

# The Ancient Tree Hunt

## KS3 Geography

### ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION

#### TEACHERS NOTES

This lesson examines Environmental Interaction. Your pupils will take part in a role play based on whether or not to fell ancient trees for a new skateboard park.

#### Aims:

- To enable pupils to appreciate that local planning decisions are often based on compromises – you cannot please everyone
- To enable pupils to learn actively through group work

#### Starter

Talk about the 1996 Newbury by-pass protest when a few dozen people lived up and chained themselves to trees to try to stop the Newbury by-pass being built through woodland. They failed but caused a big stir. Some pupils may remember Lisa on *The Simpsons* climbing a tree to save it. You could then give them the 5 W's ie why, where, who, what, when.

#### Activity: Role Play

##### Should we build a skateboard park?

Your pupils will undertake a role play about whether or not to fell trees in a small wood for a skateboard park.

The roles are:

- Teenagers*
- Local MP*
- Local Councillor*
- Farmer*
- Woodland Trust*
- Residents Association*
- Parents of skateboarders*

Construct groups and give each a role play card which gives basic information about each role. Encourage them to plan for this and wear/have something that exemplifies the role eg a skateboard or baseball cap, a clip board, Woodland Trust badge, political party badge, farmers hat, etc

There is an opportunity for some roles to have differing views. Try to encourage the pupils to explore differing viewpoints to help show that decisions are not easy to make.

#### Key Concepts

##### 1.6 Environmental interaction

- Understanding that the physical and human dimensions of the environment are interrelated and together influence environmental change.

Some parents should be for the park and some against it. The compromise for the MP could be restricted times of opening or a wardened site. Some residents may be for the park but against big competitions for fear of too much noise, traffic and vandalism. You could use the local Green councillor to illustrate local politics – perhaps they start up a campaign in the local paper to try and build up support – and this works especially with the vandalism of the previous park. You could add a farmer's wife who does NOT want the trees removed because she knows that birds who live there keep down the insects that affect their crops

Other issues you could build into this scenario are:

- An access road/track to the site
- Who is paying for it? – local tax, lottery grant....
- Will the community be a more pleasant place with the park or a less pleasant place without the trees?

#### De-role

Don't forget that it is important to get the pupils out of role before they leave the lesson. If they get really enthusiastic then the discussion/argument/role might carry over after the lesson!!

#### Plenary/Homework

- Ask pupils to do a plan of their own protestor's tree house
- Write a summary of what your planning decision would have been and explain it.
- Do a continuum to see if their opinions have changed over the 3 lessons.



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### STUDENT ROLE PLAY CARDS

**Teenagers:**

I like skateboarding and want to learn new skills. The nearest skateboard park is 5 miles away and I have to rely on my parents to take me and my friends. My parents are not always free so I sometimes use streets and pavements near my home. With a skatepark we could have competitions and invite touring teams for exhibitions.

**Parents of skateboarders:**

Some of us are for it because we won't have to drive to the existing park. Some of us are against because if our children skate on the paths nearby then we know where they are and can keep an eye out. If they go to a new skate park who will patrol it and keep a look out for our children?

**Woodland Trust Representatives:**

We want the local council to look for another site. The trees are healthy and too valuable to cut down as ancient trees are irreplaceable. You would lose –

- (a) protection for birds and insects
- (c) some plants that use up carbon dioxide
- (d) a nice view.
- (e) the trees have been there for thousands of years and we would lose part of our woodland heritage.

**Farmer:**

I own the wood and will get money from the council as they will have to buy the land. I don't use the wood to earn money so I'm not interested in keeping the trees.

**Local councillor  
(member of the Green Party):**

I want to keep the ancient trees in the wood. I am in the minority on the council so have to think how I can get support from other members. I may try to get the local media on my side. The skateboard park we built 2 years ago was soon vandalised and is now no use.

**Residents Association:**

We say that the local youth can be a problem on paths with their skateboards. People pushing prams and older people have had problems getting out of the way and there have been a few accidents. The local wood is used for dog walking and a new skateboard park could cause a problem with dogs and some older people who like to use the woods for a walk may feel nervous.

**Local MP:**

A number of local people have written to me about the ancient trees. Some are for the skateboard park and some are against. My National party is keen to support "green issues" but I need local votes in the next general election so I can keep my seat in parliament. I might look for a compromise where all sides are reasonably happy.



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