Geography 7–10 – guide  
to teaching field sketches

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This resource has been developed to assist teachers in NSW Department of Education schools to create learning that is contextualised to their classroom. It can be used as a basis for the teacher’s own program, assessment, or scope and sequence, or be used as an example of how the new curriculum could be implemented. The resource has suggested timeframes that may need to be adjusted by the teacher to meet the needs of their students.

# Overview

**Description:** this teaching support resource addresses the K–10 geographical tools continuum providing examples of how students can engage with the the geographical inquiry skills continuum. The lessons and sequences in this program of learning are designed to allow students to build understanding of geographical inquiry skills.

**Duration:** this sequence is designed to be completed in approximately 1 hour.

# Outcomes

A student:

* **GE4-7** acquires and processes geographical information by selecting and using geographical tools for inquiry.

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# Learning sequence 1 – field sketches

**Note:** the guide to teaching field sketches is designed to be used as a support resource for teachers addressing the geographical skills continuum. This resource is not guiding teaching and learning of a specific topic content in geography 7–10; rather, it provides resources and strategies that can be applied at any point across the stages in the context of the content they are teaching.

## Syllabus content

Visual representations take many forms and include digital and non-digital mediums. Examples include, but are not limited to, diagrams, images, photographs, paintings, illustrations, symbols, models, posters, collages, cartoons, multimedia, infographics and mind maps. Visual representations are used to display, visualise, analyse and communicate geographical data and information.

Fieldwork is an integral part of geography. Students must undertake and participate in fieldwork in each stage of learning. There are many opportunities for fieldwork in Stages 4 and 5, such as investigating the characteristics of a local place or observing aspects of human-induced environmental change.

## Learning intentions and success criteria

**Note:** these learning intentions and success criteria are general and should be contextualised to suit your school and students’ needs.

### Learning intentions

Students learn about:

* key features of field sketches
* the purpose of conducting a field sketch.

### Success criteria

Students will be able to:

* construct a field sketch
* explain how a field sketch assists in investigating characteristics of a local place.

## Field sketches

Field sketches are drawings made while in the field. Field sketches have many uses, to:

* ensure careful observation
* assist in keeping an accurate record of what is observed in the field
* assist in describing places to other people.

Figure 2 provides an example of a field sketch based on the location shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – photograph of Shelly Beach in East Ballina

