

Dock Detectives!



STUDENT INTRODUCTION

Portsmouth is a city on the south coast of England. The **coast** is the term we use to describe the boundary between the land and the sea. Portsmouth is one of the south coast's major **urban** areas. An **urban area** is a built-up area. Portsmouth has just over 200,000 people living there and it is a pretty important place!

In this study, you are going to be learning about the *physical* and *human* geography of Portsmouth Harbour, and what made this an ideal location for the development of a major Port and Naval Base.

Firstly, though, let's find out a little bit more about the background/history of the area, and also make sure that you understand what the *key geographical terms* you need to know mean.

PRE-VISIT TASKS

There has been a settlement here since Roman times, where a settlement called 'Portus Adurni' was built in the 3rd Century. This area is now a **suburb** of the North-west of the city.

A **suburb** is a district of/part of an urban area, usually on the outer edges.

Task 1: In site...

Settlements originally developed in certain **sites** because there were certain features / characteristics that made it ideal. Your teacher will now show you a web-link that gives a definition of the term 'site'.

Write that definition in your own words in the space below:

A site is... _____

Your teacher will now go through with you some of the factors/characteristics that influenced the choice of a good site for early settlements.

- ▶ Listen and look carefully, and then write some notes into the table below to summarise what you have learned:

Characteristic/ factor	What makes a good site	What makes a bad site
Relief (height and gradient of the land)	It should be...	But not...
Water supply	It should be...	But not...
Building materials	It should be...	But not...
Defence	It should be...	But not...
Own choice:	It should be...	But not...

Well done - you should now be happy with this key term.

Task 2: Portsmouth's site

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PRE-VISIT
TASKS

Looking at the map below, which shows the area of Portsmouth and its immediate surroundings. From what you have learned about what does, and what doesn't, make a good site for the settlement, can you label the map to indicate BOTH.

Perhaps use different colours for the things that made it a good/ not so good site for the settlement to develop. One has been done as an example, showing both a good (green) and a bad (red) feature of the site:



Extension: Using your labels, try to write a paragraph to summarise which this was a good site for the original settlement to develop.

Let's learn a little bit more about the physical Geography of the area. Physical geography is about the natural world around us. It looks at how natural processes cause natural landscapes to develop and change over time. So, what is the physical Geography of the area like, and how did it become like this?

Portsmouth is an **island** city, surrounded by water. In fact, it is the only city like this in the UK.

- ▶ Look at the map on page 3 and see if you can find Portsea Island – it is surrounded by water on all sides, which makes it officially an island.

A narrow tidal creek, called Portsbridge Creek, separates it from the mainland to the north.

- ▶ See if you can name the areas of water that separate it on the other 3 sides:
 1. To the East is _____
 2. To the West is _____
 3. To the South is _____

Once a dry valley, now the Solent...



Yes, that's right... the area now under the sea and known as the Solent was once a dry **valley** with trees, rivers and animals like Elk and Woolly Mammoths roaming around! The Solent River ran through this valley, with many smaller **tributaries** joining it along its course. Our early ancestors even lived here; evidence of stone age settlements, and the lives of their dwellers, have been found under the sea here!

About 9000 years ago, this all changed though. Vast amounts of water, that had been 'locked up' as ice and snow on the land, melted and basically 'drowned' this valley, cut through the chalk ridge that once joined the Isle of Wight to the mainland, and flooded the whole area to form what we now know today as the Solent – the area of sea that separates the Isle of Wight from the South Coast of England!



Imagine that you are one of the first settlers to decide that this site would be a good place to settle down and build your dwellings and farm your animals and grow your crops.



- ▶ Write a story about your 'journey of discovery' as you searched for a suitable site, and found this one, making sure that you fully describe what was so good (and maybe also what wasn't!) about your final choice.

My name is _____ and I am here to tell you the story of my tribe's hunt for a good site to settle down and start our own small village. It was to be called Portus Adurni. We needed to find a good place; it needed to be....

We searched for many weeks along the south coast. We found many places but they were....

Finally, just as we were losing hope of ever finding a good place, we stumbled upon an island of land, cut off on all sides by rivers/ natural harbour and the sea. It was perfect because...

Although there are still a few draw-backs, like.....

