

WHY PRODUCE RESOURCES?

Each of the five steps in producing a resource will help you to progress your own learning and goals and how, in the future, you may earn your way in life as an employee and perhaps later as an employer. Earning is not the only aim in life but it does help you to be able to afford to achieve your aspirations.

Even the first step will help your knowledge and understanding of the world of work, improve your career options and so raise your chance of earning your way. This is by identifying traders to highlight in your resource, either by the goods and services they offer, or by the locality they serve.

Why take an interest in researching into goods and services?

You can help your understanding and performance in your studies at school in themes such as enterprise and sustainable development, by choosing to research and produce a resource about goods and services delivered in Scotland.

You could consider, for example, giving information about traders involved in making things to sell specifically to people who visit Scotland. Another option would be to focus on finding traders who grow things to sell to local residents, including those who run cafes or other food outlets. Or you could focus on goods and services, such as printing and bookkeeping, which many traders need to buy in to run their own businesses.

Why bother to see what services are available in a locality?

Your studies at school include themes such as citizenship and health and wellbeing. You can help your understanding and performance in these by producing a resource which highlights traders who serve a locality in Scotland. Such goods and services range from those required to make the locality attractive to young residents and also to visitors, through to goods and services to help residents keep themselves and their homes safe and sound.

Your production of a resource that brings together information for a locality helps you to see how the strengths of communities could be built and improved. Where research for your resource includes asking questions of local residents of all ages, you may see how relations between different generations could be improved.

Whatever focus you choose to highlight in your resource about a locality, you would see how 'health and wellbeing' may apply to a locality as well as to you as an individual.

Links for a better future

The final step of resource production is for you to contact the traders you have chosen to highlight so that you may show them your finished resource and ask their permission to include information about them. This helps you to build your confidence when applying for jobs and increases your chance of settling quickly into a new job. By being in contact with traders, you gain practical experience in communicating with the business community – not to ask for a job or otherwise pester the trader but to learn how to foster links for a better future. Such links are key to 'recruitment by word of mouth' which was once a more common way in which people found a job or chose a career.

PRODUCING A RESOURCE

There are five steps to producing a resource which you can follow individually or as part of a group.

The first step alone would give you practical knowledge to help your understanding of the current world of work. This is useful for the reasons given in 'Why produce resources?'

The example resources available on the website will help you with each of the steps, perhaps especially with creative ideas when you come to designing your resource.

Step 1: Decide who may read your resource, and choose goods and services to illustrate what's on offer in a place of interest to you and any other readers.

Step 2: Use existing sources to find up to ten traders to highlight in your resource.

Step 3: Write a short editorial, or summary, on what you discovered using the sources.

Step 4: Design your resource.

Step 5: Show your resource to others and save it for future use.

Remember that your resource is ideally a couple of A4 pages. It could be on paper, and is likely to be developed using a computer at school.

Step 1: Deciding who may read your resource, and choosing goods and services to illustrate what's on offer in a place of interest to you and any other readers.

You and your friends and family will read the resource, as will your teacher, because your studies involve your research into particular goods and services on offer in a specific place in Scotland. But your finished resource could also be on display locally – think of who might read it there. Local residents may read the resource in the library or other community centre. Tourists may read the resource where they are staying, perhaps having found it at a local tourist information point. Planners of local events may read the resource in a meeting to make arrangements.

A focus on goods and services offered in a specific place in Scotland

One focus could be on traders who, for example, provide transport-related services in an area of Scotland. The goods and services could range from vehicle hire and maintenance through to running scheduled bus, train and ferry services, to hiring out boats for holiday use.

A visitor centre could be the focus of a project, to illustrate traders who provide goods retailed by that centre. Another option for a project could include traders who supplied goods and services when a specific building was designed and built.

A project might aim to show the services required to maintain a forest or garden centre or a garden open to visitors, or the goods and services required as part of activities to sell to people who visit the forest or garden, or to supply wood to manufacturers and carpenters. Your project could highlight the goods and services which enable plants and flowers to be sold to people for their own gardens - or to businesses which sell services like wedding event planning. It could illustrate the traders who sell holiday lodges or furniture made from wood harvested from a forest to customers at home and abroad.

