

What on Earth? – Teacher’s notes

Overview

In this quick and simple activity, pupils help an alien visitor to send a report back to her home planet of Famox, indicating the features of planet Earth which can be observed from her spaceship. The step-through nature of the activity is designed to help pupils realise that we can't see everything on a globe/map at once and that the closer you get (the larger scale the map is), the more you can see. The activity is designed to be used by the teacher at an interactive white board in a whole class setting, **or** by pupils working independently at computers.

Aim of the resource

- To demonstrate how the concept of scale determines which features are visible on a globe.

Key objectives

At the end of this activity pupils will be able to:

- explain which types of features can be seen on a world map or globe, and why certain other features are not recorded.

Using the resource

1. Click the LAUNCH button to start the activity. (If it doesn't launch, try turning off your pop-up blocker.)
2. Watch the animation sequence as the alien arrives in the spaceship.
3. The animation and dialogue pauses at suitable points for discussion. Click CONTINUE when you are ready to move on.
4. You are presented with a view of the Earth from Space, and asked to tick the items on the checklist that can be seen from this distance.
5. Explore the different camera views (1 to 4) before clicking CLOSER to get a closer/larger scale view.
6. Repeat the process of ticking features you can see through cameras 1-4. When you have finished on the CLOSER view, progress to the CLOSEST view. **NB It is only on the closest view that rivers are visible.**
7. When all views have been explored, click the button to send the report back to Famox.
8. The aliens back on Famox discuss the report. The question of why no humans were recorded is posed for discussion.
9. At the end of the activity, and after any discussions, bring pupils together for the Plenary. (If pupils have been working independently on the activity, you may want them to tackle the Plenary questions on their own.)

Useful information

- NB You can skip the introductory animated sequence in subsequent viewings by clicking the SKIP button at the bottom of the main screen. You can also use the rewind and fast forward buttons to jump through the main scenes.
- Don't forget to click OK when the alien has finished speaking and you are ready to record the features. This will remove the alien's speech bubble.
- Obviously pupils are not meant to tick EQUATOR, HOUSES, PEOPLE or POLES. If they do so, the alien will encourage them to think again. They cannot progress to the end of the activity if any of these items are ticked.