

Enquiry 2: The local park

Aim: To investigate the facilities and use of a local park.

Research questions

1. What are this park's past and current facilities?
2. How do people now use this park?
3. How might this park's facilities be improved?

Geographical context

Many town parks were created during the 19th century. Some of these were on land donated by wealthy industrialists, conscious of the poor living conditions of their workers and the need for them to have opportunities for open-air recreation.

Location identification techniques

- A map to locate the town where this park is sited within its regional context.
- A larger-scale map to locate the park's site within the town.

Main health and safety issues

- Walk around the park in pairs or groups – never alone.
- Know where your teachers and their transport are located.
- Always carry a reliable mobile phone in case of emergencies.
- Stay well away from lakes and ponds.
- Be tactful and sensible when interviewing people.
- Be wary of all dogs, no matter how small or attractive!

Data collection activities

- Obtaining maps, plans and images of the town and its park.
- Surveying and locating the park's facilities.
- Drafting and using a questionnaire to discover how, and how often, people use the park. People could be invited to suggest how the park's facilities could be improved.
- Photographing/sketching the park's facilities and usage.
- Downloading oblique-aerial images of the park and its immediate surroundings.

Data collection resources required

- Clipboards, pencils and wet-weather protection for clipboard.
- Camera – to take pictures of the park's facilities and use by visitors.
- Questionnaire – to interview park users.

Suggested sources of secondary data

- Internet sites to obtain background information to the park's creation and changing use over time.
- The local reference library to obtain historical photographs to contrast the park's current layout and facilities with those of the past.

Recommended data presentation and analysis

- Regional map to locate the town.
- Plan of town – to locate the park's position within it.
- Outline plan of park – to locate its facilities.
- Annotated pictures of the park's facilities.
- A range of graph types to display data obtained through questionnaire interviews.