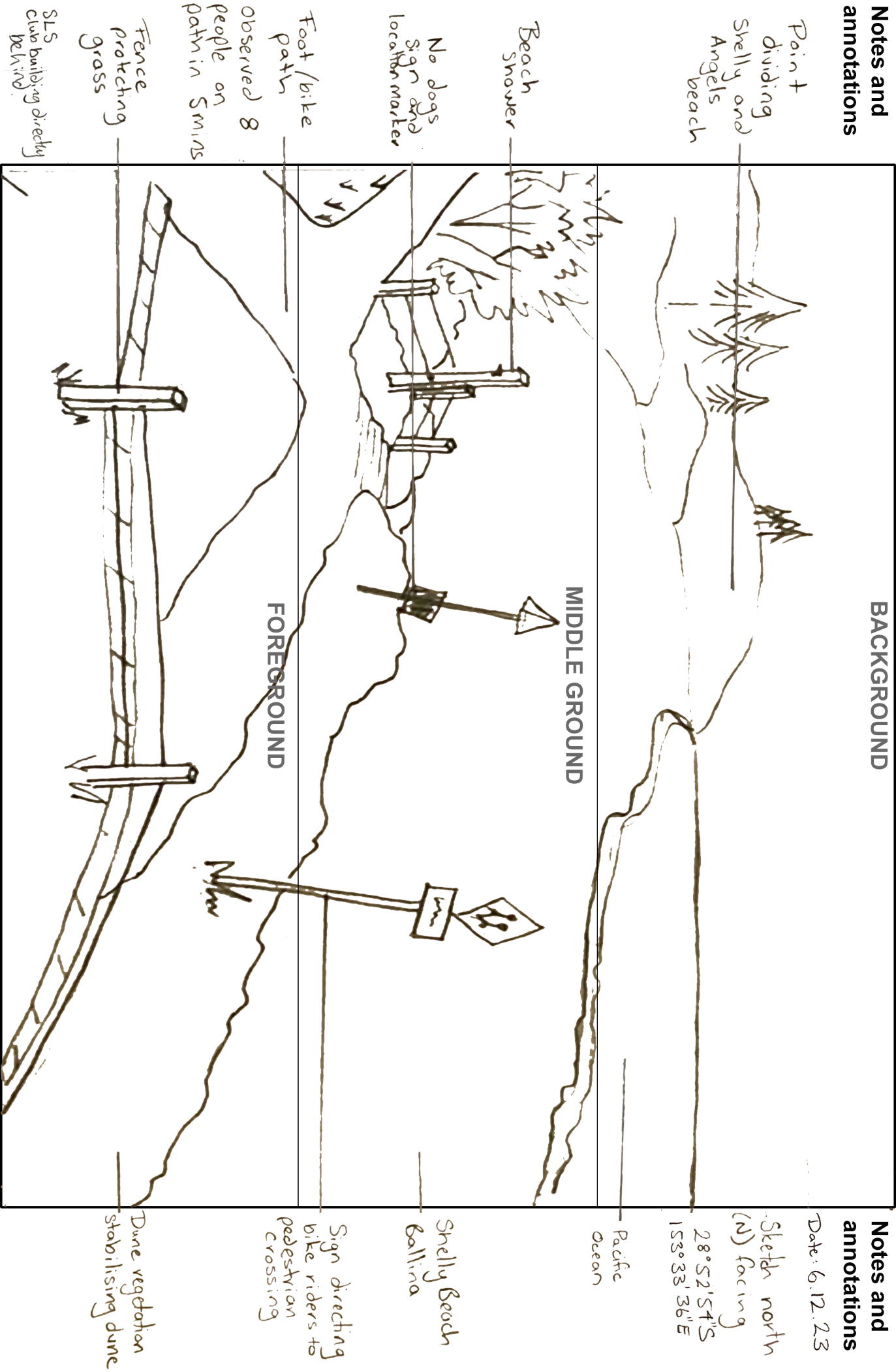


As shown in Figure 2, a field sketch is divided into 3 sections.

* Foreground: the area nearest to you. Objects are larger and more detailed.
* Middle ground: the area slightly further in the distance. Objects become smaller and less detailed.
* Background: the area furthest away, including the horizon. Objects are smaller and drawn in less detail.

Notes and annotations are important features of field sketches. Labelling important objects and noting observations assists when using the field sketch throughout the geographical inquiry.

Figure 2 – field sketch of Shelly Beach Ballina



Complete a [See, Think, Wonder](https://pz.harvard.edu/resources/see-think-wonder) routine using Figure 2.

* What do you see in the field sketch?
* What stands out?
* What features do you notice?
* How does it compare to Figure 1?
* What do you think about the field sketch?
* What could be the purpose of the field sketch?
* What do you learn from it?
* What geographical inquiry questions could this be used for?
* How do you think it could be used in a geographical inquiry?
* What do you wonder about the field sketch?
* Are there any questions you have about the field sketch?

**Note**: probing questions to support the [See, Think, Wonder](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/638) activity include:

* How is a field sketch different to a photograph?
* What can you learn about the characteristics of the beach in the Figure 2 that you couldn’t from the photograph in Figure 1?
* What advantages are possible for drawing a field sketch as opposed to drawing a line drawing from a photograph?
* How might the time difference between taking a photograph and creating a line drawing impact on your study of a place?
* Why might you use a hand drawn field sketch instead of using digital tools?
* How might field sketches assist in making predictions about the future of a field study site?

## Working in the field

**Note:** for this task, identify an appropriate location to conduct a field sketch. It is easier to draw a field sketch of a location with obvious distinguishing features such as a cliff, significant landform or building. The video [Conducting a field sketch (4:50)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/hsie/hsie-curriculum-resources-k-12/hsie-7-10-curriculum-resources/conducting-a-field-sketch) may prove helpful in explaining how to teach drawing a field sketch or be used in the context of a lesson.

Conduct all fieldwork undertaken off school site in accordance with the [NSW Department of Education Excursions policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2004-0010).

Provide students with cardboard, scissors, a clipboard, paper, pencil and a ruler for the activity. Teachers can pre-prepare step 1. A template has been provided in [Appendix 1 – viewing frame template](#_Appendix_1_–) that matches the proportions for the field sketch template in [Appendix 2 – field sketch template](#_Appendix_2_–_1). Print Appendix 1 in an enlarged format on A3 paper.

Teachers may choose to skip step 1 and have students use their hands to identify their frame of reference for the field sketch.

Use the following steps to construct a field sketch.

1. Cut a hole in a piece of cardboard the same shape as you want your sketch to be. Usually this is a rectangle, approximately 30 cm by 25 cm. [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1_–) can be used as a guide.
2. Hold the frame at arm’s length.
3. Draw the main features of the land as seen through the frame using [Appendix 2](#_Appendix_2_–_1).
4. Observe the scene again and add in any other smaller details.
5. Complete your sketch by adding labels, annotations of key observations, the name of the location, [Latitude and longitude (4:24)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/hsie/hsie-curriculum-resources-k-12/hsie-7-10-curriculum-resources/latitude-and-longitude) of the site and date you made the sketch.