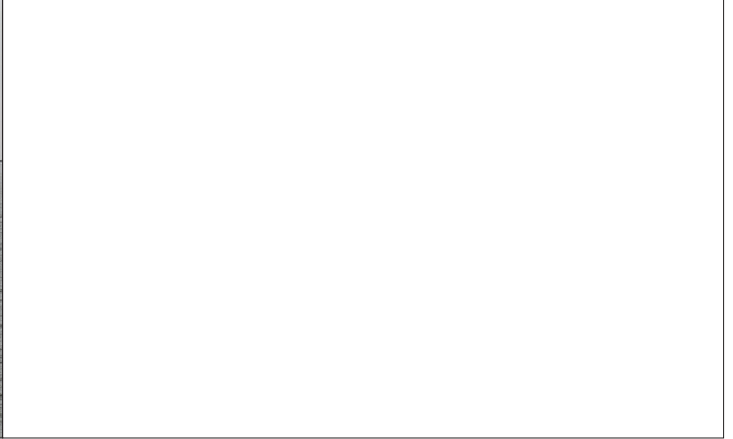
, overall it is still the perfect place for us.

Task 4: Before and after...

On the left is a picture of what the Solent looks like today. The picture was taken looking west towards the Needles, at the end of the Isle of Wight.

- ▶ In the frame on the right, draw a picture of what this area might have looked like before the ice and snow melted and flooded it. You could add labels if you like, to pick out key features.

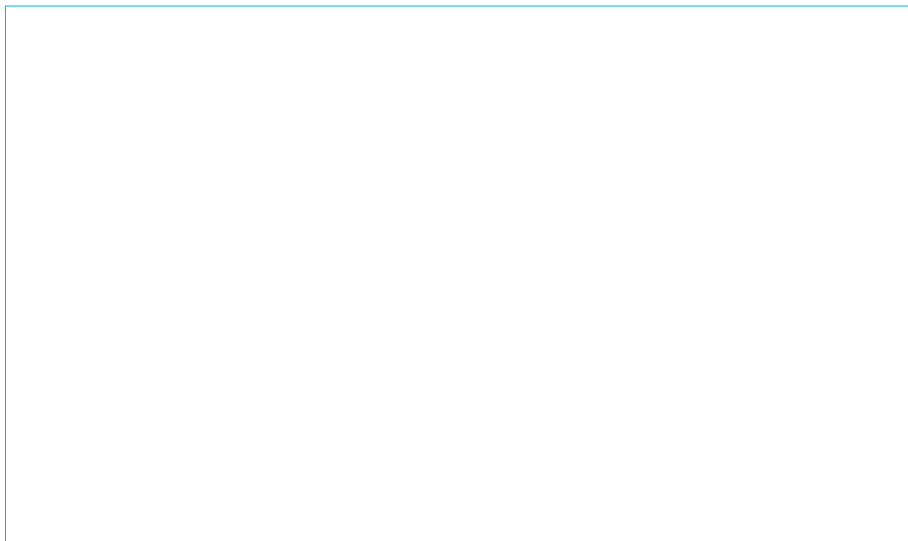
PRE-VISIT
TASKS



When sea levels rose, the sea also extended inland up the estuaries and valleys of rivers and streams. The stream that once flowed into the Solent at Portsmouth was flooded and became much larger, much wider and deeper.

On the left is an image showing Portsmouth Harbour today.

Draw a sketch below to show what this area might once have looked like, before sea levels rose and created the natural harbour.



When you are on the ferry, look out for the features and characteristics of the physical Geography of Portsmouth Harbour, and this part of the Solent.

PRE-VISIT
TASKS

The Human Geography of Portsmouth and the Solent area

Human Geography is all about people; what we do, where we live, and how we live our lives.

Well, you know something about the human geography of Portsmouth already... that more than 200,000 people live there! But, what else could we say about the human geography of the area?

- ▶ Use the map on page 3 and write some ideas down in the space below.

The headings below, describing the many different land uses, may help - the first has been started for you:

1. **Transport** *M27 Motorway runs east-west, and M275 into city. Many Major A (red) Roads, e.g....*

2. **Housing**

3. **Leisure and recreation**

4. **Commercial activities and industry**



Well done – you will be using everything that you have learnt when you complete the activities on the ferry!

ON-SITE TASKS

You are now going to carry out some activities on board the Wightlink Ferry as you make the crossing across the Solent to/from the Isle of Wight. Read and follow all instructions carefully!



The Spinnaker Tower and Gunwharf Quays

The image here shows the Spinnaker Tower, a 170-metre high observation tower which was built as part of the £38 million redevelopment of Gunwharf Quays.

Visitors can get almost 360 degree views for up to 23 miles across the city, the south coast of England, and across to the Isle of Wight.

Gunwharf Quays is an area of residential, commercial, retail, office, leisure and dock space. It involved the major redevelopment of Naval land, known as HMS Vernon.

Your teacher will show you a slideshow of what this area was once like, and how it changed during construction, and the Gunwharf Quays website which shows what it's like today.

You will now see it for yourself, from the Wightlink Ferry.



