

# **AQA Geography A-level**

## **3.2.2: Changing Places**

### **Essential Notes**



## Place

The word **place** has more than one dimension. A **location** is the **physical point** of where a **place** is. A **place** is a **location** which has **different meanings to various people**. **Locales** are **locations** in a place that are **associated with everyday activities**. E.g. school, sports ground or theatre. A **locale structures social interactions** and people are likely to show **behavioural traits** specific in a locale.

We understand place to have an **emotional meaning** and **relationship with people**. **Sense of place** is the **subjective emotional attachment to a place** which gives it meaning. A sense of place to you might be, 'I have a strong attachment to my house, it is where I grew up'. The feeling towards your house, street or neighbourhood, is the **sense of place**.

## Placelessness

**Placelessness** suggests that a place is **not unique**. For example, most UK high streets have a Costa Coffee, Greggs, Ladbroke's and a Tesco (or similar **chain shops**). If these are the **locale's** that structure interactions and help develop **sense of place** and they are the same or similar in different locations, then what makes these locations different? They are **clone towns** due to the dominance of **chain shops**.

It could also be argued that as place is about people and different people will interact in the different **locale's**, then these places are in fact unique.

## Attachment

**Yi-Fu Tuan suggested attachment** to a place grows stronger over time. As you have more **experiences** in a place, you are more likely to be attached with that place. Experiences can have **different levels of intensity**. The **greater the intensity** and **number of experiences** you have in a place, the **greater the depth of attachment** you may have to a place. If you spend long enough in a place with many **positive and intense experiences**, it will become home.

**Topophilia** concerns the **love of a place** and having a **strong attachment** to it. **Topophobia** is the **dislike of a place**. It may be possible to experience **topophobia** and still have a strong attachment with a place, but the attachment will be negative.

## Types of Places

Places can be categorised into types, though a single place may fit into many categories:

- **Near Places:** Those which are **close** to us. Near places are **subjective**. A woman living in the Australian outback may consider a place that is 100km away to be near, due to the ability to directly drive between settlements across the outback. In the UK a place that is 100km away may take several hours to travel to and may be considered as a far place.
- **Far Places:** Those that are **distant**. Both **near and far places** may have a more **emotional meaning**. Some people may get 'homesick' if they are staying away for the first time in their lives even if they are only ten minutes drive away. They may feel 'far' away emotionally, even if they are physically close.
- **Experienced Places:** Places that we have actually visited. Some people would argue that you have to visit a place to create an **emotional attachment** to it. Others would suggest that a desire to visit a place or dislike towards it because of what you have seen through the media, is enough to create an emotional attachment.
- **Media Places:** Places we have **not visited**, but may have learned about through **media representations**. Most geographers would argue you have a more **intense experience** by visiting a place, which leads to a **stronger attachment** to it, due to the stimulation of all your senses. Media sources can change our sense of place **subconsciously**.



## Genius Loci

**Genius loci** is the **spirit** of a place. It suggests that every place has a unique spirit or atmosphere, based on everything for the location is made up of, now and in the past.

## Place Character

**Place character** relates to the **specific qualities, attributes or features** of a location that make it unique. Place character is affected by **endogenous and exogenous** factors:

### Endogenous Factors

**Endogenous Factors:** Those which **originate from within** the place and are **local**:

- **Land Use** - Is the area **urban or rural**?
- **Topography** - The **relief** and lie of the land
- **Physical Geography** - Are there **natural physical features** such as waterfalls or estuaries?
- **Infrastructure** - Built services that **enhance** or are **essential** to living conditions:
  - Roads, railways, canals, airports
  - Broadband and phone networks, water supply, sewers and electrical grids
  - Parks, public pools, schools, hospitals, libraries
  - Education system, health care provision, local government, law enforcement, emergency services
- **Demographic Characteristics** - **Age, gender, number, ethnicity** of the population
- **Built Environment** - The architecture of the area. Contemporary, ageing, historical
- **Location** - Elevation, distance to the coast etc.
- **Economic Characteristics** - In debt, growth market, ageing industries, economic sectors

### Exogenous Factors

**Exogenous Factors:** Those which **originate from outside** a place and provide **linkages and relationships** with and to other places. Exogenous factors are commonly referred to as **flows** of:

