

Theme: 2

Key Stage: 4

Landscape

GCSE Geography Investigation

Title/Hypothesis - Blaenavon has successfully overcome the negative social, environmental and economic effects of the decline in the coal, iron and steel industries of South Wales.

Section 1

Introduction: What is your project about?

- Visit the World Heritage Centre in Blaenavon.
- Using the resources available, summarise the rise and fall of coal production in South Wales. Explain some of the negative effects that these industries have left in South Wales - social problems, environmental problems and economic difficulties.
- Explain that your project is about evaluating how well Blaenavon has coped with these difficulties.
- Say where Blaenavon is (include maps) and summarise specifically the industrial history of Blaenavon.
- Explain some of the initiatives you are aware of that have taken place in Blaenavon that have led you to believe that the town has overcome some of the negative effects of the decline in coal, iron and steel industries. For example, has its recent designation as a World Heritage Site helped in its recovery?

Section 2

Methodology: How will you carry out your study?

Explain that you want to investigate how Blaenavon has overcome the social, environmental and economic effects of the declining industries.

1. The most documented negative effect of the declining industries in South Wales was unemployment. Between 1975 and 1995, 300,000 men in the UK were made unemployed by colliery closures. Unemployment is both a social and economic problem. You will therefore need to investigate how well Blaenavon has overcome these problems by comparing current employment levels in the town with past employment levels in Big Pit and other Blaenavon collieries. The timeline in the World Heritage Centre will provide you with historic information on numbers of people employed in the collieries of Blaenavon as well as local population census data for each national census taken between 1801 and 2001. When the collieries closed, many jobs were lost to the people of Blaenavon, so the local council created an industrial estate. You could visit the Gilchrist Thomas industrial estate to find out the names of businesses located there, and write letters to them to find out how many employees they have. You could then compare this data with your statistics on local colliery employees in the past to assess how well this initiative has helped replace jobs that were lost when the collieries closed. You could also write to the Big Pit Mining Museum to find out how many ex-miners are currently employed.
2. You could also research data on Blaenavon by looking at employment statistics from the 2001 census.
3. You will also want to investigate how Blaenavon has overcome the negative environmental effects. Attempts have been made to overcome these negative effects e.g. vegetation has been planted on old slag heaps (include photos). However, you are more interested in finding out people's attitudes to what Blaenavon looks like. You could conduct a questionnaire with residents of Blaenavon to find out if they think the environment is attractive or if it is still suffering from the negative effects of past industry.

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In this section, include a copy of the letter you will send to businesses located in the Gilchrist Thomas industrial estate, possibly a map of the industrial estate showing where these businesses are located, and also a copy of your questionnaire.

Section 3

Collection of data

Use your time wisely and start collecting your data. Your visit to the World Heritage Centre will help you collect information for parts of sections 1 and 2. However, you will also need to collect some data in your own time.

Section 4 and 5

Data Presentation & Conclusion/Evaluation

Once you have collected all your data, you will need to use the techniques we have learnt about in class to present your data. You will then be in a position to start drawing your conclusions. When you do this, it is important that you refer back to your original hypothesis at the beginning of the investigation.