

Bodies of Water

Introduction: Water is an essential part of our lives. In urban spaces, we are surrounded by different bodies of water that have served different purposes. These bodies of water hold lots of stories that can tell us more about the histories of the people and the land that surround them. Through this activity, we will learn about how we have used water bodies in cities in the past, how we are currently using them, so we can begin to imagine how we must use them in the future!

Time: 1 hour +

Age: 7-12 years

Resources: Can be done alone, but more enjoyable in groups of 3+ people; pens/pencils, paper, drawing/painting material, prints of images (optional)

Instructions:

STEP 1: Each person chooses a body of water.

Bodies of water can be anything which hold water, natural or manmade. For eg. River, Lake, Pond, Puddle, Bathtub, Sea, Estuary, Ocean and so on

Choose a specific body of water that you like. If it is safe for you to do so, accompanied by a guardian and following Covid guidelines, visit this body of water. If it is far from where you are, or inaccessible at the moment, imagine this body of water.

The body of water I chose is Enfield Lock, a canal part of the Lea navigation.

STEP 2

While looking at, or while imagining this body of water, ask the following questions, and note down the answers:

- A. What is your personal connection to this body of water?
- B. How do you feel when you are standing near it? (in reality or in your imagination)
- C. What is it or the surrounding areas used for now?
- D. What is the history of this particular body of water, or the area surrounding it?

STEP 3

After coming home, place an image/drawing/collage of the body of water in the centre. Write or draw the observations and comments from the above questions around it.

STEP 4

After each person has done this, compare each other's chosen bodies and have a conversation about it, adding to each other's comments and observations.

My friend chose the Thames as their body of water. We compared Enfield Lock and the Thames.

STEP 5

Try to find ways in which your bodies of water link to each other. Draw arrows and write or draw comments to show how they are interlinked!

We discovered that the canal, which flows into the river Lea flows into the Thames, and it flows into the sea. We also discovered that water from the river Lea and water from the Thames is used for drinking, bathing and cleaning water in our homes.

Further questions to ask:

- What have you learnt are the different uses of bodies of water in urban spaces?
- What are ways in which bodies of water can be exploited or misused?
- How are different bodies of water connected to each other?
- Can you do more research about your particular bodies of water to find out more about their past and present?
- How do you imagine your chosen body of water to be used in the future?
- How do you imagine bodies of water in urban spaces to be used in the future?

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