

Spies in the Skies

Teacher notes.

This starter/plenary can either be photocopied and then cut-and-pasted, or dragged over a screen in conjunction with a whiteboard and projector.

It lists eight advances in technology brought about through the use of satellites.

The purpose of this exercise is to invite pupils to arrange the technological advances in order of importance/relevance in our daily lives.

Clearly there is no 'correct' order, and this provides the opportunity for pupils to discuss the relevance of some items and to give their own opinions on how useful some of the technological advances are.

The activity raises social, cultural and environmental issues and also offers the chance for pupils to develop their Citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills.

The eight technological advances listed below have all been made possible through the use of satellites.

Arrange them in order of their importance or relevance in our lives.

Mapping - OS maps are now made using satellite data, we can zoom in on our house using Google Earth, and remote areas of the Earth can be charted.

Television - We have a multitude of digital TV channels, but even terrestrial TV brings us live news reports and sporting events from all over the world.

Medical scans - Diagnostic devices such as MRI and CAT scanners have been made possible through the image-enhancing technology developed for space observations.

Archaeology - Sites of archaeological interest in remote regions of the world can be surveyed with the intent of finding and protecting ancient buildings and sites.

Weather forecasting - Through the continuous monitoring of global weather systems, more accurate forecasting can be made (but they still can't stop it raining).

Natural disasters - The scale of natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes can be assessed quickly so that help and rescue teams can be deployed to the correct locations.

Navigation - We can navigate easily to our destination in cars, go geo-caching, the captains of ferries and cruise liners can tell exactly where they are and we can enquire the whereabouts of the next bus and how long it will be until it arrives!

Monitoring the environment - Scientists are able to monitor forest fires and oil spillages, the melting of ice caps and glaciers, measure the amount of ozone in our atmosphere and gain a clearer picture on how our planet works.