

LESSON PLAN — CHANGING LANDSCAPES

This unit challenges students to analyse why landscapes change. It demonstrates that old photographs can provide a wealth of information about how past land management practices can affect our lives today. Understanding that photographs place our lives in an historical continuum, students are encouraged to envisage possible futures based on decisions they make today.

Students explore photos for information about how people used to live and how they managed resources. They demonstrate ability to research and interpret information, using resources from the local library, museum or historical society. They communicate their understanding of cause and effect by describing two alternative futures based upon decisions they make today.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- read photographs in order to extract information.
- demonstrate research skills using the local museum or library.
- demonstrate research skills using the internet.
- predict the consequences of decisions
- plan and record an oral history

Resources

- Powerhouse Museum photographs in Changing Landscapes
- Guide to taking an oral history
- Copies of old photos from family albums, the local historical society or museum.
- Camera, computer and printer, sound recorder or video camera

Starting point

The places where we live rarely stay the same. The street you live in is likely to look very differently from the way it did 100 years ago. Urban planning, social innovation, population increase, natural events and changes in technology can all have an impact on a landscape.

Activities

- Discuss how your community has changed over the last 200 years. Was there a large indigenous population before white settlers arrived? Who were they? What were the first industries in your district? How did they shape the community? Are they still there today? If not, why not? What is the main industry now? When were the following first seen: street lighting, cars, gutters, sealed roads, electricity in homes, traffic lights, supermarkets, shopping plazas, movie theatres and fast food restaurants? Visit your local museum, library and internet to answer these questions.
- Interview an old person in your community to find out how things have changed. Use the guide to taking an oral history.
- Use old photos to make a short video of how your area has changed.
- Select and discuss photographs, text and accompanying questions from the Changing Landscapes page of the Powerhouse Museum's *EcoLogic* website. Text and questions print with the photo. Photographs are grouped under the following subject headings: People and industry, Farming and land clearing, Mining and rural infrastructure, Biodiversity, Urban places and systems, Transport, Water.

- Provide contemporary images or ask students to photograph a local area and envisage how that area might look 50 years from now based on alternative decisions about land use. Students should create two possible futures for the area, paying attention to the needs of sustainable communities.
- Students should do two illustrations of how their chosen area might look in 50 years time. Include notes about transport systems, sources of energy for electricity, building materials and technologies, lighting and cooling technologies and communication systems. Students will present their possible futures to the class.