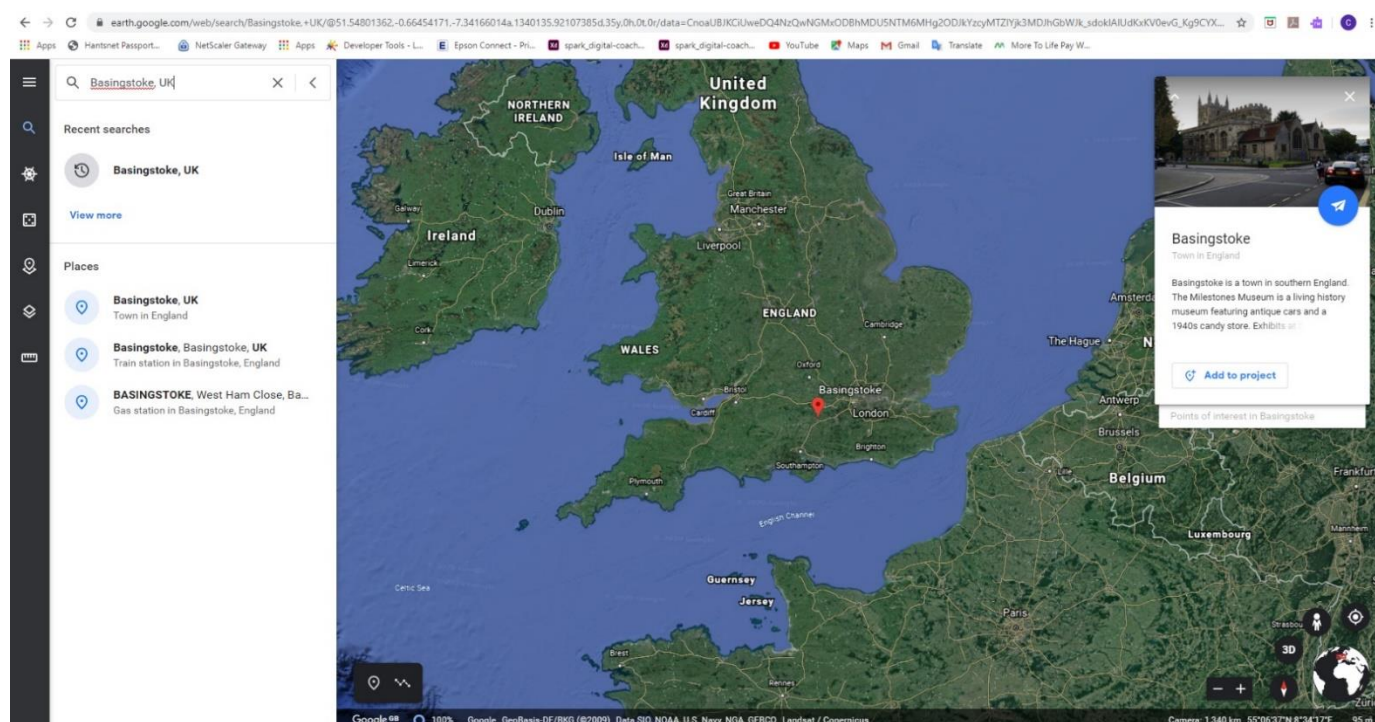


Creative ideas for using Google Earth to induct, orientate and integrate new arrival EAL learners



Google Earth in Chrome browser - <https://www.google.com/earth/>

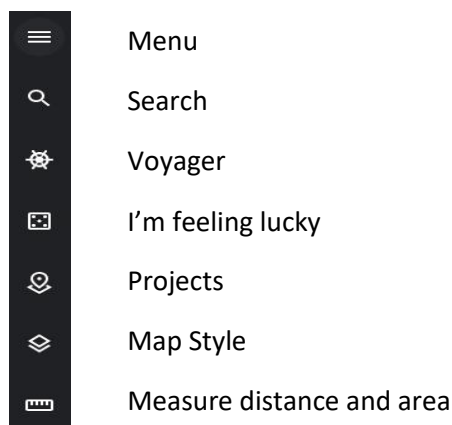
Introduction

It can be an unsettling time for children and young people arriving in the UK from another country, whether they have been well prepared or not. Therefore, orientating them (and possibly other members of their family) to their new 'home' is a good idea. It may also be possible to find out a lot of background information about a new arrival from their past experiences in their country of origin and other countries they may have lived in and/or journeyed through. There are also opportunities to compare and contrast life in the UK with other countries and also help new arrivals integrate with their peers by exploring their knowledge and experiences of other countries, cultures, languages, lifestyles etc.

