

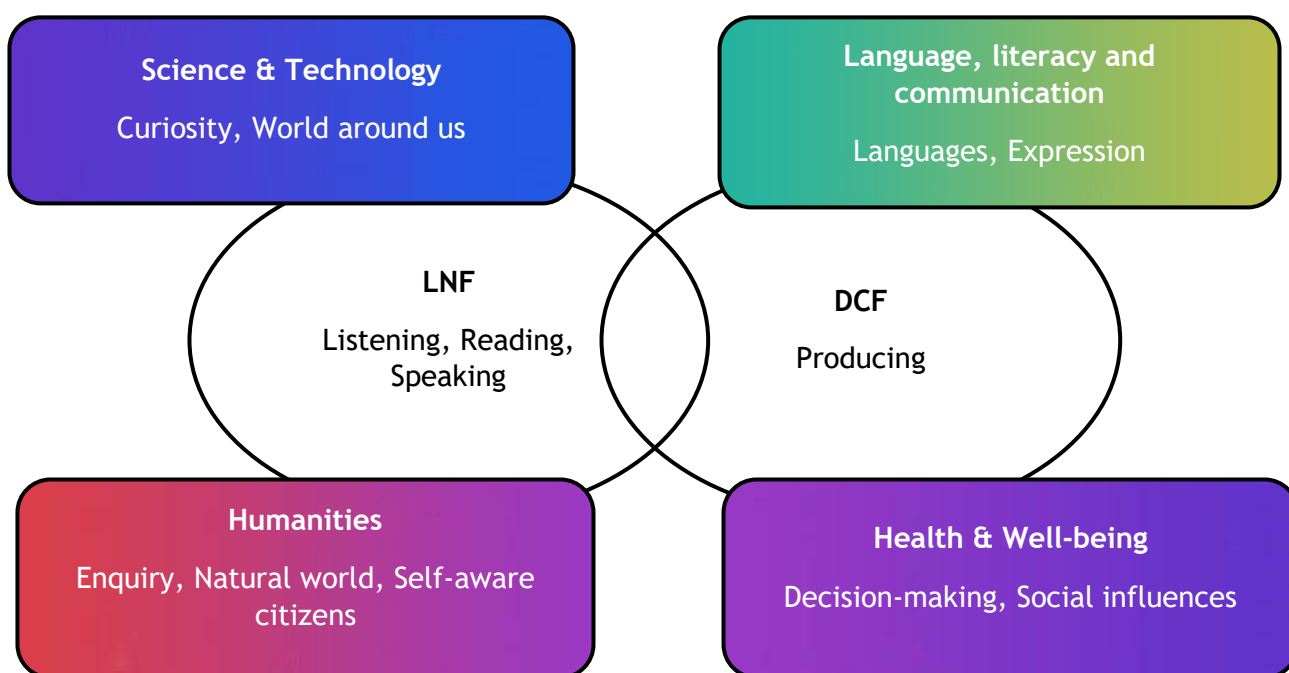
Why should we combat illegal off-roading on the Common?

Overview

Learners activate their prior knowledge and understanding about off-roading. They investigate further using research skills and evaluate their findings. Learners compare legal and illegal off-roading, weighing up pros and cons, before thinking creatively to develop an action plan to reduce off-roading on the Common.



Opportunities to develop...



Resources required for the activity

- Internet access.

Resources included with this activity

1. Video clip of legal off-roading in south Wales:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEjw5xoO7QE>
2. Source square - printed onto A3 paper
3. QuADS grid
4. Video clip of the dangers of off-roading:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ArBOilzwoE>
5. Placemat – printed onto A3 paper
6. Suggested focus questions in sets, relating to each task, which can be given to each pair/group as they start each task. Conversely, these questions can be used by the teacher.
7. Teacher notes as background to off-roading.

How to run the activity

Task 1: What is 'off-roading'?

Ask learners to watch the video clip (**Resource 1**) showing quadbikes legally off-roading in south Wales. Encourage pairs of learners to think about discuss what they see on the clip and to record their ideas on a source square (**Resource 2**).

Suggested questions

- What is happening in the video clip? How do you know?
- What type of vehicle is this? Why do you think that?
- What is 'off-roading'? Why do you think that?
- What other vehicles are used for off-roading? How do you know?
- Why do you think they are doing this? What makes you think that?
- Who might be interested in doing an activity like this? Why do you think that?
- Where else can you do activities such as this? How do you know?
- Where is it legal to do activities like this? Where is it illegal? Why do you think that?

