

Digimap for Schools

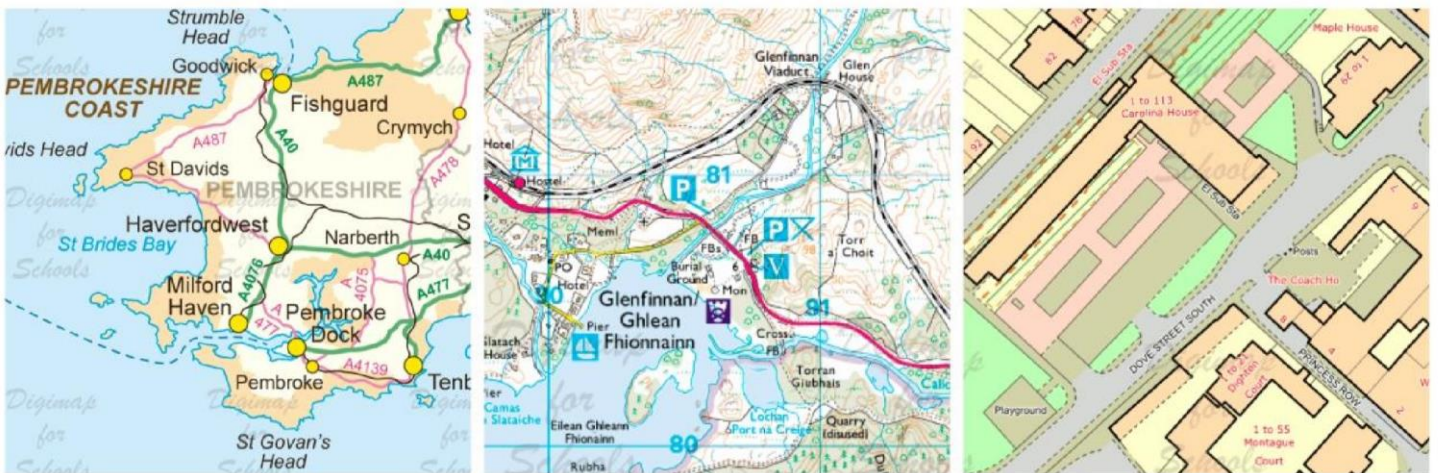
Exploring the Gazetteer

Exploring the importance and uses of a place name gazetteer

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Geography teaching resource

Primary and Secondary



This is one of a series of teaching resources for use with Digimap for Schools. For more details about this service, visit <http://digimapforschools.edina.ac.uk>

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Digimap for Schools Geography Resources

Title: Exploring the Gazetteer

Level	Context	Location
Primary and Secondary	Exploring the importance and uses of a place name gazetteer.	Great Britain

Knowledge	Search function/gazetteers
Curriculum Links (England)	Exploring location of places, routes on maps, build on knowledge of globes, maps and atlases and apply and develop this knowledge
Curriculum Links (Wales)	Locate places and environments using atlases, maps and plans. Use maps of different types and scales and ICT to interpret locational information.
Scottish Curriculum for Excellence	Social Studies Outcomes: People, Place and Environment: 1.14a, 2.14a

Activity

This is a useful stand-alone activity that will ensure that all students understand the function of a gazetteer, are competent with **Search** and know which of the search options is best under different circumstances.

Introduction

The gazetteer can be searched in three ways:

- 1 **Place name:** when you enter a place name, the map will zoom to that area, but if there is more than one option, a box will appear, providing a list for you to choose from. You do not have to enter the whole name, which is particularly useful if you are not sure how to spell it. The list of results will stay on the screen until you close it, giving you the option to change your mind.

The gazetteer does NOT contain building or street names, so if you cannot find the place you are looking for, try searching for the closest town or large village instead.

- 2 **Postcode:** postcodes do not require a gap between the first and second half of the code. Searching by postcode will bring up a map at 1:5 000 scale centred on the postcode.
- 3 **Grid reference:** you can enter a grid reference up to 10 figures (you must include the prefix letters).

For a full explanation of how the Search function works, click on the **HELP** button.

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Main activity

The following tasks include suggestions to help students try out all three ways of searching for place and understanding which may be quickest in different situations.



1 Place name searches

Here are some suggestions for possible themed 'treasure hunts' or 'top tens'...

- Urban safari – find places named after animals, or which mention animals; for example, Cat's Bottom, near King's Lynn in Norfolk and Dog's Bones on Orkney
- Under the sea – find places named after marine creatures.
- What's in a name – find boys', or girls' names.
- A-Z – identify places with the letters of the alphabet. Award points to whoever can find each letter that is the shortest distance from the school.
- Food and drink – places with a food-based link.
- Famous places; for example, those that share a name with a famous person, whether a celebrity, musician or sportsperson.

How many names of other countries are reflected in Ordnance Survey maps of Great Britain? Can anyone suggest why some countries are more popular than others?

2 Postcode searches

Searching by postcode is quicker if you want to find a house or street-level location.


- Ensure all students can find their own house using their postcode.
- Introduce students to the Royal Mail postcode finder so that they can understand how to find a postcode if they don't already know it (see web links below).
- Provide a list of postcodes and a separate list of places. This can be as long or short as you deem appropriate, but should be relevant to your students. Either divide them into groups that can race each other to see who can match up the lists first, or it can be set as a homework exercise. Postcodes might include a local cinema, supermarket, place of worship, school, a landmark building, farm, housing estate and so on.

3 Grid reference searches

Grid reference searches are useful when you have previously identified a grid reference of a location, or the place you want to find has no address or is away from habitation. A grid reference is the most precise place identifier.

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Divide the class into two groups. Each group will find grid references of map features in rural and mountain areas using the grid reference tool  and will write down the answer of where they are; for example, the top of Ben Nevis. Each group then passes over their list of grid references only and the second group has to find the places using Search.

Taking it further

All secondary students should understand how Ordnance Survey grid references work. If a refresher is required, visit the video explanation and information (see web links).

Web links

The **Ordnance Survey blog** has a range of posts, which explore place names around a particular theme, and is well worth following to keep up to date with the latest ideas: Enter 'gazetteer' in the search to find relevant posts about place names. <http://blog.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/>

Royal Mail permits up to 50 free searches a day for postcodes: www.royalmail.com/postcode-finder

Understand more about postcodes: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postcodes_in_the_United_Kingdom

Interactive introduction to using the National Grid:

<http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/support/guide-to-nationalgrid.pdf>

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