A word of caution

Most pupils will be more than happy to discuss their background and talk about their home country, culture, religion, lifestyle and bi/multilingualism. They may even be keen to share this with classmates. However, some children and young people have had very traumatic pasts and may be unwilling, at this time anyway, to talk much about their previous life before coming to the UK. Some children have arrived as unaccompanied minors and are currently in care; in this case there can be safeguarding issues around sharing personal information or even providing them access to unsupervised access to the internet. It is always best to check these issues out before implementing these ideas.

Be aware, also, of the need to sensitively handle class-based discussions. Try to avoid notions of 'the exotic', tokenism or negatively stereotyping countries, people, lifestyles, culture etc. For example, providing a balanced view of the perceived wealth of a country or showing pictures of traditional housing and technologies, often found in more rural areas, alongside more well-developed city areas.



Setting up Google Earth

There are several versions of Google Earth, including a web-based version (Google Chrome), an app and desktop software. Each one gives a slightly different experience, offering a range of similar tools, but with some versions offering additional functionality.

Set up your preferred view e.g. how much detail is shown on the map (Map Style) and whether to show community-based photos or just those curated by Google (on/off in the Menu according to choice).

Logging in enables a user to save settings and add personalised content like pins and projects (see below).

Ideas for using Google Earth

Some of these activities could be conducted with the whole class, with the target pupil's agreement. However, others are more suitable for a 1:1 situation, perhaps a teaching assistant/teacher and the target pupil/family.

1. Find out about country/countries of origin – this could be place of birth, places lived in and/or travelled through

- look at the country from space and discuss bordering countries, features visible from space like mountains and rivers and demonstrate scale in terms land area and distances from/to using the 'ruler' tool
- beam down onto a specific place within a country – home, famous places etc.
- examine photographs that appear as you zoom down...some of these will be imagery and associated texts curated by Google and be aware that others will be images uploaded by anyone in the global the community (if turned on in the Menu)
- find opportunities to compare and contrast generic themes e.g. topography, climate, buildings, weather, transport etc. between countries
- launch Street View (orange man) to 'walk' through the locality (where mapped) – look for vegetation, homes, places of worship, schools, shops, vehicles, signs, animals, clothing etc to promote discussion

2. Orientate pupils (and their families) in the local area

- from another country, allow the earth to spin to the UK to show the geographical relationship between countries and convey a sense of distance so that pupils understand where they have moved from/to
- take some time to explore the main features of the UK e.g. neighbouring countries, regions, islands, topography, major cities etc.
- beam down to the current locality and compare and contrast generic themes (as above)
- find a specific address like a home, the school or a famous landmark using a postcode

- find major landmarks and places of interest and show pictures and associated information e.g. educational establishments, public amenities, local attractions etc. Google curated images/texts are a great way to follow landmarks associated to a specific area
- use Street View to walk from place to place e.g. ask a child to describe their journey from home to school and develop positional vocabulary at the same time

3. Work with pupils (and potentially parents) to create a 'Project' – this option is available from the Google Earth sidebar. The Project feature allows you to create a presentation about any desired topic/place. It's worth watching the guidance video to find what a Project can offer e.g. placemarks, drawing lines and marking areas, showing images and writing associated text (any language) and setting up a starting point for a Street Walk (where mapped). Once created the Project can be kept as a personal piece of work or played in a presentation format, perhaps for a wider audience.

Examples of Projects might include:

- My country or home town/city
- My culture
- My journey
- My favourite places

4. Create and share a Project using the tools provided so that pupils and/or parents can find out what is available in their new area – include images, text (possibly in different languages), Street Views etc.

Possible things to cover:

- A brief history
- Local landmarks
- Amenities

5. Investigate Voyager, available from the Google Earth sidebar. Voyager gives access to curated 'tours' based on geographical, cultural, religious and linguistic themes. Tours are linked to The Literacy Central website where connected resources are available. Relevant themes could be explored in the classroom to integrate a new arrival and help peers understand more about the new pupil's background.

Some interesting Voyages:

- Celebrating religions (Culture)
- Indigenous languages (Culture)
- Spiritual and religious sites (Culture)
- This is school (Education, Culture)
- Around the world – poetry, myths and legends, fairy tales, folk tales (Education)
- Explore cities (Travel)
- Discover countries (Street View)