Review your field sketch and compose 3 [Geographical inquiry (2:59)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/hsie/hsie-curriculum-resources-k-12/hsie-7-10-curriculum-resources/geographical-inquiry) questions that could be applied to the site you were observing.

**Note:** when using assessment as learning in the classroom, peer and self-assessment is an effective approach to enhance the learning of students. Explicitly teaching students how to assess their own work, and the work of their peers, has many benefits. It promotes student understanding of their learning and provides opportunities for critical analysis of their own efforts encouraging them to become more autonomous learners. [See three before me (C3B4Me)](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/549) peer assessment requires students to share their work with 3 peers before submitting to the teacher.

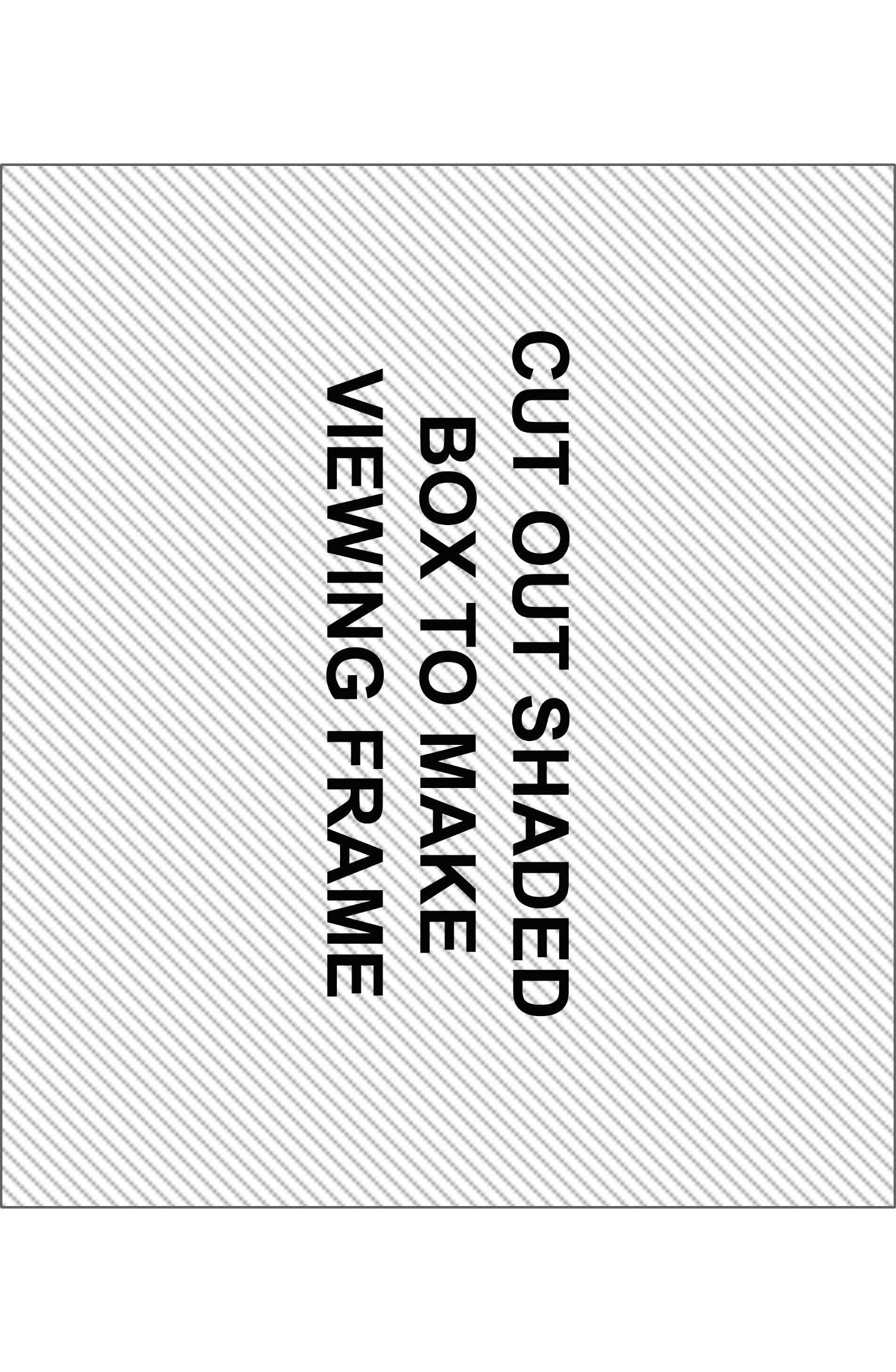
Exchange your field sketch and 3 geographical inquiry questions with 3 of your peers in the class. Provide feedback for your peers on their field sketch and inquiry questions. Some ideas you might like to consider in your feedback are listed below.

