

# Mapping the Future

**Primary: (ages 7 – 11)**

**Interdisciplinary (visual arts, health, geography)**

Students are challenged to work together as a class to create a communal map of their ideal city. To support this, students engage in a number of visual arts activities being asked to draw themselves, their favourite places and their desired workplaces. During this exercise, students recognise their own motivation, goals, and self-image, make links between well-being and the physical environment, and develop a vision of what would help to achieve a fulfilling life. They listen to the opinion of their peers, and they help each other to express more accurate and clearer goals to create their collective vision of the ideal city.

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**Time allocation**      Around 3 lesson periods

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**Subject content**      Use visual arts techniques to create drawings and communicate plans  
Develop understanding of what is needed to live healthy, safe, fulfilling, responsible and balanced lives  
Develop knowledge of urban environments, city planning, and sustainability

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**Creative and critical thinking**      This unit has a **creativity** and **critical thinking** focus:

- Question assumptions and generate and play with unusual ideas about cities now and in the future
- Consider several perspectives on how to plan cities
- Reflect on and appraise visions for cities

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**Other skills**      Collaboration, Respect/Tolerance of difference

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**Key words**      cities; planning; urbanism; maps; sustainability; future; identity

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## Products and processes to assess

Students collaborate to create a city based on their individual and collective identities and aspirations. They produce a series of drawings, and discuss and decide where these should be placed on their map. At the highest levels of achievement, students are open to exploring different aspects of their life, they demonstrate a realistic self-image, express goals, and make connections between their goals, their activities, and their urban environment. They are able to articulate important aspects of their identity, as well as seeking alternative perspectives and generating interesting, creative, and novel ideas for the layout and features of a city. They show awareness of what urban features might support well-being more generally, sensitivity to the views of others, and are able to reflect on the process they have undertaken.

## Teaching and Learning plan

This plan suggests potential steps for implementing the activity. Teachers can introduce as many modifications as they see fit to adapt the activity to their teaching context.

Step	Duration	Teacher and student roles	Subject content	Creativity and critical thinking
1	Lesson period 1	Teacher explains that the class will be creating a big map of their ideal city/built environment. Students will create the city themselves; placing the roads, and working out what buildings and places to include. The challenge for students is to create a city where they would want to live both now and in the future. At the end of each exercise, they will have created another building block of the city.	If desired, teacher may precede this step with discussion of historical, geographical, or technological changes that have impacted cities. There are several additional suggestions for preliminary activities in the 'opportunities to adapt, extend, and enrich' section below	
2		<i>My favourite place</i> Everybody receives an A/5 sheet, and they can spend 15 minutes drawing their current favourite place, somewhere they can do what they really like to do (These places will be the first items in the city). The teacher may decide to follow-up with a discussion of how students approached their drawings, highlighting different techniques as appropriate to curriculum	Improving mastery of drawing (this can be focussed on area of curriculum as appropriate e.g. different views, perspectives etc.)	Observing and feeling important and relevant experiences
3	Lesson period 2	<i>The future in a hat</i> Everybody draws from a bag/hat a question about the future. Examples of questions: Where would you like to continue your studies after primary school? What would you like to be when you grow up? Where do you imagine yourself in 10 year's time?  They get a few minutes to answer in a drawing (or students can also be asked to answer in writing: exact instructions to vary according to level of class and curriculum). Then they put the piece of paper back into the bag and they draw another one out. If somebody draws the same question again, he/she needs to put it back.  Teacher leads a discussion of their answers, focussing on commonalities and differences and how a city can meet everyone's needs. If students want to share which responses are their own, they are free to do so.  This exercise can last around 30 minutes and is completed without names; therefore, children do not need to fear sharing their thoughts.	Developing ability to articulate aspects of their identity and aspirations for the future  Improving ability to make quick recognizable sketches of a range of subjects  Developing knowledge of urban environments and city planning	Imagining the future and visualising it in an artwork  Reflecting on areas of their identity that they previously haven't examined in order to create a meaningful output  Considering several perspectives on a problem

