

STAGE 6 FIELDWORK ESSENTIALS

Preparing for Fieldwork (Tourism)

Louise Swanson, Vice President GTA NSW

While studying Tourism as an economic activity students will need to undertake fieldwork.

Before students go out in the field and complete their fieldwork there are several preparatory activities that they need to undertake to get the best out of their research.

PRE-FIELDWORK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Formulate a geographical question or determine an issue for study.
- ☐ Identify appropriate sources of geographical information (both primary and secondary).
- ☐ Identify appropriate tools and fieldwork for the investigation.
- ☐ Plan and organise fieldwork activities.

FORMULATING A GEOGRAPHICAL QUESTION

Choose a topic that you are interested in and which addresses the requirements of the task you have been given. You can choose to do your fieldwork about the economic activity (tourism in general), or the economic enterprise operating at a local scale (e.g. Perisher). It might be useful to use the syllabus to give you some ideas about appropriate topics. For example, you might consider one of the following:

- Growth/decline in tourism at your field site.
- Positive/negative impacts of a new development on tourism at your field site.
- Positive/negative environmental impacts of tourism at your field site.
- Positive/negative social impacts of tourism at your field site.
- Positive/negative economic impacts of tourism at your field site.
- Sustainability of tourism at your field site.
- Locational factors affecting the economic enterprise
- Environmental constraints on the economic enterprise.

Hint: Once you think you have decided on your topic, reflect on the question/issue and ensure that it has obvious links to Geography. Sometimes when you find a topic that you like, you can forget that it can't just be an interest, it needs to directly tie in with the subject.

Conduct some preliminary research and determine whether there is enough depth to your topic. Tease out the ideas related to your topic by creating a mind map or table that addresses: sub-topic of your question/issue, specific issues related to each sub-topic, and different perspectives/debates related to the sub-topic.

- Consider the wording of your question/issue. It is better to use words that allow you to show the full scope of what you have learnt. Use directive terms like analyse or evaluate rather than more basic terms like describe or outline. These basic directive terms will limit your project depth.
- Identify appropriate sources of geographical information
- Brainstorm different sources of information that you will be able to use to begin to learn about your question/issue.

STAGE 6 FIELDWORK ESSENTIALS

IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE TOOLS AND FIELDWORK ACTIVITIES

Primary research refers to research conducted first hand. Examples of primary research include personal observations, measurements, recordings, photographs taken by you, interviews (e.g. with a local council member, government department, special interest groups), questionnaires, maps that you create, sketch maps, photo sketches, numerical and graphical data that you collect, ground and oblique photographs that you take or videos that you record.

Secondary research is research that someone else has conducted that you can use and interpret. Examples of secondary research include maps, numerical and graphical data from the internet, organisations or companies, aerial photographs and satellite images, videos filmed by others, books, journals, pamphlets, journals, newspapers, and magazine articles.

The **fieldwork technique** that you use will be determined by what type of information you want to find out.

What do people think about....?

- interviews
- questionnaires
- letters
- meetings - observations
- protests - observations

What is happening at a particular place...?

- observing traffic flow
- observing pedestrian flow
- observing land use

Vegetation measurements...

- sampling – random, quadrat methods
- height of vegetation
- density of vegetation
- species identification

Slope...

- cross-sections
- steepness of the slope (clinometer)
- aspect of the slope

Soils...

- soil profile
- soil acidity
- soil texture
- soil moisture content
- soil colour

Weather...

- temperature
- rainfall
- wind
- air pressure
- relative humidity
- clouds

Rivers and Creeks...

- measuring changes in channel shape
- velocity
- discharge
- material carried in the stream

Pollution...

- noise readings
- water quality
- air quality

Many of these techniques are more relevant for fieldwork investigating the physical environment. However, if you were investigating an issue such as the environmental impacts of a tourist activity, or the impacts of biophysical factors on a tourist activity, then many of these would be suitable.

These fieldwork tools can be used to undertake geographical inquiry in any Stage 6 topic and the Senior Geography Project.

STAGE 6 FIELDWORK ESSENTIALS

PLAN AND ORGANISE FIELDWORK ACTIVITIES

Create a log of activities that you intend to carry out. If you are carrying out the fieldwork as part of a project, then you may plan your fieldwork over a term or two. If it is part of a class activity, then you might need to plan your activities over a shorter period like two or three weeks. Use a table set out like the one below. Add as many rows as you need.

Date	Fieldwork activity	Primary/Secondary	Information to be collected

Before you go to your field site, make sure that you have everything you need to complete your fieldwork. The basics that you will need to take with you to your field site:

- Blank outline map of your field site to make annotations/notes
- Blank outline map (and a couple of coloured pencils) of your field site to complete a land use survey
- Multiple blank copies (and a pen) of your survey questions. Alternatively, you could set this up as a survey monkey or google form and complete it on your device as you ask the questions.
- Your interview questions, blank paper and pen. Alternatively, you could record the interview on your phone (audio and/or video – make sure you ask permission first).

You may need a whole range of fieldwork equipment depending on the techniques you have chosen. Review fieldwork techniques at:

About Fieldwork link – http://lrrpublic.cli.det.nsw.edu.au/lrrSecure/Sites/Web/about_fieldwork/index.htm



PLANNING FIELDWORK WORKSHEET

Suggested topic:

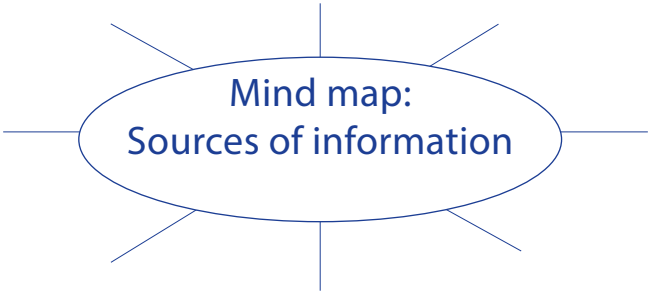
Possible research question:
(use directive terms like evaluate, assess, analyse, investigate, examine, etc):
.....
.....

How do your research topic and question relate to the subject of Geography?
.....
.....

Sub-topic of your question/ issue	Specific issues related to each sub-topic	Different perspectives/debates related to the sub-topic

STAGE 6 FIELDWORK ESSENTIALS

SOURCES OF INFORMATION



Identify the tools and/or fieldwork technique that you will use to investigate your topic.
Make a list of the techniques you will use.

.....

.....

.....

.....

CREATE A PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

Date	Fieldwork activity	Primary/Secondary	Information to be collected