* How effective is the field sketch in illustrating the field location?
* How well presented is the field sketch? Is it easy to read?
* How well labelled is the field sketch?
* Is there enough relevant information provided with the field sketch, for example, latitude and longitude, and the date the sketch was drawn?
* How effective inquiry questions are in providing scope for further geographical investigation?
* Is there a better way to word any of the inquiry questions?

Before submitting your field sketch and inquiry questions to your teacher use your peer feedback to amend and improve your work.

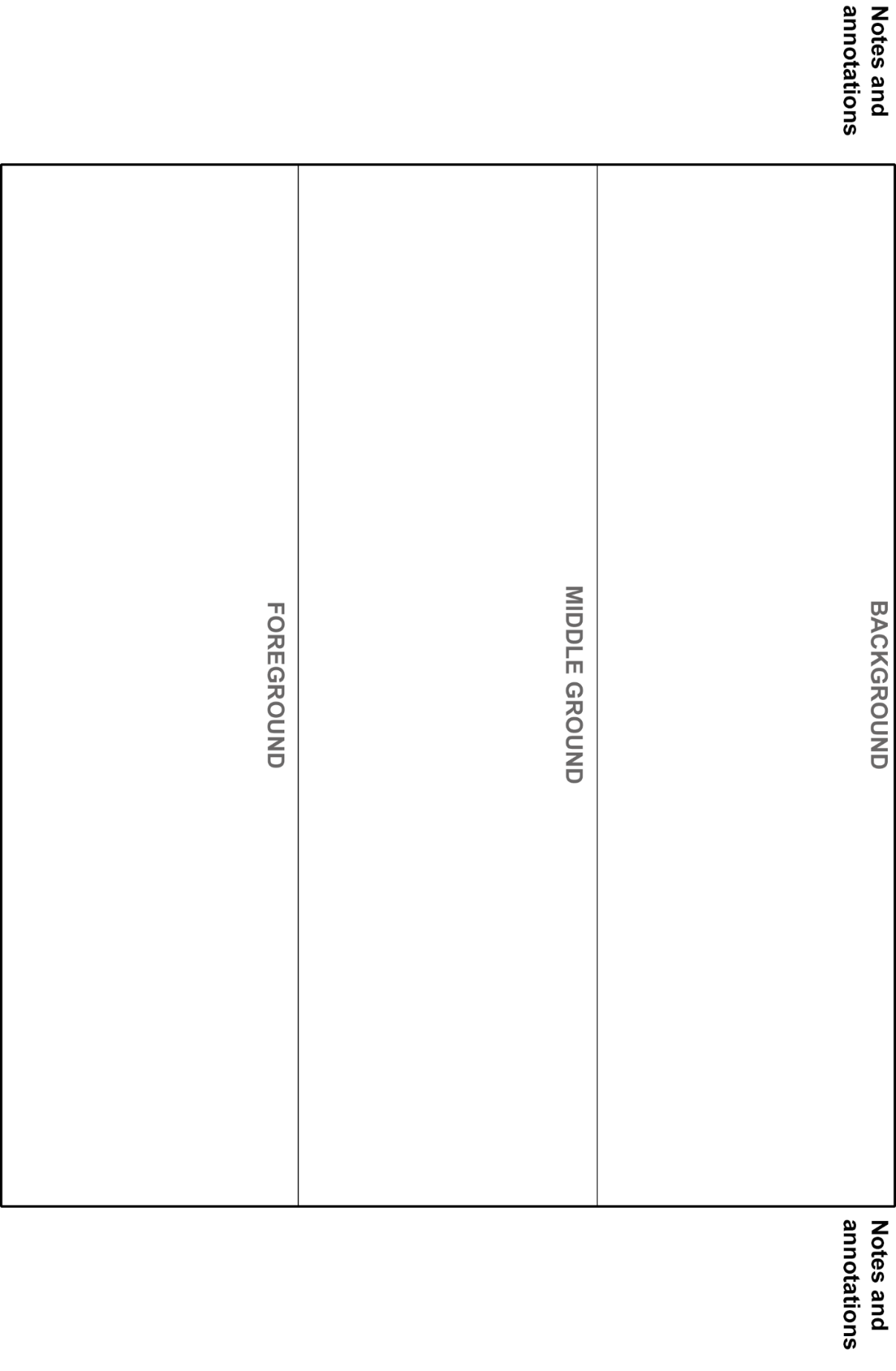
# Appendix 1 – viewing frame template

The following page contains a viewing frame template that can be printed and used for suggested learning activities.



# Appendix 2 – field sketch template

The following page contains a field sketch template that can be printed and used for suggested learning activities.



# References

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