



Geography Knowledge Organiser– Straits, The Local Area

Year 5: Spring Term

The geography of the local area

Key Knowledge and Skills

Key Vocabulary

Locational Knowledge

The Black Country is an area within the West Midlands, so called on account of its industrial past.

The four metropolitan boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton make up The Black Country.



- Wolverhampton is the only city that lies within the Black Country, with the other main towns being Dudley and Walsall.
- The rivers Stour and Tame flow through the Black Country and there is also an extensive canal network.

Place Knowledge

The name 'Black Country' supposedly derives from the South Staffordshire coal seam and is said to be the thickest layer of coal in Britain. It comes to the surface in this area, making the soil black.

Some people also believe that it is called the 'Black Country' due to the thick amounts of smoke in the air from the many factories in the area.

Black Country people are very keen to retain their local identity and dialect and distinguish the area from Birmingham.

Human and Physical Knowledge

The Straits area was previously known as the 'Straits Green Colliery', which was established in 1935, consisting of two mine shafts. Some parts of the colliery can still be seen today, such as the bell or 'bob' pits.

The land use and economic activity of the Black Country has changed dramatically since the time of the Industrial Revolution. During this time, the heavy industry that mined the coal and used it in foundries and steel mills also turned the air and buildings black. This added to the idea of the Black Country.

Baggeridge Colliery, owned by the Earl of Dudley, was the largest in the area. It was in full production by 1912, employing 3,000 men and producing 12,000 tons of coal a week. The colliery was officially closed in 1968 and the site was bought by the council. Baggeridge was the last remaining pit in the Black Country and has since been transformed into a country park, which was opened by Princess Anne in 1983.

Map knowledge

Maps can be used to show the height of a locality in relation to how many metres above sea level that it is. These give an idea of the highest and lowest points within the Black Country. Contour maps use lines to do this, whereas Relief maps use colours and layer shading.

Understand these key words

| Vocabulary | Definition |
|------------------------|---|
| Distribution | A description of how something is spread out. |
| Environment | The natural surroundings of a place. |
| Industry | The large scale production of materials. |
| Human processes | Things created by people. |
| Land use | The activities which take place in an area of land. |
| Locality | An area and its surroundings. |
| Minerals | A naturally occurring material found in the earth. |