- **People** - **Impact** of tourists, workers, migrants, refugees, visitors and changing quantities of people on an area **over time**
  - Germany has around **1.4 million asylum seekers**, who integrate into their society, though also creating political and social disputes. Inevitably this will impact the character of Germany
- **Money and Investment** - **Trade** deals, tax, major **events** (e.g. sports competition), new businesses or movement of business from an area
  - Investment into the London borough of Stratford before, during and after it hosted the Olympics has had a long-lasting impact on its place character. Smaller sporting events may have a short-term impact.
- **Resources** - Availability of **raw materials**, products, food, water and energy
  - Due to good transportation networks, the UK is food secure. If the crops fail one year more food can be imported from other countries to make up for the deficit. In less developed countries this is unlikely to be possible.
- **Ideas** - Entrepreneurs may move to an area bringing new businesses with them. Ideas could be information about an area from another country. Designers drive creative processes within an area.
  - Detroit has been impacted by the ideas of urban planners which have helped develop the city, leading to positive reviews by Lonely Planet. This has driven the tourist industry of Detroit, impacting on its character

Over time, **endogenous factors will be shaped by the changing flows of exogenous factors**.



## Perspective on Places

### Insiders and Outsiders

**Insiders** are those people who feel at home within 🏠 and may have the following characteristics:

- Born in 🏠
- They hold **citizenship** for 🏠
- **Fluent** in local language and conform with **idioms**
- Conforms with **social norms and behavioral traits** common in 🏠
- Most importantly does that person **feel secure, safe, welcomed, happy** in 🏠?

**Outsiders** are the opposite to **insiders** and may not be born in 🏠. Lots of factors can contribute to make someone feel like an insider or outsider in a place, and this feeling of belonging or not belonging **can change over time**.

It can be the case that people who do not belong to the main **ethnic group** of a community feel like **outsiders**. For example, an **immigrant family** could have moved into a neighbourhood which is predominantly white British. Lots of factors can add to people feeling like **outsiders**:

- They may not initially feel accustomed to the **culture, social norms** and **dialect** of the majority of the community.
- The **shops and restaurants** along the high street may not be **familiar** to them; they may find it hard to find particular **foods** which they had from home, for example.
- The **architecture of the buildings** may feel unfamiliar to them.

However, feeling like an **outsider** may not be a **long-term** mindset. As the family get used to living in that place and **integrate into society** they can feel like **insiders**.

Think about the street or area that you live in. Is there a family in your street that may feel like **outsiders**? Have they just moved in? Are they originally from another country and do not fit in with the community? What could you do to make them feel more like an insider?

In some instances, **people who once felt like insiders can begin to feel like outsiders**. For example, large **influxes of immigrants** into an area can change the **characteristics** of a place. The **high street** may change as shops and restaurants adapt over time to **cater for new cultures**. This can make the **original residents** begin to feel like outsiders as things become unfamiliar.

### The Other

'**The other**' refers to people who are **unfamiliar or different to the self**. **Conflict** and **social tensions** can exist when people who **do not have the same identity** (the qualities, beliefs and attachments) as other people they meet. When people are considered '**other**' it makes it easier to be **prejudiced** against them as they seem 'alien' to us and can be dehumanised. For example, metaphorical language used by some in the media to describe immigrants can exacerbate negative feelings towards immigration. **Conflict** could also be due to **racism or xenophobia** (**fear** or distrust to something that is uncommon or **out of place**). **Xenophobia** is most commonly seen in modern day society as **suspicion towards migrants** and **foreigners**. This links into **prejudice** and is a complicated issue to solve. Identity and mindsets such as **racism and xenophobia** can lead to **segregation** and also shape places.

This **sense of 'other'** isn't limited to how residents see immigrants. Immigrants can also see **native residents as 'other'**; both these interactions can mean a lack of social integration, exacerbating issues of conflict within an area. Conflict and tensions can arise when **different groups of people have different ideas towards how an area should develop**.



## Case Studies

Your **distant and/or near place** should cover at least one of these topic areas:

- Demographic and Cultural Characteristics
- Economic Change and Social Inequalities

For that place, consider how each **endogenous and exogenous** factor may affect the above categories and consider the linkages between the **endogenous and exogenous** factors. How might **government policies, TNC's or global institutions** seek to **reduce inequalities** and **segregation** or how have they accidentally caused it in the first place?

## Sources of Information for Place Studies

As you must **research your place studies individually**, it can be difficult to find **reliable sources of information** about your places. To avoid a **misinformed place study**, it is important to include information **from a range of reliable sources**.