Task 2: How can we off-road locally?

Ask small groups of learners to carry out research into where people off-road in the local area.

Encourage them to find examples that offer legal off-roading experiences, such as:

- Mud Mayhem (https://mudmayhem.co.uk/en/venue/oVenue-10817_oVenAct-4)
- Dave Thorpe off-road centre (<https://davethorpehonda.com/>)
- Battle MX Track (<http://www.battlemx.co.uk/>)

and also examples of illegal off-roading, such as on Gelligaer and Merthyr Common. They could use a QuADS grid (**Resource 3**) to record their findings.

Suggested questions

- What information do you need to find?
- Where and how are you going to search for this information? Why?
- What do you think you will find out? Why do you think that?
- What have you found out?
- Where can people off-road legally in this area?
- Where do people off-road illegally in this area?
- Why do they choose these places? Why do you think that?
- Where did you find this information?
- How reliable is this information? How do you know that?

Different groups of learners might then consider the pros and cons of legal and illegal off-roading and a class list could be collated that sums up the reasons that many people choose to engage in illegal off-road activity.

Task 3: What are the dangers/issues of off-roading on Gelligaer and Merthyr Common?

Ask groups of learners to think about and discuss what the issues might be of people using the Common to illegally off-road. Encourage them to consider how it might affect the people who carry out the activity and the flora and fauna living on the Common.

Show learners the head-cam video clip (**Resource 4**) or invite them to access it online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ArBOilzwoE>

Encourage learners to discuss the video clip and to share their ideas with the class.

Suggested questions

- What did you see on the video clip? How did it make you feel? Why?
- What do you think the bike rider would have been thinking? Why?
- What are the dangers for people who use the Common for off-roading? How do you know that?
- Why doesn't this stop them off-roading?
- How could off-roading affect the plants and animals living on the Common?
- Why is this a problem?
- How important are these things? Why do you think that?
- How could this affect the Common in the future? Why do you think that?

Task 4: How could we promote legal off-roading?

Show learners a clip of a legal off-roading activity in South Wales, for example, Yamaha at Llanidloes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJ7mlfBBvzk> or use the first video clip again Quad Challenge (**Resource 1**).

Ask groups of learners to think about and discuss what steps might be taken to promote legal off-roading locally and to prevent illegal off-roading on the Common.

Suggested questions

- Why would we want people to off-road legally rather than illegally?
- Who owns off-road vehicles locally? How do you know?
- Why do they buy off-road vehicles? Where do they use them?

Task 4: Continued ...

- How could we persuade people who own off-road vehicles not to use them on the Common?
- How could we involve local companies such as Marsh MX to promote legal off-roading?
- Where would be a good place locally for legal off-roading? Why do you think that?
- Who owns this land? How do you know or how could you find out?
- How could we persuade them to allow off-roading activities on this land?
- What else would be needed for a company to set up legal off-roading? Why?

Task 5: How could we develop an action plan?

Invite groups of learners to use their discussions and ideas from **Task 4** to develop an 'Action Plan' to reduce the illegal off-roading activity on the Common. They might brainstorm ideas using a Placemat (**Resource 4**) so that they prioritise possible actions.

(A Placemat encourages all members of a group of four to share ideas in a constructive and visual manner. Learners are given a large A3 laminated 'placemat', along with some sticky notes. Each group member individually compiles their own ideas on a particular problem and writes them on sticky notes. S/he then sticks the sticky notes on their section of their group's placemat. This provides a more concrete basis for learners to question other members of their group about ideas. Each group then compiles a collaborative answer by moving selected sticky notes: agreed powerful ideas are moved close to the centre, less powerful ideas are placed further out. The group's ideas are then shared with other groups.)

Encourage learners to use this process and the outcomes to develop a clear action plan, detailing suggestions that could lead to the reduction of illegal off-roading activity on the Common.

Suggested questions

- What ideas do you have for reducing off-roading on the Common?
- Which is your best idea? Why do you think that? Why would this idea work?
- Which of the other ideas do you like? Why?
- Out of all the group's ideas which are the best? Why do you think that?
- How will you develop your Action Plan? Why do it like that?
- How successful do you think your plan could be? Why?


Resource 2: Source square

What is this?

What else do you want to know?

What can you guess / infer?

What can you see / observe?

