

SOSE Worksheet – Level 04

“What’s in a name?”

Imagine that you lived in a place where nothing was named. How could you tell people where you were, or where to meet you, or where to go?

Obviously you would have to do something about it. You would have to come up with names.

Draw a rough sketch map of the area in which your school is situated. Discuss with your teacher where to place the boundaries – this will vary from school to school. But if you restrict yourself to the block your school is on there are already lots of places to which you can give names.

There’s the school itself, of course, and the four streets or roads that form the block it’s on. There may be other important landmarks along those streets, on either side of the road – shops, church, police, fire department, hotels. The streets, of course, are still streets and the buildings still have those functions but nothing has a name.

The park, the tallest tree, the pedestrian crossing, the traffic lights – **everything significant could help a stranger to find their way about “your place” should all be marked on your sketch map. And everything that is marked must then be given a place name – which means even a place usually known only by function (such as “police station”) needs a name.**

But before you begin naming the places on your map, there’s one more thing: the names have to be justified. **There has to be a reason, which you can explain, for every name you choose.**

For example, the name may describe a geographic or other natural or even man-made feature, it may commemorate someone or something that is associated with the place, it may be drawn from research into Aboriginal names for places or things or once associated with the district. It may describe a function not otherwise noted (if a vantage point is a good place to see the sun go up or down, for example).

There must be a reason and you will have to explain it.

It might help to find out the origins of some of the actual names, find out where they came from and whether something from the same source, or theme, or episode in history could be substituted.

Remember, this is not a map-making exercise, you don’t need to go and measure distances or elevations, but you do need to include on your plan all of the significant points that will help a stranger to navigate – and then name them in a way that has some provable connection to the place itself.