

Uncovering Our Local Heritage with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To investigate local history by analysing historical evidence, identifying how our local area has evolved over time, and understanding the significance of local landmarks.

Use your knowledge of historical enquiry to answer the following questions. Ellie the Elephant has been researching the archives, and now it is your turn to act as a local historian. Provide detailed explanations where required.

Local history is the study of the people, places, and events that have shaped your specific community. By examining maps, photographs, buildings, and oral histories, historians can reconstruct the story of a neighbourhood. Ellie the Elephant, our history expert, reminds us that every street corner, stone wall, and park tells a story about how life has changed from the past to the present day.

Word bank: primary source · secondary source · chronology · landmark · industrialisation · architecture · archive · settlement

1. If you were researching the history of your local high street, explain why a photograph from 1920 would be considered a primary source, whereas a modern history textbook about the area would be a secondary source. (2 marks)

2. Describe two physical features of a building in your local area that might give a clue about when it was constructed. Consider the materials or the style of the architecture. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast how the purpose of your local area might have changed over the last 100 years. For example, was it once an industrial site that is now a residential or commercial space? (3 marks)

4. Justify your answer: Why is it important for a community to preserve its oldest buildings rather than replacing them with modern, efficient structures? (3 marks)

5. What might happen to our understanding of the past if all historical records from our local area were destroyed? Explain the consequences for future generations. (2 marks)

6. If a new 'Local History Museum' were to open in your town, identify three specific types of artefacts you would include in the exhibition to represent the history of your community. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Then and Now' split-screen illustration of a local landmark. On the left, draw how it looked 100 years ago; on the right, draw how it appears today, including details that show the passage of time.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are an investigative historian. Conduct an interview with an older relative or neighbour about their memories of the local area. Write a 200-word report synthesising their memories with historical facts you have discovered through your own research. How do their personal experiences change your perspective on the 'official' history of the town?