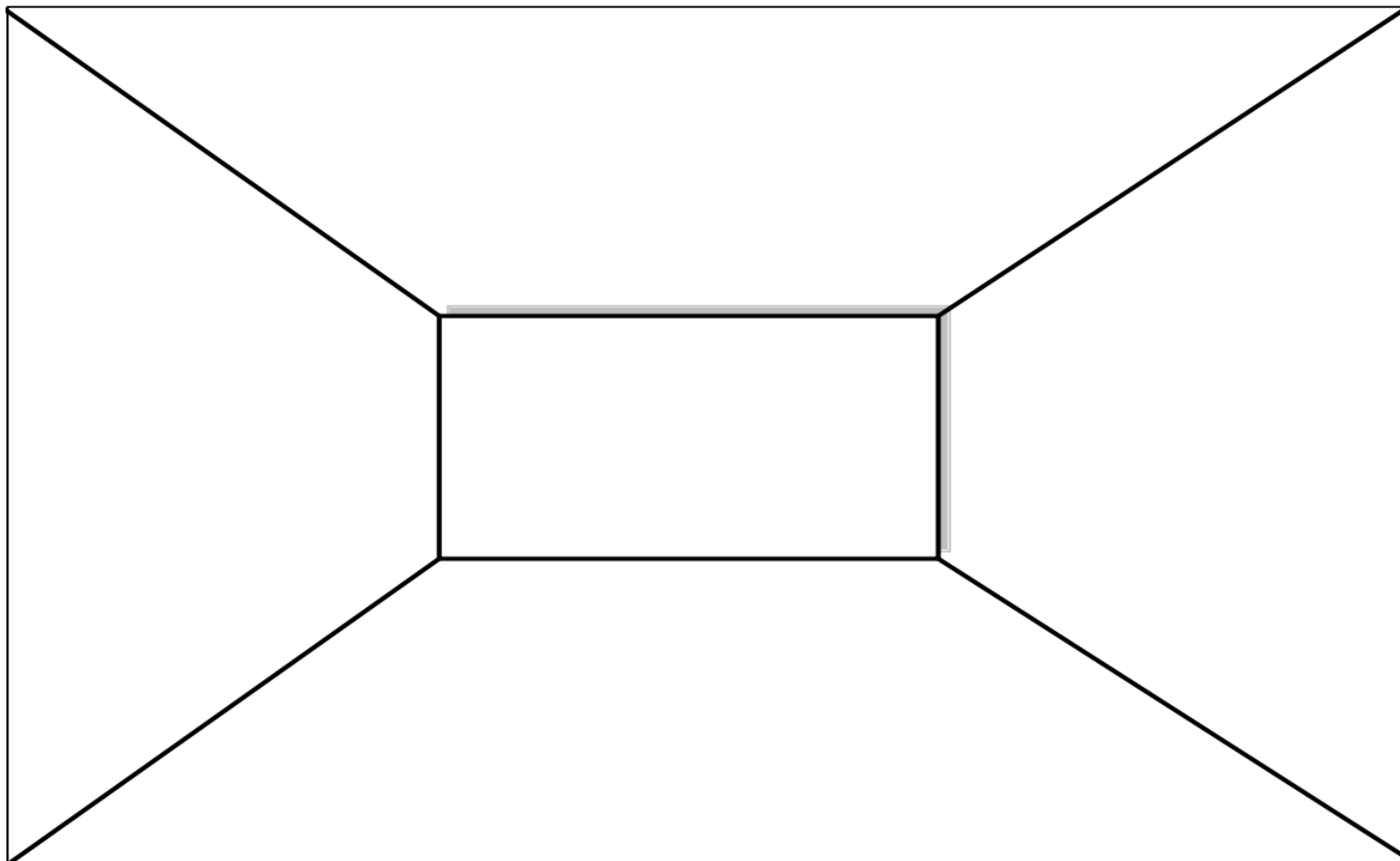


How will you find out?

Resource 3: QuADS grid

Question	Answer	Details	Source

Resource 5: Placemat



Resource 6: Suggested focus questions

Task 1: What is 'off-roading'?

- What is happening in the video clip? How do you know?
- What type of vehicle is this? Why do you think that?
- What is 'off-roading'? Why do you think that?
- What other vehicles are used for off-roading? How do you know?
- Why do you think they are doing this? What makes you think that?
- Who might be interested in doing an activity like this? Why do you think that?
- Who might need to drive regularly in these conditions? Why?
- Where else can you do activities such as this? How do you know?
- Where is it legal to do activities like this? Where is it illegal? Why do you think that?

Task 2: How can we off-road locally?

