

Exploring Our Past: Local History Detectives

Learning objective: To understand how to investigate local history using primary and secondary sources and identify how our local area has changed over time.

Use these flashcards with Ellie the Elephant to explore the history of your own town or village. Read the term or question on the front, then flip to check your understanding of local historical enquiry.

Primary Source

An original document or object created during the time period being studied, such as a diary, photograph, or map from the past.

Secondary Source

Information created later by someone who did not experience the event firsthand, such as a history textbook or a modern documentary.

What is an Artifact?

A physical object made or used by humans in the past, such as an old coin, a tool, or a piece of pottery found in the local area.

Oral History

Information about the past gathered through recorded interviews with people who can share their memories of how life used to be.

Chronological Order

Arranging events or historical periods in the exact order in which they happened, from the earliest to the most recent.

Why do historians study old maps?

To compare how the landscape, roads, and buildings of a local area have changed or expanded over the centuries.

What does 'Architecture' tell us about a building?

The style and materials of a building can reveal when it was constructed and the status of the people who lived or worked there.

Census

An official count of the population, including details about jobs and homes, which helps historians understand how communities lived in the past.

Landmark

A recognisable natural or man-made feature, such as a statue, church, or ancient oak tree, that helps define the identity of a local area.

Settlement

A place where people establish a community to live, often chosen because of nearby natural resources like rivers or fertile land.

Heritage

The traditions, buildings, objects, and culture passed down from previous generations that we value today.

How might a local monument change its meaning over time?

The way people view a monument can shift as society changes; what was once seen as a celebration of an event might later be viewed as a reminder of a different perspective.