

the Countryside Investigators

Shopkeeper Activity 1

Shop Drop

Age range:

7-11

Duration:

Approx 60 mins

Aim

For pupils to learn about the way in which rural communities are changing and how this affects life, by looking at village shop closures.

Learning Objectives

Pupils should learn:

- About the factors that are leading to village shop closures
- How the populations of rural communities are changing
- How loss of a rural shop/Post Office affects the community



Curriculum for Excellence Links (Experiences & Outcomes)

SOCIAL STUDIES – People in Society, Economy & Business: *SOC 2-15a/2-16a/2-21a*

Materials and Equipment

- Jotters and pens/pencils
- Copies of Worksheet Sh1 (one per pupil if required – see below)

Preparation

This activity involves drama in the form of roleplay and so pupils should be familiar with how this works. The worksheet will help pupils to focus on the issues, so may best be completed before the drama.

Key Vocabulary

shopkeeper, rural, community,
post office, commuter, resident,
competition, village



Running the Activity

a) Introduction:

Begin by asking the class what might be found in a village apart from houses. Make a list that might include church, school, pub, playground, shops, farms, etc. Ask why these things are important. Explain that village shops are much smaller than supermarkets and often sell a wide range of goods but have limited choice. Go to Village > Shopkeeper and show the pupils the Shopkeeper video. This will set the scene and give them more information about village shops and how they are changing. Explain that many small villages have lost facilities such as schools, churches and shops over the years and that in most cases this has badly affected the communities. Ask how the closure of a village's only shop or Post Office would affect it and why. Discuss the reasons why many village shops have closed (see Worksheet Sh1).

b) Investigate:

To help pupils think about the issues, each pupil can be given a copy of Worksheet Sh1. This lists some reasons for closure of rural shops. It is important not to spend too long on discussion or the worksheet initially, however, as the main focus of the activity is drama.

c) Roleplay Preparation:

The idea of the roleplay is to give pupils roles involving a typical village shop/Post Office to help them understand the issues around closure of rural shops. Initially pupils are paired, with each pair playing the same roles, chosen from the following:

- Elderly village residents
- Commuters (ensure that pupils understand what this means)
- Local farmers/crofters
- Young family new to the village
- Holidaymakers staying in local B&B
- Walkers passing through the village
- Local pupils

d) Groups

First the pairs are grouped into fours and one pair is chosen to play the shopkeepers of the village shop/Post Office. In the scene, the other pair walk into the shop and the shopkeepers ask them what they think of the shop and how much they use it. If they don't use it much they should be asked why, and what would make them use it more. They can also be asked why the shop is important to them and how closure might affect them. After five minutes, the roles can be reversed so that each pair gets a chance to see the issues from the other perspective.

e) Different Roles

The pairs/fours can be swapped around so that the pupils get to work with different roles. After about 20 minutes, the class should be brought back together to see what has been learned from the exercise. The worksheet can then be completed.

f) Class Activities

To reinforce learning in a fun way go to Village > Shopkeeper > Game and complete the shopkeeper game on the interactive whiteboard as a whole class activity. The game teaches pupils about the importance of individual contact and customer needs in a village shop.



Extension Activities

1. Compare this issue with what has happened in towns/cities where small independent shops have closed due to competition from supermarkets and large shopping centres.
2. Write a letter to (fictitious) local councillors to persuade them to keep open the local village shop/Post Office.
3. How can village shops be made more appealing? Some rural shops are doing well by concentrating on local produce, especially food, and carrying out deliveries or selling unusual items to appeal to tourists.

Shopkeeper activity 2 looks at this whole area.

Background Information for Teachers

Go to Teachers > Useful links to find out more about village shopkeepers and their work.