- What information do you need to find?
- Where and how are you going to search for this information? Why?
- What do you think you will find out? Why do you think that?
- What have you found out?
- Where can people off-road legally in this area?
- Where do people off-road illegally in this area?
- Why do they choose these places? Why do you think that?
- Where did you find this information?
- How reliable is this information? How do you know that?

Task 3: What are the dangers/issues of off-roading on Gelligaer and Merthyr Common?

- What did you see on the video clip? How did it make you feel? Why?
- What do you think the bike rider would have been thinking? Why?
- What are the dangers for people who use the Common for off-roading? How do you know that?
- Why doesn't this stop them off-roading?
- How could off-roading affect the plants and animals living on the Common?
- Why is this a problem?
- How important are these things? Why do you think that?
- How could this affect the Common in the future? Why do you think that?
- When might be the best time of year to do this? Why?

Task 4: How could we promote legal off-roading?

- Why would we want people to off-road legally rather than illegally?
- Who owns off-road vehicles locally? How do you know?
- Why do they buy off-road vehicles? Where do they use them?
- How could we persuade people who own off-road vehicles not to use them on the Common?
- How could we involve local companies such as Marsh MX to promote legal off-roading?
- Where would be a good place locally for legal off-roading? Why do you think that?
- Who owns this land? How do you know or how could you find out?
- How could we persuade them to allow off-roading activities on this land?
- What else would be needed for a company to set up legal off-roading? Why?

Task 5: How could we develop an action plan?

- What ideas do you have for reducing off-roading on the Common?
- Which is your best idea? Why do you think that? Why would this idea work?
- Which of the other ideas do you like? Why?
- Out of all the group's ideas which are the best? Why do you think that?
- How will you develop your Action Plan? Why do it like that?
- How successful do you think your plan could be? Why?

Resource 7: Teacher notes

Where can you ride an off-road vehicle?

On any land, where the land owner has given permission to do so:

- Byways Open To All Traffic (BOATS), as long as there is no Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)
- If a vehicle is road legal (has number plates) and you have tax, insurance, MOT and a driving licence, then you can legally ride it on the road (or green lanes that are classified as roads).

Where can't you ride your off-road vehicle?

On any land, where the land owner hasn't given permission. This includes:

- Common land
- Moorland
- Footpaths
- Bridleways
- Restricted byways
- Canal tow paths
- Disused railway lines
- Roads, including Green Lanes that are classified as roads (if you haven't got a driving licence, insurance, tax, MOT and if the bike doesn't have number plates)
- Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPS) – these were altered to restricted byways several years ago.

Consequences

It is illegal to drive or ride a mechanically propelled vehicle without lawful authority on common land, moorland or land not forming part of a road, or on any road which is a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway (Section 34, Road Traffic Act 1988).

If you are caught riding your off-road bike, quadbike or off-road vehicle illegally, then you could face the following:

- Officers have the power to seize vehicles from uninsured drivers, and drivers that don't have a driving licence under Section 165A of the Road Traffic Act 1988
- You can be reported to appear in court for driving without insurance or a driving licence, as well as for careless or dangerous driving, driving without due care or attention or for driving on common land
- In addition, officers can issue Section 59 Notices if you are caught driving on land without the land owner's permission. If you receive two notices in 12 months then your vehicle will be seized, and you will have to pay to have it returned. Your vehicle can be seized without a warning if the circumstances make it impracticable to give one. If you don't pay, then it will be crushed.

Notes

Off-roading puts vehicles in areas not designed for them. This has a variety of effects on the natural environment, including:

- **Disturbing the ground:** Off-road vehicles can churn up soil, leading to ruts, damaged root systems, compacted soil, accelerated erosion, more frequent dust storms and/or increased sedimentation in waterways.
- **Disturbing vegetation:** In addition to damaging plants in the process of driving over them, off-road vehicles can spread seeds as they churn up soil and vegetation, aiding in the spread of weeds that can damage native plant life.
- **Disturbing wildlife:** As a natural habitat is churned up, eroded or invaded by noxious weeds, the wildlife that depends on it suffers. Also, vehicle engine noise can frighten off animals, not only kicking them out of their habitat but also depriving hikers and campers of the chance to spot them.
- **Disturbing grazing animals:** There are many grazing animals on the Common including sheep and cattle. These rely on good grazing land which can be destroyed by off-road vehicles leading to malnutrition and the possibility of disease. As with wildlife, engine noise frightens the animals and can lead to injuries as they run away as well as possible miscarriages for pregnant grazing animals.