 NSW

Liveable **places** for children



<http://www.viewsoftheworld.net/?p=1710>

LOTS OF GREAT STIMULUS MATERIAL



http://www.veatchild.org/news/News_archive/2006/dangerouscountries/dangerouscountries.html

<http://imagine2050.newcomm.org/2008/10/04/the-grisly-truth-behind-soccer-ball-manufacturing/>

http://adsoftheworld.com/forny/exhibition/eradicate_child_labour

Concluding introductory activities 1



Images from GeoWorld 7 NSW



The importance of factors will vary between individuals and will change over time e.g. access to schools. Some factors e.g. personal safety are important in all phases of our lives while in recent years environmental quality has become more important

Human rights such as freedom, the availability of goods and services, personal [safety](#), [education](#), [health care](#), [culture](#), [environment](#), [recreation](#), employment, political-economic stability, public transportation, climate and access to nature are used to measure livability in the global surveys.

GeoWorld 7 NSW

Concluding introductory activities 2



Make a list of the personal and location factors that affect where you and your family currently live.

Why do the factors affecting peoples decisions change over time?

Do you think "livability" and "quality of life" mean the same thing? Explain.

List factors that would be important to you but are missing from the Wordle.