

Key topic areas	Equipment and resources required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Ecosystems • Settlements • Communities 	<p>Access to stakeholder groups may be necessary</p> <p>Quality survey templates</p>
<p>Context</p> <p>Carrying out a quality survey, in which geographers score an area or landscape against a predetermined set of criteria, is a common feature in geography fieldwork. Very often the survey is an 'environmental quality survey' where students take a broad interpretation of the term 'environment' and rate an area on aspects as varying as levels of traffic congestion and the amount of green space.</p> <p>As students mature and become more experienced geographers they should recognise that two contextual aspects of quality surveys are important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the person judging the quality and what high or low quality might look like to them • the location being judged and what specific criteria might be important considerations in that space <p>Geographers rarely think selfishly: having an empathetic understanding of different stakeholders and their needs is central to how they work and make decisions. Allowing students access to true stakeholders means that this empathetic understanding does not come from a place of stereotyping. For example, a quality survey that looked at how accessible a space might be to wheelchair users should use criteria that wheelchair users themselves suggest rather than those of a non-wheelchair user. Stakeholders can offer insights into new contexts that students who are not part of that stakeholder group may not have considered important.</p>	
<p>Classroom set up</p> <p>On an IWB present students with a mixed list of indicators of high quality. These should cover indicators of quality that are specific to two contrasting locations as well as generic criteria that one would consider important to all in all locations (example on right).</p> <p>Ask students to then place these into groups according to those specific to specific places and those which would apply to both. This can then open up in trade discussion about how quality involves thinking about criteria specific to particular locations.</p> <p>Ask students to then come up with quality criteria for a location they are less likely to be familiar with (such as a salt marsh or an informal settlement). Ask them to also evaluate how easy it is to come up with criteria and how they might overcome this problem. This can lead to an introduction to the concept of a stakeholder and how important they might be when judging a location.</p>	

no or low levels of litter

wide pavements

gull protected litter bins

no or low intrusive noises

convenient opening times

an abundance of parking available

evidence of nesting seabirds

lifeguard on duty

shops selling beach toys

a variety of shops and services

interesting viewpoints

no unpleasant smells

In the field

The data collection happens in two parts. In the first the students should interview a stakeholder as a member of the specific user group of the location. This might be someone who lives or works in the field work location or someone who has specific needs or identity in the context of the location. This could be conducted as a whole class interview where a user is invited into a lesson or as an on the street questionnaire in the field location itself.

"What three things would you consider to be markers of a successful High Street?"

Question wording may differ depending on the context of the location or geographical focus, but students essentially need to find out what that user feels are important markers of quality in that location. Students should then feed those criteria into a data recording sheet that allows them to rate each criteria on a 1 (low quality) to 5 (high quality) scale.

The second part of the field work sees the students go to set survey points around the field work location and carrying out their survey in pairs or small groups. On return to the classroom the students should calculate the average score for each survey.

Criteria	1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)
variety of shops				✓	
litter		✓			

Suggested data presentation

The average survey scores can be shown on a map of the fieldwork area. A shape, such as a circle, of a set size can be shaded in a choropleth style where the darkest shade of a single colour represents an average score of five and the lightest a score of one.

Students can also draw a one to five continuum on a piece of graph paper and on this they can plot individual scores for each criteria.



Key questions for reflection and analysis

- In general, is our field site of high quality according to the needs of our stakeholder(s)?
- Do some parts of our field site have higher quality scores than others?
- Which of our criteria are most successfully seen in our field site?
- Is there any relationship between survey locations and specific criteria?
- How might the time of day or year have affected the scores we gave against our criteria?
- Was / were our stakeholder(s) representative of the local or contextual population of the field site?
- What other criteria would have added valuable data to our study?
- Which of our criteria could we remove or replace and why?

Taking it further

Students could look at the parts of the survey site that showed particularly low quality scores, and consider the extent to which these areas can be managed to raise their quality score. Students could create a three point plan of suggestions for improvements.