

What is it?

The resource was created by Spark with the sponsorship of PD Ports who also act as the River Tees Port Authority. They are committed to helping young people in the area to be the best that they can be and this resource is one example of helping schools to understand the local context,....and teach geography more effectively!

How to use it

Simple answer is 'however you like' however, there is far more content than you could possibly use in a usual 'half term topic'. Below are some suggestions to help you get the best out of it:

Pick your targets

You may only have 5 weeks to teach this topic so decide which bits you really want your children to know about. We would always suggest that the introduction page is the best starting point and there are downloadable activities on their, filmed journeys down the river and more to give children the context and overview. Whilst trialling these resources we also included a simple activity where children used the maps app on their iPads to find Cross Fell, the source. They then had to try and follow the river downstream on the map until it reached the sea. The Keynote resource on the introduction page or the example Flyer can be used to support this activity in different ways. Use the Keynote to identify features or the flyer to highlight key features.

The national curriculum for geography identifies features of the river as important and the impact on the local population. All the resources have been made with this in mind whilst also highlighting the history objectives focussed on a local study. Railways feature frequently!

Pick which ones really suit you interest and use those pages as a stimulus for a lesson - additional lesson resources are added frequently.

Dip in and out

Although you may only have a certain number of weeks and lessons allocated to your topic, you can use the videos and the interactive map regularly, especially during the weeks of the topic coverage. Each video is designed to be short and to provoke a discussion. You can easily fit them into a ten minute 'watch and discuss' activity woven into different days across the weeks: e.g., just before lunch, morning work etc. They can even be shared as a homework task.

Explore a theme

Features of the river can be taught in one lesson however there are a lot of resources focused on PD Ports and the role of Teesport in our local economy. You run a whole topic time just based on what they do there and there are links to a huge bank of resources that include: Digital Interactive Books (with a range of tasks built into them for both KS1 and 2), learning about the different roles at the Port, and 72 geography map challenges based on trade to and from Teesport.

Equally there are additional resources based around Bridges (see introduction page video and link to resource).

Go freestyle

Some teachers may prefer to allow children the opportunity to explore the resources for themselves and then complete a task such as:

- Complete a five slide presentation that shows what they think are the 5 most important things they have learned about
- Create a book in Pages featuring 5 main topics they have learned about and were most interested in
- Create a short movie with still images and the children's voice over (which they will draft and write through their research)

The ideas above are all digital in nature as you would expect from Spark but the best river topic we ever saw included a full scale 3d model of the river down one side of a classroom with various features (bridges and famous places) created by the children and placed along it. But a topic like

Visit

Obviously we would encourage any school to get out and visit at least one location on the river. Each page has some advice for teachers when deciding which one. Original content, photos, videos etc can of course be included in the children's work when back at school. Even better, the children can learn about each aspect, write a response and then deliver it to camera while on location if the trip is scheduled later!

We want your views

Spark creates resources to be used by you. If you use them, please let us know and give us feedback. 'It's awesome' is fantastic but also 'It could do with an extraetc' or 'The way it is set out is confusing' are things that we can do something about to improve it. Please let us know and we are also always keen to showcase children's work that results from it.