



Fieldwork investigations - Sensory mapping

Fieldwork involves observing, measuring, collecting and recording information in the real world. Learn how to use sensory mapping (use your various senses) to map experiences of an area.

What is sensory mapping? Why do we do sensory mapping?

Sensory Mapping is about drawing your own map on a particular day and time to describe the site in words and symbols.

Sensory mapping allows students to show how people are affected by the environment and present it as an alternative form of communication. The information we gather using senses other than our sight can inform an understanding of our environment that can often be overlooked. These sensory experiences add to our overall perception of the place we enjoy. Water plays a significant role in engaging our senses. So doing sensory mapping near a waterway will help us understand the value of water in our urban environment.



Parks and open spaces near waterways improve our wellbeing

What you'll need?

- Piece of paper
- Clipboard, pen or pencil
- Mood chart, decibel scale, Beaufort scale (all available on our [Self-guided excursions](#) page)
- Camera (optional)
- See extension notes for other ways to record the environment such as - Lux meter, anemometer, decibel meter (optional) our sensory mapping can be done in a park or open area many near or connected to a waterway.

Did you know?

You can do sensory mapping as part of our [Self-guide excursions](#). The program consists of observational field work, historical geography and use various geographic tools.



How to make a sensory map?

Find a suitable place to do your sensory mapping near a waterway. Make sure you will be safe and not in the way of any other activity.

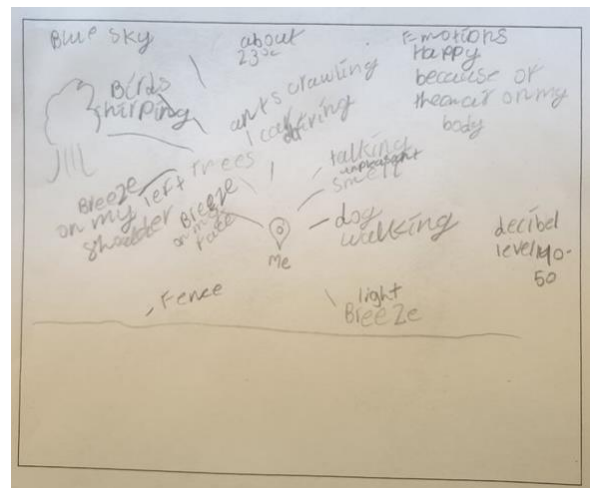
Part 1 – Explore your feelings

1. Sit down and close your eyes. Have your paper and pencil ready. Start in the middle.
2. Focus in on your senses of touch, sound and smell.
 - Listen... what noises do you hear and what directions did they come from?
 - Feel ... is the sun on your face? Is the wind in your hair? What other things can you feel?
 - While you are sitting here ... how are you feeling? Are you happy? Relaxed? Annoyed? Bored?
3. Open your eyes and look immediately at your paper.
4. Use drawings or symbols and words to represent all the details your senses picked up. Every sensory map is as unique as you are.



Part 2 – adding some data

1. Now let's use some geography skills to make some more detailed observations to complete our sensory map.
2. We can use either instruments or charts to assign values to our measurements.
3. What can you measure?
 - a. Light – on you and water reflections
 - i. With a lux measurement chart
 - ii. With a lux meter instrument
 - b. Wind - on you and water/trees
 - i. With a beaufort chart
 - ii. With an anemometer instrument
 - c. Sound – near you and focus on nature (water)
 - i. With a decibel chart
 - ii. With a sound level meter instrument
4. What can you record?
 - a. People's behaviour/use of space
 - b. Participatory observations of the area including the waterway
 - c. Field sketches
 - d. Annotated images taken with a camera



Results

- What role does water play in the way you're feeling?
- How important are your other senses when thinking about what you like about a place?
- Are there are other ways you could record what you're thinking and feeling?
- How do our geographic observations and scientific measurement change the sensory experience?
- How does both making geographic observations and scientific measurements influence our values about the environment?

Background information

Liveability is all those things that make a city enjoyable to live in.

To learn more about how we connect with our environment see our [liveable cities](#) page.

Why do our senses and feelings matter?

How we value water connects us with our environment and each other. Water plays a vital role in creating a liveable city.

Being near water, on the water or in the water can make many people feel relaxed, calm and connected to the natural environment. How do you feel when you're near water?

How do we help improve liveability?

Clean water ways can make us feel better about where we live. Managing water and protecting the environment is very important to us. Sydney Water play a huge role in contributing to healthy waterways.

In Sydney we have access to clean, safe drinking water and the removal of wastewater (sanitation). That means our health and wellbeing are being cared for in the places we live.



Water and recreational space

Have a look at the steps we take to produce great quality drinking water on our [water quality and filtration](#) page. When you have finished with your water it goes down the drains and comes to one of our treatment plants. Our [wastewater treatment](#) page will explain how that water is cleaned and what you can do to help.



Natural creeks and rivers add to our enjoyment of a liveable city

Want to know more?

There's lots to learn about water. Go to our [education](#) pages to discover the value of water for [Primary school](#), [High school](#) and beyond.