

Guide to Town Centre Worksheet

Allow 90 mins for this activity.

Ensure you remind students to take lots of pictures of the buildings and specific key parts of them that they might want to zoom in on.

Refer to the map when stopping to see a building – can they find it on their map? When changing direction, refer to the map to see if children can use the map to decipher which way they need to go? Ask questions, e.g. – How do we get to Market Place from here? What are we going to pass on the way?



Start the walk at the end of Lord Street opposite B&M. The first stop is at number 35, the former Tiger Inn. The stained-glass window above the door is the only clue to this building's long history as a pub. Explain that this street once led all the way from The River Trent, where steam ships dropped off shoppers and traders to do their business in Gainsborough. Both sides of the street were lined with pubs, inns, and shops to serve all these people who were on their way to the Market.

The next stop is at 45-47 Lord Street where the pupils will spot the mosaic floor in the shared doorway. Explain that this was once a big double-fronted shop. Both windows would have displayed expensive men's suits when it was 'Beechey Outfitters' in 1904. Encourage the pupils to step back and look for clues that this was once one single building. Point out the mosaic border above the windows. Originally this was built as a bank in the early 1800s.



Now look to the right and ask the pupils to study the Townhall. Discuss the different shapes that make up the architecture of the building. E.g., pentagons, rectangles semi circles etc. Can they spot the dates on the columns? What might the date mean?



Walk to the end of the Townhall and look closely at the jewelers. Can they see another date? What does that tell them about the shop? Explain that it was established in 1908 and owned by the Barnes family until 2012. A different person now owns it.

Discuss the architecture of the shop – how does it compare to a more modern building.

Observe around – discuss the surrounding shops. Which look older/newer? How can they tell, what clues are there? The curved parade of shops opposite is clearly of a very different design. Explain that this corner was destroyed by a bomb during WW2 and that the curved building was put in after the war. The change in architectural fashions is very clear here. Many people find the post-war architecture unattractive now.

Would the road have been the same 100 years ago? Lord Street was open to traffic until the 1980s and this would have been a busy crossroads.



Now ask students to use their maps to slightly double back to find Flag Alley, at the side of the Halifax Building Society and proceed towards the Market Place.



Spend some time looking at Burton & Dysons Solicitor's office– can they describe the outside of the building? How does it compare to a more modern building? How can we tell it is older? Older windows tend to have smaller expanses of glass. This Victorian shopfront represents what all the shops would have once looked like, with painted wooden doors and window frames and traditional signage.

Continue into the centre of Market Place – discuss how this would have been the main hub of the town during Victorian Times and early 1900's. Which buildings look older, why – how can you tell, what clues are there? Remind the students to look up. It is often the upper floors which remain original and give the most clues.

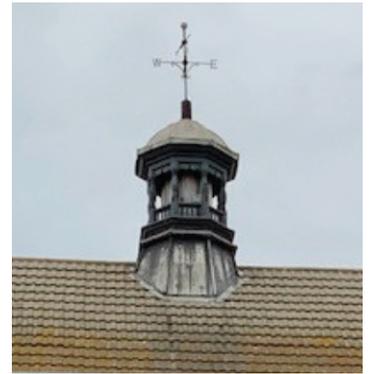
Now study the 1820s sketch of the Market Place. Ask pupils to stand where they think the artist stood when she drew it. Assist them to identify the buildings where Boots and Nationwide are located which are prominent in the sketch.

Ask students to look around at the different styles of shop window. Early shop windows had smaller panes of glass which needed more wooden framework to support them. As glass technology improved, they were able to make larger sheets of glass, and eventually the whole shopfront could be made of one sheet of toughened glass. The trend has been to have as much uninterrupted glass as possible in shops windows to allow customers to view displays without windowframes in the way.



At the time of the sketch there was a very ancient Old Moot Hall which served the same purpose and stood in the same position as our Townhall. This was replaced in the 1890s with the current Townhall, but this was damaged when the bomb fell on Market Street in WW2, so the Market side of the building was rebuilt in the 1950s.

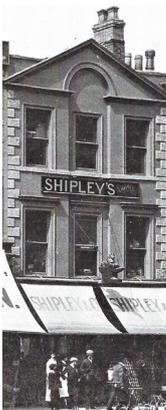
Ask students to look around the Market Place at the moldings at the top of the buildings and compare the intricate designs? What is at the top the Town Hall? Have they seen anything like it before? This is a louvre, which imitates the louvre in the kitchen of Gainsborough Old Hall. It worked as a chimney/vent to let out smoke from open fires at the Old Hall but has only been built into the Townhall as a decorative architectural detail.



Explain that the Townhall has changed over time and this side was originally more like the other side on Lord Street but the Townhall and some of the shops were badly damaged in WW2 when the bomb hit Market Street. This side was rebuilt in the 1950s in what was the modern style.



Students can now draw some of the tops of the buildings. Encourage them to focus on the details. Ensure they also take photos of the parts they are drawing.



Explain that the Nationwide building used to be a hardware shop called Shipley's. The fancy triangular molding is called a 'pediment.' This style of building is inspired by Roman architecture and was very popular at the time it was built in the early 1800s, as this is when the buried Roman town of Pompeii was discovered. The Georgians were mad about everything Roman! The photograph was taken around 1900.

Encourage students to make a note of questions about the buildings that they might like to research and find the answer to. What do they notice about the windows? What were the side doors and upper floors used for?



Can they spot 'ghost writing'? This is the legible marks left by long-gone painted signs. Focus on the Provincial Bank building – discuss detail that we can see. Explain that the letters have left the words even though there is no actual lettering there.

Discuss bricks of the different buildings – which are older/newer. How can we tell?

Lastly, discuss the fact that so many shop buildings and apartments above them are empty. 100 years ago, every shop would have been in use, with more shops in the upper floor apartments, accessed via the side doors. How have modern shopping habits affected independent shops and chain stores? What might be a good new use for these empty buildings?