Some people may have little interest in forests, except perhaps to visit one when on holiday. But the example of wood illustrates how a raw material is grown and used to make something that then is sold to residents of a country or exported to people living abroad. People abroad may wish to buy things specifically because they are distinctive reminders, whether the goods are useful or give pleasure.

The same principle covers other materials such as stone used in buildings or ingredients in things to eat. It applies to any raw material derived from a process to recycle what is otherwise wasted by being dumped in landfill or sent abroad so that other people may make goods which are then imported back into the UK. It also relates to postcards and calendars which have been made in Scotland and hence are genuine souvenirs by not being imported. And it's the same with films and songs which tell a Scottish story.

Most businesses involved will themselves need to buy goods and services from others, including spare parts, printing and publishing services, accountancy, bookkeeping, and property-related services. In some cases the businesses may also purchase goods and services (for example genuine souvenirs, locally-produced food or catering services) for sale to their customers who are visitors on tour.

There are many things to research that are now sold and bought online. A growing proportion of UK-based traders have websites to promote the goods and services which they offer, a significant number do not, and these are often the traders who serve local areas. A project could examine the reasons for such developments and the use or otherwise of technology by a group of traders.

A focus on goods and services which are offered locally

How easy is it for local residents to contact someone to help maintain their houses, look after their garden or mend burst water pipes? How can younger residents find out about interesting local activities? Are residents generally able to buy locally-grown food?

Can residents with increasing physical needs or their caring friends or family find traded and other services to help them live at home safely and independently? There is a checklist of the services people require in such circumstance in the 'Finding key local information' example resource on the website.

Could your resource improve how the community markets itself to potential visitors by illustrating attractive goods and services on offer, from places to stay through to things to do? It could do this by collating information which is already available in a variety of locations. Your school could ensure that a copy of your finished resource is displayed in local caravan and camp sites and other places which tourist boards may have overlooked.

Finally, could your resource help the place where you live by giving useful information to people who organise local events? It could illustrate goods and services like locally-made products which could be purchased by the event planners to be sold on stalls at such an event for the enjoyment of those attending.

This sort of resource could be a most useful 'community service' by your school, because people who organise or license events may not be locally-based so might overlook locally-available goods and services which could enhance an event. Where an event is run in your area, your resource could help local people to feel totally involved.

Your resource will pull together much information for local residents, so a printed copy of your finished resource could usefully be displayed in local service information points including the library and health and community centres. Your school could also aim for media coverage of your project in local newspapers or magazines which may be already delivered free to residents.

Producing your target statement

In one paragraph, write a statement identifying your target readership, the goods and services you seek to illustrate, and the area served by traders you will seek to find. The area is the whole of Scotland, unless you identify a specific place or locality in Scotland. If you wish to focus on Scottish exporters, the area could be an export destination country. The target statement records your decisions about this and notes the reasons for those decisions.

If you are still undecided, ask your friends and family what they have spent money on lately and illustrate some of the traders who supplied those goods or services. Everyone buys food so your resource could be 'to let residents know how much of their food is sourced locally'. This could be part of your target statement, with the goods you seek to illustrate being food which is sold in a local shop or superstore. You will find the traders from their websites (often shown on the food labels), and the specific area served is where your readers reside.

You are now ready to start step 2.

Step 2: Using existing sources to find up to ten traders to highlight in your resource.

You need relevant information when you look for traders to highlight in your resource. There are many different sources you can consult including the business pages of a telephone directory and websites which tell residents and visitors about the local area.

Check at the local library, health and community centre, and any other public service information point.

Look in local newspapers and magazines, including those delivered free to residents.

Ask friends and family.

Use search engines on the internet.

Ask a trader you know to recommend another.

Check with your teachers and other students working on similar projects to see which traders have been or are likely to be contacted. Traders may not be pleased to be pestered with lots of requests for the same information.

Go to a visitor centre to see who made the goods being retailed by the centre, and look at the brochures designed for visitors.

Ask local business organisations and relevant professional, trade and industry bodies whether they have directories of their members who earn their way by selling goods and/or services in the private sector.

Try searching the internet using a place name, such as Edinburgh or Glasgow, and the word 'online'. This can be useful, especially if you are looking at an industry which currently depends mainly on imports through only a few wholesalers. In this case, highlight the wholesalers and broaden your resource to include, for instance, hauliers who deliver their goods to your area.