		It may also be interesting to discuss with students their thoughts on how ambitious their goals are and what they will need to do to achieve them.		
4		<p><i>Self-map</i> Everybody receives an A/3 sheet of paper, and they spend around 15 minutes drawing their own silhouettes – it does not have to be realistic. Then they need to write in their silhouettes at least 5 positive characteristics about themselves (or the teacher may ask students to write positive characteristics about other students in the class). If the teacher feels it would be useful, students could also write 5 attributes outside the silhouettes, which they would like to work on (or they feel it is missing) and they think might be beneficial to their lives. These will be the people in the city.</p> <p>If students wish to share their self-opinion or their (positive) opinion of others, they can do so now. The teacher may also wish to facilitate a class discussion at this point on what the students need to build in their city, which will help them to realise their best selves (e.g. places where they can work, play, learn, exercise, relax, imagine/dream, and socialize, and whatever else they think is necessary). How will this be organized?</p>	<p>Drawing silhouettes of themselves</p> <p>Recognising strengths of themselves and others and setting simple but challenging goals</p>	<p>Identifying and explaining their own strengths and possibly limitations</p> <p>Developing knowledge of urban environments and city planning</p> <p>Generating and exploring unusual and novel ideas about cities</p>
5	Lesson period 3	<p><i>Workplace</i> Everybody gets an A/5 sheet of paper and they spend around 15 minutes drawing a place, where they would like to work as an adult (this could be an office, or whatever 'workplace' they can imagine. These will be added to the city). The teacher may decide here to challenge students to think of unusual occupations or occupations that might be common in the future that are uncommon or do not exist now. They may also ask students to use particular techniques in their drawings, as appropriate to the curriculum. Students discuss and decide where to place these workplaces and place them in their city.</p>	<p>Improving mastery of drawing buildings or office-spaces. Teacher can choose to focus on particular technical drawing techniques as appropriate to curriculum.</p>	<p>Challenging assumptions, checking and analysing missing pieces of their city</p> <p>Generating and playing with unusual ideas to produce a meaningful output</p>
6	This could be extended to more lesson sessions if time is available	<p><i>Reflection and expanding the map</i> The map can be expanded with other items (e.g. where they like to spend their free time, where they do sports or hang out). Students can be asked to reflect on what else is needed in a city and why and how they can build a really interesting and novel city that will work both now and in the future. If there is time to extend the exercise, students can be asked to draw, paint, or construct models of such places, and discuss and agree where they should be placed.</p> <p>The class looks collectively at the map and the teacher leads a reflective discussion of what they think about their city, its strengths and limitations, and how it will support them to live good lives in the future. As appropriate, the activity can end by asking students to reflect either in discussion or in writing: What have they learned about drawing? What have they learned about cities? What have they learned about themselves?</p>	<p>Developing understanding of what is needed to live healthy, safe, fulfilling and balanced lives</p> <p>Considering sustainability and how cities might change over time</p> <p>Articulating knowledge gained about drawing, cities, and themselves</p>	<p>Evaluating the strengths, limitations and novelty of their solution</p> <p>Reflecting on chosen solutions in relation to their own expressed goals, desires</p>

## Resources and examples for inspiration

### Web and print

- A number of questions printed on paper for “Future in a hat” game.

### Other

- A5 and A3 size technical drawing sheets. A5: twice as many as the number of students. A3: as many as the number of students.
- Wrapping paper glued together (depending on the size of the city you want to create), this will be the area of the city
- Prepared roads (50-60 pieces) for the city
- Painting, drawing, and construction materials as necessary

### Opportunities to adapt, extend, and enrich

- This activity could be introduced by looking at material covering the history of cities, city planning, urban regeneration, the growth of urbanism, or how cities get re-built after disasters
- As a preliminary or follow-up exercise, the teacher could facilitate a discussion about the city, town, village etc. that the students currently live in. What are its advantages and disadvantages?
- This lesson can be focussed on the creation of sustainable cities (involve learning about reliance on cars, importance of green spaces, recycling and other infrastructure etc)
- A visit from the local planning office can be incorporated into the unit so that students have the chance to learn about how city planning works in the real world.
- This activity also presents opportunities to make further links to literacy (writing about themselves and cities), history (development of cities), and technology (the impact of changing technologies on city planning).

**Creativity and critical thinking rubric**

- Mapping of the different steps of the lesson plan against the OECD rubric to identify the creative and/or critical thinking skills the different parts of the lesson aim to develop

	<b>CREATIVITY</b> Coming up with new ideas and solutions	Steps	<b>CRITICAL THINKING</b> Questioning and evaluating ideas and solutions	Steps
<b>INQUIRING</b>	Make connections to other concepts and knowledge from the same or from other disciplines	2,3	Identify and question assumptions and generally accepted ideas or practices	4,5
<b>IMAGINING</b>	Generate and play with unusual and radical ideas	4-6	Consider several perspectives on a problem based on different assumptions	3, 5
<b>DOING</b>	Produce, perform or envision a meaningful output that is personally novel	3,5,6	Explain both strengths and limitations of a product, a solution or a theory justified on logical, ethical or aesthetic criteria	4,6
<b>REFLECTING</b>	Reflect on the novelty of solution and of its possible consequences	6	Reflect on the chosen solution/position relative to possible alternatives	3,4,6