

## Designing Popular Activities: An A-Z celebration of your local area

**T**he charity Common Ground believes that celebration should be “the starting point for action to improve the quality of our everyday places”. One of the ideas it has devised to help people celebrate is a project called ‘ABC’ ([www.England-in-particular.info/abc/ab-index.html](http://www.England-in-particular.info/abc/ab-index.html)).

The idea of ABC is for people to create a pictorial or written alphabet in which each letter is illustrated by something that is local and distinctive, such as certain buildings, features, rivers or even varieties of apple. Research for the project fits well into a number of curriculum areas, and pupils could use a wide variety of skills when producing an ABC poster. Indeed, the ABC doesn't even need to be a poster, but could be a short booklet or a display that uses a variety of media, such as textiles, ceramics, photographs, drawings, engravings, linocuts or digital images.

ABCs should include the unique, idiosyncratic and quirky, but Common Ground suggests that, rather than just focusing on special landmarks, you should include the locally typical and locally abundant.

When pupils create an ABC, they could begin by thinking about what things typify their local area or make it distinctive. Useful categories to get them started might include:

- Landmarks
- Regional styles and building materials
- Local industry (traditional and new)
- Artists
- Writers
- Traditions
- Legends
- Festivals
- Events
- Vegetation
- Wildlife

Pupils could design their own letters, or draw on lettering that can be found in the local community. Possible sources of lettering could include:

- Gravestones
- Milestones
- Signposts
- Shop signs
- Billboards
- Manhole covers
- Local newspapers

If you fold out the following page, you can see the ABC we created for the area round our office . . .