Checking if a trader is relevant to include

Once you have identified a trader who offers the required goods and services, ask yourself if they cover the area focussed upon by your resource. Remember the area you chose in step 1 (the whole of Scotland, unless you set a specific place or locality in Scotland, and, if your resource focuses on Scottish exporters, you set the area as an export destination country).

It may be difficult to identify if the offer of goods and services does cover your area of interest, simply because many traders leave their options open until a need arises to extend the geographical coverage of their trading activities.

Check if the trader seems to be part of the Scottish business community. Two rough tests for this are either for the trader to give a postal address in Scotland on a website or in promotional literature, or to be known locally.

Compromising on a trader's relevance

You have found a relevant trader to highlight if the trader obviously offers services in the area focussed on by your resource and has also passed either of the two rough tests above. Otherwise discard the trader, but only if your search finds others who match your needs

Do not worry if you find only a few traders to highlight. Part of the research process is to learn when to use further sources or to compromise, deciding to illustrate traders whom you could have discarded. Remember that no more than ten traders should be in your resource.

Continue to search for traders until you have found enough or have decided to compromise - which you will need to do, especially if your project starts to run out of time.

Selecting those to highlight

How will you select those to highlight if you have a choice of relevant traders? By a trader having a well-designed website or trading from a cool place to be based? By the trader describing interesting past contracts or commissions, or doing work that you didn't know was done in Scotland or offering to deliver services in places abroad that attract you? It could be any of these reasons – and others: it's for you to decide.

Highlighting the most interesting relevant traders found in your search

Once you have found interesting relevant traders to highlight, revisit their websites, brochures or advertisements. Choose some sentences which seem to highlight to you what is distinctive about what they offer. Make the highlight short, about 30 words or less, and use words exactly extracted from the trader's website or other promotional material. (These extracts may also illustrate different traders' approaches to communicating with customers – and it's good practice for you in communicating with potential future employers and being clear about what information you are seeking.) When the highlights have all been written you are ready to start step 3.

Step 3: Writing a short editorial, or summary, on what you discovered using the sources.

Write a report of about three paragraphs on your project, making sure it is written in a way to attract the attention of your readers (which you identified in step 1).

Include in your report how easily you found traders to highlight - when you feel sure that the illustrated traders match what you were looking for.

What conclusions can you draw by re-reading the trader highlights you drafted in step 2? Ask yourself questions such as:

- Why did you select these traders to highlight?
- Because their websites were smart, by their choice of cool places to be based, by their serving the locality of your resource's focus, by their description of interesting contracts done or services delivered?
- Or because they offered services you didn't know were still available or already done locally?
- By their offer to deliver services in places abroad that attract you?
- Are the selected traders mainly importers or wholesalers? Is that why you had difficulty in finding traders to highlight? Are their goods being delivered over long distances?
- Have you identified a future niche market, because some services just do not seem to be currently offered in a locality? (Remember this information because it may well help a local trader to expand their business and raise the commercial need for more local workers. Including this information in your resource could well forge a link that will be useful to you and your school when you approach the jobs market in future.)

Summarise your conclusions in the project report; they become part of the editorial content of your resource.

Listing your sources

How did you find the traders' details? They could have been in:

- A telephone directory, local newspapers or magazines or Information found at a local library, health and community centre or other public service information point.
- A website which introduces the locality or brochures designed for visitors.
- Local knowledge, having asked friends and family, or asked traders to recommend others or tell you about the lists of traders held by their membership bodies, whether by profession, trade, industry, business type or size.

You will probably have used an online search engine to find some traders. Did you find some traders from websites listing many traders? For instance, did you find hoteliers from a website run by the local tourist board? Such websites could be referenced as a directory in your resource.

Finalising your resource

If you have enough traders highlighted, you are now ready to start step 4. If not you need to make progress, because your project may be running out of time. Discuss solutions with your teacher and remember that such research can be difficult and obstacles are to be expected – as job hunting and career decisions can be in a fast-changing UK economy. Add a conclusion to your project report from your research and any discussions with your teacher; this also forms the editorial material for your resource.

Step 4: Designing your resource.