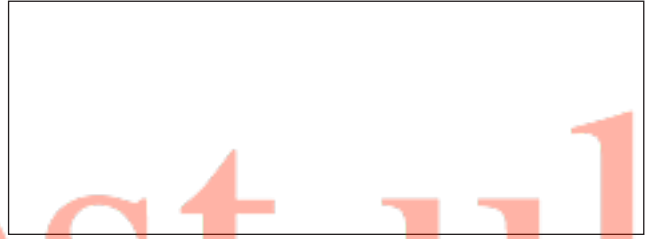
Task 1: An artist's impression...

In the space below, draw a simple sketch of the Harbour, focusing on the Gunwharf Quays area around the Spinnaker Tower. Then, try to label as many different types of land use as you can.

ON-SITE TASKS

Task 2: Name the features

Look at the images below, all taken in the harbour. See how many of these human features you can identify – write a title / short description of each beneath the photo.



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See how many of these human features you can identify – write a description of each beneath the photo:

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Empty box for identifying human features in the first image.

Empty box for identifying human features in the second image.



Empty box for identifying human features in the third image.

Empty box for identifying human features in the fourth image.

Extension: Can you also write down what type(s) of land use can be seen in each image. Is there any type of land use NOT shown in these images? Why do you think that this type of land use is not evident here?

Task 3: Fort spotters

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ON-SITE
TASKS



Portsmouth is home to a Naval base, which has been an important part of the city since 1194. By the early 19th century Portsmouth was considered to be the 'World's greatest naval port'.

Today, it is home to almost two-thirds of the Royal Navy's surface ships, including the new formidable Type 45 destroyers, and HMS Queen Elizabeth which was docked here at the time of writing and can be seen in the background of the picture here. It is the first of a new class of aircraft carriers which are the largest and most powerful ever built. At a cost of £3.1 billion to build, it can carry up to 40 aircraft.

Currently undergoing sea trials, it will be commissioned at the end of 2017. The wider Naval base here includes officer accommodation and messes, as well as support for them such as education, medical and welfare facilities. Also, several training bases and facilities have been established in other parts of the city, including in Fareham and Gosport. In all, there are about 17,300 people working in the bases here, which forms a significant part of the total population.



The entrance to Portsmouth Harbour, and the bases within it, has been protected from both the land and sea with defence lines constructed from 1665 and fortified over centuries since.

In addition to the Naval Base at Portsmouth, the Solent has other forms of protection in and along it, some of which you will see as you travel across it on the ferry...

Four **Solent Forts** were built between 1865 and 1880, with the aim of protecting the coast and the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour from attack by the French. These are called Spitbank Fort, St Helen's Fort, No Man's Land Fort and Horse Sand Fort. However, none of them ever got used for their original intended purpose and were sold after the second World War. They have now become part of a chain of luxury hotels and a museum.

Palmerston Forts were built around the coast of the Isle of Wight and were added to the line of defences around the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour.

Questions to consider:

1. Why do you think that Portsmouth Harbour was vulnerable to attack?

2. Why do you think that Portsmouth Harbour made a good location for the Naval Base/Port?

3. How does the physical geography of the coastline here make it suitable/good for the development of:

a) Ports/harbours?

b) The Naval Base/Port?

c) Defences?



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**ON-SITE
TASKS**

Task 4: French attack!



Imagine that you are trying to attack Portsmouth.

Write a letter/postcard home, to describe your attempts... what were you aiming to achieve?

Have you been successful? Why/Why not?

POSTCARD

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- ▶ Fishbourne is the other end of the Ferry route from Portsmouth Harbour. You will notice immediately how different it is!
- ▶ Make some observations from the ferry and complete the table below to indicate at least five key differences, and also any similarities, between these coastal locations.



Categories	Differences	Similarities
Size of settlement		
Types of / variety of different land uses and human activities (that can be seen)		
Physical Geography of the site		
Importance of the settlement		
Own choice:		
Own choice:		

Summary presentations

Why was Portsmouth Harbour a good site for a settlement, port and Naval Base?

You are going to work in small groups to develop a presentation with the above title.

How, exactly, you decide to put together your presentation is up to you, but it should cover the following:

- ✓ An introduction to Portsmouth – where it is (including maps) and what it is like (pictures!)
- ✓ What the physical Geography of the site is like
- ✓ What the human Geography is like today – the human features and characteristics of the city and harbour
- ✓ How the physical Geography (past and present) has made it a good site for the development of the city, the port and the defences/naval base here

Think about how you are going to divide the work between your group members, so that you each have a 'job' to do. Also, think about the design of your presentation – it needs to be attractive, clear and informative!

This is a summary task so try to use all that you have learned during the pre-visit and on-site tasks, including all those good geographical terms!

Good luck!

