Learning the Landscape through Language

RESOURCE SHEET 3 – BUILDING ANGLO-SAXON HILLS AND MOUNTAINS

The Anglo-Saxons used lots of different words for hills and mountains – many more than we use today. This is because they used different words depending upon the size, shape or profile of the hill or mountain that they were naming. Using contour maps, it is possible to construct 3D models of Shropshire hills. The children can then compare their different profiles, to try and understand why the Anglo-Saxons used different vocabulary to describe these hills and mountains.

This is an exercise that children could work on in groups or individually, and focuses on children building a 3D model of one of four Shropshire hills and mountains using contour map templates devised by the University of Nottingham. There are four contour layer maps:

1. Stottesdon
2. Wentnor
3. Heath Mynd
4. View Edge

Stottesdon is the easiest model to build, and View Edge the most difficult, and so this may help you to decide which maps to allocate to which individuals/groups. For these resources to be effective, it is recommended that classes construct at least two of the different hills/mountains (and ideally all four), so that a comparison between different hill types can be made. Begin by printing out the contour layer maps that you have decided to focus on. For this exercise, you will need:

- <u>Either</u> several colour copies of the contour map that you are using (this is the easiest way of creating the 3D model), <u>or</u> one copy of the map and some tracing paper.
- Scissors
- Glue
- Paper
- Strong cardboard
- Copies of photographs of each hill/mountain

<u>Exercise one</u>

Begin by asking the children to think about what hills and mountains look like, and to draw one of each. After they have completed this task, ask them the following questions:

- Do all hills look the same?
- What is the difference between a hill and a mountain?

<u>Exercise two – part one</u>

Selecting a map (or maps) for constructing your 3D model. Information on each location is detailed below:

1. <u>Stottesdon</u>

The village of Stottesdon sits on top of a low hill with a fairly level and fairly extensive summit. This type of hill is what an Anglo-Saxon would have called a **dūn**. In modern English, this word eventually became 'down', as in the South Downs. For this model, give each child a copy of Map 1 (Stottesdon).

2. Wentnor

The village of Wentnor is sited on top of a ridge with a convex slope. Wentnor means 'the flat-topped ridge of a person called Wenta or Wonta', and the final part of this name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon term **ofer**, 'flat topped ridge'. For this model, give each child a copy of Map 2 (Wentnor).

3. Heath Mynd

Heath Mynd is a mountain lying within the parish of More, and which rises to a height of 452m. Its name almost certainly refers to the surrounding heathland, originally derived from the Anglo-Saxon term **hǣð** 'heathland' and the Welsh word for 'mountain' – **mynydd**. For this model, give each child a copy of Map 3 (Heath Mynd).

4. View Edge

View Edge lies near Stokesay, and it is the modern name for what was once Weo Edge – named by the Anglo-Saxons using the Old English term **weg-hōh**, meaning 'spur of land by a road'. This is another hill with a very distinctive shape, and the term **hōh** meant 'heel', and was applied to hills whose shape resembles the heel of a foot. These hills also have a concave slope. For this model, give each child a copy of Map 4 (View Edge).

Constructing your model

Note that the base layer (which is always 10m less than Layer 1 in height) is always the basic rectangular shape of the whole map. So, for this layer, you will simply need to cut out the rectangle.

For those using multiple copies of the maps:

- Begin by cutting out Layer 1 using your first copy of the map. Note that you will cut your outline at its greatest extent, ignoring all of the higher layers. This layer will be smaller than the base layer, but larger than each of the subsequent layers. Label this layer 'Layer 1'.
- Next, using another copy of your map, cut out Layer 2 and label it. Keep going until you have cut out all of your layers, finishing with the smallest layer.

For those using tracing paper:

- Using your map, trace the outline of each layer onto a separate piece of tracing paper.
- Begin by cutting out Layer 1. Note that you will cut your outline at its greatest extent, ignoring all of the higher layers. This layer will be smaller than the base layer, but larger than each of the subsequent layers. . Label this layer 'Layer 1'.
- Cut out each of the subsequent layers and label them, finishing with the smallest layer.

All: Now, using your layer templates, trace and cut out each of your layer shapes in cardboard, labelling them as your complete each layer.

Once complete, lay a copy of your map onto your cardboard base, and glue each cardboard layer into place, starting with Layer 1 and finishing with the final layer. You have now constructed a model of your chosen hill or mountain!

Exercise two – part two

Bring the finished models together, so that the children can see each of them. Give them an opportunity to look at and handle each model. Ask them to think about whether all of the hills look the same. Ask them to select words to describe each hill. This might include, for example:

- High
- Flat
- Round
- Long

You might want to ask the children to think about the terms 'concave' and 'convex'. What are the differences between each of the hills? What are the similarities? Now ask the children to think about the Anglo-Saxon terms for these hills. Why do you think they gave each of these hills a different name? Ask the children to think about how the Anglo-Saxons moved through the landscape without maps (this could tie in to Resource Sheet 1). Why might the names help people to travel from one place to another (think about the different shapes of the hills, and the idea that Anglo-Saxons used descriptive words to distinguish between them)?

Using the photographs of the different hills, think about:

- Whether the 3D models look like the hills in the images
- What are the advantages of the 3D models over the photographs (and vice versa)?

The 3D models help to provide a clear picture of each respective hill shape, however, they don't provide any information about vegetation, settlement, etc., which can be discerned from the photographs.

Exercise two – part three

The name Heath Mynd is partly Welsh. Ask the children to think about this. What other **mynd** names do they know (Long Mynd)? In addition to the Long Mynd, there are several **mynd** names in Shropshire, including:

- Long Mynd (Church Stretton), rising to 516m
- Oakeley Mynd (Lydbury North), rising to 309m
- Huckle Mynd (Bishop's Castle)
- Myndtown Hill (Myndtown), rising to 361m

Locate each of these 'mountain' names on a map. Think about:

- Where in Shropshire are they found (close to the Welsh border)?
- Why might the Welsh word for mountain have been used?
- What languages have been spoken in Shropshire over the last 1,500 years? Brittonic (a Celtic language, spoken by British people); Old English (spoken by the Anglo-Saxons); Welsh

Field-Trip

You may be able to combine the exercises in this resource pack with a field-trip to one of the map locations, or perhaps to the Long Mynd. This would give the children yet another perspective from

which to consider and examine the Shropshire hills. How easy it is on the ground to identify the shape of the hill? What kind of landscape features obscure the view (buildings, trees, pylons etc.).

National Curriculum

These exercises support the following aspects of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 2:

Geography

- Use maps to describe features studied
- Name and locate…geographical regions [of the UK] and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), and land-use patterns, and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time
- Understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom
- Describe and understand key aspects of physical and human geography (including types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources)

History

- Understand Britain's settlement by the Anglo-Saxons (Anglo-Saxon invasions, settlements and kingdoms: place-names and village life
- A local history study

Science

- Gathering, recording, classifying and presenting data to help answer questions
- Explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment
- Recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways
- Use the local environment to explore and answer questions about animals in their habitat
- Recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things

Mathematics

- Measurement: choose and use appropriate units to measure height
- Measurement: estimate, calculate and compare different measures
- Geometry: make 3-D shapes using modelling materials
- Geometry: recognise 3-D shapes in different orientations and describe them
- Geometry: ordering and arranging mathematical shapes
- Geometry: describe movements between positions as translations of a given unit up/down

English

- Retrieving and recording information from non-fiction sources
- Provide opportunities to discuss language, including vocabulary, extending their interest in the meaning and origin of words