The resource is likely to be printed on paper, but will also probably be stored on a computer at school - perhaps ending up as an online example resource on the school website. Try to avoid too much multi-media content simply because this can make a computer-held resource very large to store and slow for others to access.

By this stage you should have all the information you need to present in your resource - which, ideally, is two A4 pages in length.

- Decide on a 'banner' heading which tells readers about the goods and services your resource illustrates and, if necessary, the area served by the traders you selected. This should be written in a way that's attractive to your chosen readership. (You decided your likely readers in step 1).
- The editorial (this is the summary that you produced in step 3).
- The list of sources you found useful (you produced this list in step 3).
- The highlighted information about each of up to ten traders (you produced the highlights in step 2).
- Then assemble all this material to produce the resource in a form which you think will attract its readers. Have a look at the examples on this website as well as magazines on sale in local shops for ideas about attractive designs for printed materials.
- You can use colours to add interest or for emphasis. You can also break up the text by including some photographs (but only where you own them including if you've taken them with a school digital camera or your mobile phone). What types of pictures might you include? Examples include people you've met while researching the project, traders' premises, local scenes, your school etc.
- Remember to include your name, the names of those who helped you, your school's name and the date.
- At the bottom of the final page include this statement: 'This is a www.ScotSectorlink.org.uk format resource'.

Well done, you now have a resource!

Step 5: Showing your resource to others, and saving it for future use.

Does your school plan to display a printed copy of your resource at a library or other public information point, for residents, tourists or planners of local events?

Will your school seek local media (papers, TV, radio) coverage of your project to publicise the resource?

If so in either case, then you and your teachers can add to your resource by asking readers – including those looking for local information or to promote an open day - for their opinion (did they find the information useful? Was it presented in an attractive way?).

Will your school add the resource to the school collection (for example in the library or resource centre or on the website) for other students to use?

(If the answer to all three of these questions is 'no' then move straight on to the section below on how to store your resource.)

But if 'the answer is 'yes' to any of these questions, things must now be kept business-like, as the important people who must first see your resource are the traders it highlights.

Asking your school for a permission sheet for each trader

Before you contact any of the traders, ask your school to provide you with a 'permission sheet' for each trader not already included in the school's collection of similar resources produced by students.

Note if any trader highlighted in your resource has already been included in another resource that is already held in your school's bank. Where this is the case you can change your highlight to match the earlier one for which the trader has already signed a permission sheet – unless information about that trader has changed. You still need to contact the trader, but only to show your new resource as a courtesy.

For each trader not already included in the school's bank of resources, the permission sheet, printed on school headed stationery and provided by your teachers, will be as follows:

We [school name inserted here] request the approval of [trader's name inserted here] for the wording of the entry in the attached resource which highlights the business interests of [trader's name] and which has been produced as part of a school project.

Approval is sought on the following terms:

- 1. The resource will be retained by [school name] solely for educational purposes, to help knowledge and understanding of the business community.*
- 2. We [school name] do not pay or charge companies for the data they agree to have highlighted in the attached resource.*
- 3. (if applicable) The resource will be displayed in local public information points.*

Please record your approval and grant permission for use of the resource as above, by e-mailing [insert an address] or by signing and returning this sheet. Thank you.

Once you have the permission sheets

Once your teacher gives you the permission sheets contact each trader in person, by telephone or e-mail or by post, to show the trader your resource and ask for the permission sheet to be duly signed or e-mailed back. Permission is more easily given for information which has used extracts from the trader's website or promotional literature.

Remember that some traders will be too busy to reply immediately, perhaps offering to look at your resource and permission sheet at a later time. If a trader is unable to give their approval in time for your project or prefers not to be included, then courteously explain that you will have to omit that trader. Select another relevant trader (in step 2), amend your resource to replace one trader's highlight with that for the new trader, and ask for an extra permission sheet.

Once all traders have given their permission, then add to the end of your resource: 'This is a school project by pupils of [insert your school name] with permitted free promotion of traders'. Then the resource can be displayed publicly.

Saving your resource

Make sure your resource is filed clearly and safely in any school collection of such material (probably in the library or resource centre) along with all returned permission sheets. An electronic version may also be held on the school website or intranet.

Congratulations, you have now produced a resource which will help you, your school and the place where you live!