

## Location Lingo - the names on our maps

### Teachers'Notes

These notes accompany pupils' material produced by the English Project for English Language Day 2010, when the theme is the Language of Place and Communities. Together with the education staff of the Hampshire Archives, we have introduced school pupils to a selection of old maps of their school area, showing changes over long periods of time, and encouraged them to consider why place names occur as they do, what they mean, and how they change.

**Age range.** The activity is suitable for children from year 5 to year 10 and above. The same questions should elicit more sophisticated responses as the age increases. This material is copyright free, and can be adapted.

**Materials.** Any school within reach of a local archive centre or museum should make contact in order to gain access to originals or copies of their map collection. Try to pick an area with which at least some of the group are familiar, and choose maps which span as long a period as possible, including modern examples such as an A-Z or Google map. A section of a map will be acceptable in most circumstances

Attached is a four-page example of a Winchester-based reference sheet, which can be adapted. The Beaulieu estate map (p4) can be reproduced, with an acknowledgement of its origin. It has some common examples of place-name parts which apply to many places in England. Also provided are some references to sources of information about place names in the UK. You are likely to find an equivalent list to the Hampshire place-names on one of your own local history websites. For users, outside the UK, it is worth noting that emigrants from the UK took many names abroad with them. Look at maps of the West of USA, New Zealand, Australia, to check this.

#### Teaching approach.

Give some time to look carefully at the various maps provided, including the Beaulieu map and the list of place-names on it. In the references are some further sources of information about place names. Among the questions for pupils to consider are;

- The maps are very different from each other – why do you think they were made?
- What do they mainly show?
- Can you see any names you recognise now?
- Are there any names you wouldn't use now?

- Are there any places you now call something else? On page 2 of the reference sheet, and on the Beaulieu map, you'll find a list of some place-name origins. Have you thought about what "Beaulieu" means?<sup>1</sup>
- Can you find any places on the maps that use these names, or parts of names?
- Find names that show ownership by PEOPLE
- Find names that might indicate SIZE or IMPORTANCE
- Find names that indicate features in the LANDSCAPE
- Find names with a RELIGIOUS connection

How have maps changed since these examples were made? What kind of maps might you use now? Why do you need them?

In pairs, pupils to give each other instructions to walk between two streets or buildings that they know well, about a mile apart. (Teacher might need to be specific about this). When this has been done, they should think about what they chose as landmarks. Was it street names, shops, pubs, or other things? What would a useful map of their nearest town look like for them? While they were explaining, did they use any of their own informal names for places and streets? Please capture these, with any explanations of why they call them that.

It would be useful to prepare some copies of a sketch map of the streets in this area, without any names, so that the landmarks and informal names can be filled in during the discussion.

### Follow-up

- Make a map of the area about 1 mile around your home. Use whatever technique you choose to do this – download a Google map; copy a local street map ; draw your own.
- Make a list of the main street names and landmarks, eg the pub names, field names and see how many of these give you clues to their origins. Do you know of any interesting house names? Why are they interesting to you?
- Are there any examples where names have been changed? Do you know why or when?
- Are there any places which you and your friends call by a different name? When you were small, did you have "secret" names for special places? Ask your family members for examples. Put these names on your map.
- Why would places be given nicknames? Can you think of examples anywhere else, that you know? Eg The Big Apple for New York.

**Finally** – we have called this project "**Location Lingo**". We are working with all kinds of people to collect the informal names and nicknames that they use to refer to towns and places that they know; names that aren't used on published maps. Look up The English Project website ([www.englishproject.org](http://www.englishproject.org)), and put your examples on the map page that we have made for the purpose. Reference [www.locationlingo.net](http://www.locationlingo.net)

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<sup>1</sup> Beau = beautiful, and lieu= place, both in French. The manor belonged to the king, but was probably named after the Norman conquest, so was given a French name.

## References:

“**Etymology**” – the study of the meanings of words, and changes in their meanings. Use an etymological dictionary, like the OED.

“**Toponymy**” – the naming of places

## Dictionaries of Place Names, eg

- Mills, A D, *Dictionary of English Place-Names*, Oxford University Press (1991).
- Cameron, Kenneth, *English place-names* (new edition), Batsford (1996).
- Watts, Victor, *Cambridge dictionary of English place-names*, Cambridge (2004).

## Web pages

- The Key to English Place Names on the webpage for the Institute for Name Studies at the University of Nottingham see <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~aezins//kepn.php> - gives a clickable map, including counties
- Ordnance Survey is doing some work on this, but mainly through other organisations: see <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freesite/didyouknow/placenames/>
- Example of tracking street names through time on [http://www.historyonline.co.uk/freesite\\_tour/resources/localhistory/streets.html](http://www.historyonline.co.uk/freesite_tour/resources/localhistory/streets.html)
- List of Winchester’s earlier street names, and a clue to their origins
- <http://www.cityofwinchester.co.uk/history/html/streetnames.html>
- A helpful little page from History On-line. [http://www.historyonline.co.uk/freesite\\_tour/resources/localhistory/streets.html](http://www.historyonline.co.uk/freesite_tour/resources/localhistory/streets.html)
- A primary stage workbook and teachers’ guide based on London place names; material that can be adapted <http://www.camdenyoungarchaeologists.org.uk/Documents/place%20names%20booklet1.pdf>