



## Introduction

Option B, “Neighbourhood, Village, Town, City”, studies the character of individual communities. Its objective is to explore the origin, design and development of a community, tracing its evolution from the distant past to the present day. It also explores the architectural fabric of cities, towns and villages, examining the issues of conservation and preservation, and ways of planning for the future. Upon completion of this module, each student will have compiled a profile of his/her own community and will have a clearer understanding and appreciation of the spaces in which they move and live.

“Neighbourhood, Village, Town, City” presents students with a number of questions for investigation and discussion.

- Why are communities shaped the way they are?
- What factors influence the development of settlements?
- What is the significance of the different kinds of buildings, streets and public spaces?
- What should be preserved or conserved?
- How do we plan for the future?

Throughout this module, students are presented with a variety of problem-solving and learning experiences, both practical and written. Through these, they are given access to some of the concepts and terminology used by professionals, so gaining a greater understanding of the places in which they live and how they can influence their development.

The module consists of ten lessons which are designed to be worked through in sequence. While each lesson has a carefully structured format, it is open to modification at the discretion of the teacher and/or the request of the students. In order to develop additional lines of enquiry a list of Cross-Curricular Connections is provided at the end of each lesson.

In Lessons 3 - 5, as a prelude to the study of their own communities, students are presented with a Case Study of Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Maynooth provides a rich source of study material. Its shape has changed considerably over the centuries and is continuing to change today. Many of the issues encountered in Maynooth are relevant to other communities in Ireland.

In Lesson 6 students start to investigate their own community. Teacher preparation for the activities in Lessons 6 - 10, including the field trip in Lesson 7, will be demanding. The recommendations given in the Lessons provide for a situation in which only one teacher is involved in running the module. However, this study provides excellent opportunities for collaboration between teachers of different subjects. If the lines of



## NEIGHBOURHOOD, VILLAGE, TOWN, CITY

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enquiry suggested in Lesson 6's Cross-Curricular Connections are taken on, and if class time in other subjects can be used, there is a real possibility of a Transition Year class producing a substantial study and set of proposals for their own community, supported by maps, statistics, scale drawings and models. Class activities could include presentations of their proposals to the local Chamber of Commerce, Tidy Towns Committee and similar groups who have the power to put some proposals into action.

*Note: The word "community" has two definitions: all the people living in a specific locality or a specific locality including its inhabitants. In this module it is used in its second sense, to cover the variety of places - townland, village, town and city - in which students may live.*