



Support units: Geographical inquiry

Illustration 1: Developing questions for inquiry – Year 6

Framing the questions

How questions are framed impacts on the scope of investigation and depth of reflection when answering a question. Answers to simple questions can be extended by additional questions. For example, students can:

- frame questions that ask, 'Why is it there?' and extend the idea into 'Why not elsewhere?'
- explore the notion, 'What kind of distribution does it make?' and extend the idea into 'Is this spatial pattern found elsewhere in the countries of the Asia region?'
- extend their spatial understanding by asking, 'Do these things usually occur together in the same area?' and, 'What are the possible linkages between these occurrences?' then ponder, 'How has it changed spatially over time?' and, 'What will it look like in the future?'

Students can frame questions based on a cartographic perspective. For example, when looking at specific examples, they might ask:

- How long would a journey take from Jakarta to Seoul travelling in a jet aircraft?
- What kinds of representation are used to portray per capita incomes, health and energy consumption? Why?
- What is the intent of the cartographer in producing the map?
- Whose interests does it serve?

In addition to these spatially and cartographically-oriented questions, they can inquire into values and attitudes. For example:

- What do I think about the diversity of the world's Indigenous peoples? and
- What courses of action concerning Indigenous peoples throughout the world are acceptable to me? then
- How can I defend and justify my ideas about the world's Indigenous peoples?

Geographers are fond of questions that evaluate the appropriateness of spatial decisions and social justice. For example:

- Who gains and who loses as a result of planning decisions made by governments in Australia and who gains and who loses in the connected places in the countries of the Asia region?
- How are places in countries of the Asia region portrayed in Australian print, visual and social media?
- How ought they be portrayed to provide fair and socially just impressions?

Students may pursue questions that are associated with global education. For example:

- What can I find out about social justice and human rights in Australia and the countries of the Asia region?

- How can we achieve peace, security, cooperation and sustainability in places in Australia and in countries of the Asia region?

Students may ask questions associated with humanistic geography. For example:

- What are my own perceptions of this place that is so well connected with Australia?
- What does this place in an Asian country mean to people as evidenced by their reactions to it?

They may study geographical issues that connect places in Australia to those in countries of the Asia region. For example:

- Where is this issue located and when did it occur?
- Who is involved in the issue?
- How should we respond to this situation and how would we be able to justify our stance?

Students may want to take up the concerns of feminist geographers with questions that investigate the links between the unpaid work of caring and paid work in the labour force, or the relationship between international migration of women from Asian countries and child care, domestic work and exploitation in Australia.

They may want to take up the concerns of cultural geographers. For example:

- How are places in the countries of the Asia region represented?
- Who has the power to represent these places?
- What is left unrepresented about these places?

Students may want to take up the concerns of political geographers. For example:

- How do politicians promote 'place' through the creation of political territories in the countries of the Asia region?

They may want to pursue questions that relate to sustainability in the countries of the Asia region. For example:

- How are environments and human conditions inextricably interrelated?
- How are major issues such as poverty, energy consumption, development, and health and loss of species interrelated?
- How are increasing efforts by people around the world working towards sustainable futures?