### Census Data

Census data can be useful for providing insight into both the **past and present** character of a place, especially **demographic and economic** characteristics. **Nomis** is a website provided by the Office for National Statistics, providing **reliable data** on different areas.

**Advantages:**  
Data is reliable and factual.

**Disadvantages:**  
Quantitative data may **ignore** important opinions, e.g. data may show an area as poor and derelict, but this does not reflect residents' **opinions** of their place.

### Field Trips

Visiting your near and far places will develop your own **personal sense of place**. You could interview residents to gain information about the current living situation, as well as the **past character of place** and how a place has changed. You could also collect your own quantitative data.

**Advantages:**  
You can make your own opinion rather than relying on media's presentation of a place.

**Disadvantages:**  
You may hold personal bias for/ against a place, which could influence qualitative descriptions. Opinions are hard to measure.

### Art & Media

Artistic representations are good sources of people's opinions on places. Songs, artwork, films, TV, and literature present a place's **culture**, as well as people's **lived experiences** in places. For example, the **Romantic poets** presented the Lake District positively in their work.

**Advantages:**  
Art and media is a major contributor to an area's character, so it is important to recognise the influence it has on sense of place.

**Disadvantages:**  
Not quantitative, meaning it is hard to compare/ measure.

### Advertising

Tourism and business sectors of a place often advertise an area in order to **attract** people to it/ **invest** in it. This form of media is useful for gathering information about a place, such as the different attractions and history.

**Advantages:**  
Advertising often presents **multiple dimensions of a place**, meaning a lot of information is compiled into one source. A place's attractions add to their character, so they are important to consider.

**Disadvantages:**  
Advertising may show a **one-sided, biased** view, ignoring the **negatives** of an area. Some areas may not be tourist or business based, meaning there is little **advertising** needed.

### Maps & Photos

Maps and photos present a factual and objective view of a place. They are also useful to compare **past and present places**, as there are many archived maps and photos of places.

**Advantages:**  
The ability to compare a place's **past** is important, as you should consider how a place has developed and changed over time. Maps and photos may not be influenced by people's opinions on a place and they are objective.

**Disadvantages:**  
Photos may still have a subjective view (i.e. only showing good/ bad areas). Although they are good for finding information and developing your sense of place, these sources of information are difficult to cite in an exam.





## Source Reliability

You may need to analyse the **reliability** of sources. Is the source **objective** and does it reflect the true nature of the subject? Is the source **biased** and the subject of the source **manipulated**? It is difficult to be certain of source **reliability** so a mix of different sources is preferable. To observe source **reliability**:

- Does the source give a **positive or negative** portrayal of a place? Is the source balanced?
- What is the purpose of the source? Who was the source produced by? **Provenance** can be used to describe the **origin** of the source
- Do other sources describing a place offer a different **perspective**, or support the source?
- Does the source link to **contemporary issues or geographical concepts**?
- What does the source not show?

## Place Meanings

**Place meaning** refers to the **sense of place and character** that different people give to a place. It is how a place is **represented by tourist organisations, governments, corporate bodies and community groups**. These groups drive changes to places and are known as **forces of change**:

- Community Groups
- Governments
- Councils
- Individuals
- TNC's
- National Organisations
- International Organisations
- Global Organisations

**Place meaning** is shaped by the **past and present connections** of a place on a **variety of scales** from global to local.

**Rebranding** is the process by which forces of change aim to adapt the place meaning of a location. This could be to encourage tourism by promoting the **endogenous or exogenous characteristics** of a place, to overcome **negative connotations**. **Communities** can change place representation and this commonly takes place in the form of **social media campaigns**.

**Rebranding** involves: advertising campaigns, infrastructure and built environment improvements, positive media coverage, tourist board management

To achieve this:

- **Community groups** may levy media groups to positively or negatively portray a place
- **Councils** may invest in tourism boards to portray a positive image of a location
- **Governments** may set out strategies such as improving infrastructure
- **Individuals** may start social media campaigns which suggest a different image of a place

Place representation may take place in different forms: websites, posters, songs, videos, photographs, news articles

Additionally places may be represented by **census data, graphs or measures such as Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)**. When analysing **geospatial data** such as a choropleth map it is important to consider **reliability**. A large block of colour may be misleading. The abrupt boundaries do not reflect the actual spread of data which will be more distributed. Geospatial data can be **misleading** so is more reliable when compared with another source.

