

MUNICIPALITY DISSERTATION PROJECT

Should I do a municipality study?

In many Finnish schools, pupils complete a dissertation project focusing on a single municipality in the 8th or 9th grade.

The dissertation project helps the student to practice applying the basic knowledge acquired during the geography course.

Which municipality to focus on?

Is there a municipality, town or region that is close to your heart?

It might be beneficial for you to have spent time in the municipality you focus on (i.e. it might be your hometown, where your friends or family live, or a popular holiday destination) On the other hand, a small municipality is easier to study than a large city.

How to publish your work?

You can create your dissertation in a digital learning environment, a word processor, or you might want to print it on paper.

You can also come up with other ways of presenting your work. These include a website, a video, or a photo exhibition.

How to gather information?

- Come up with 2–5 search words and use them to find information on the internet.
- What kinds of maps and map software do you have access to?
- What kind of information can you find in your school's library and atlases?
- The Statistics Finland and Local Finland websites have a lot of useful information and materials.

1. Create a good map

- Choose a good base map or several maps with different scales. Use the map to illustrate the municipality's location within the country.
- You can use other maps as inspiration and examples, but the final map should be created by you.
- Illustrate the location of your chosen municipality by marking the main roads and closest neighbor municipalities.
- Do not forget to display the scale of the map and explanations for the symbols used!

2. Climate and weather

Search for a climate diagram or other weather statistics of your chosen municipality.

- Longitude.
- Geographic zone (frigid, temperate, subtropical or tropical)
- Vegetation zone or biome (tundra, coniferous forest, broadleaf forest, Mediterranean vegetation or chaparral, grassland, desert, savannah or rainforest).
- The closest ocean current (name, cold or warm?)
- Winter (how long is it?)
- The warmest month of the year and its average temperature
- The coldest month of the year and its average temperature
- The rainiest month of the year and its average rainfall
- Other climatic events (why, when, how long?)
- Other factors contributing to the region's climate.

Seasons:

- Spring: daily average temperature above 0 °C, days become longer
- Summer: daily average temperature above 10 °C
- Autumn: daily average temperature below 10 °C, days become shorter
- Winter: daily average temperature below 0 °C.

3. Topography and landscapes

- Study a topographic map of your chosen municipality.
- What are the highest and lowest points of your municipality?
- Is there a lot or little variation in elevation?
- Is the municipality located in a highland or lowland region? What types of rock are the most common in the municipality? What is its soil type like?
- Use maps, atlases and the internet as your resources.

- How do the geological features of your home region influence its landscapes, livelihoods, traffic, construction and culture?
- How did the ice age affect your home region? If there is not enough information available in books or online, you can use your geography textbook as a source.

4. Water

Clean water is important for sustaining human communities. How is water used in your chosen municipality? Where is it from? How is it treated?

Mark the most important bodies of water in your chosen municipality on the map.

Use the internet to find more information about how water is cleaned and treated in your chosen municipality.

5. Nature and landscapes

Choose a suitable map of Finland. **Mark down the scenic regions of Finland and their main cities.**

The cuisine typical to your chosen region tells a lot about its livelihoods, agriculture and traditions. **Plan a daily menu** typical to your chosen region.

Describe two plant and animal species that are characteristic of your chosen municipality. Describe their populations and lifestyles.

Describe the typical landscapes of your chosen municipality and place the municipality in its scenic region. What are the most/least beautiful areas in the municipality?

What kind of **agriculture** is there in your chosen municipality?

What kinds of **forests** are there in your chosen municipality? What is their significance for the people of the municipality?

What kinds of **recreational activities** are there in your chosen municipality. Plan a recreational week for you and your friends in your chosen municipality. What kinds of activities would you choose to do?

6. Population

- When was the municipality first populated? How has its population developed over the course its history?
- Is your chosen municipality densely or scarcely populated? What are the most densely populated places in the municipality?
- How many children and elderly are there in your municipality? How does their amount compare to other municipalities and cities (e.g. Helsinki)?
- What is the net migration of your municipality like (do more people move in or out of your municipality)?
- What is the economic structure of your municipality like? How does it affect the population of the municipality?
- Do many minorities live in your municipality? What are the most populous minority groups in their municipality? What is their position in the municipality's population like?

Use the municipal statistics found on the Statistic Finland website as your source!

7. Energy

- Where does the electricity used in your municipality come from?
- Are there any power plants in your municipality? Where? What kind?
- How is energy conserved in your municipality? What could be done better to save even more energy?

8. Industry

What kind of industries are there in your municipality? Classify them into different categories.

How important are these industries for the economic life and population of your municipality?

Does the industry in your municipality cause environmental problems? What kinds of environmental problems?

How are the harmful environmental effects of industry reduced in your municipality? What could be done better?

9. Traffic and transport?

- What methods of transports link the municipality with its neighbors and larger regional centers? How often do buses or trains move between the municipality and the nearest large regional center?
- What methods of transportation are the most popular in your municipality?
- If you are focusing on a larger city, find timetables and route maps of the region's local buses and trains.
- What kinds of public transport are there in your municipality?.

10. Cities and the countryside

Recognize different kinds of economic and population centers. What kinds of economic and population centers are there in your municipality?

Study the table of services available in different kinds of economic and population centers below. Where are these services located in your municipality? Are some of them available only in larger regional centers outside of your municipality? Where?

Small municipal center	Municipal center	City center	Regional center
Supermarket / general store	All the services available in the small municipal center	All the services available in the municipal center	All the services available in the city center
Elementary school	Bank	Specialized stores: music store, pet store, etc.	University
Service station	Post office	Vocational school	Summer university
Grill, bar or pub	Bookstores, flower shops, etc.	Hospital	Central hospital
Kiosk	Pharmacy	Specialized services: travel agent, etc.	Regional library
Hairdresser or barber	Car repair shops	Theater	Orchestra
Small library	Dental care, vet	Radio station	Auction house
	Health center	Newspaper	Large supermarkets and shopping centers
	Specialized stores	-	Ice hockey / Football arena
	Middle school and high school		Private and public offices

	funeral parlor,		
	Restaurant, hotel		
	Tax office		
	Swimming pool		

11. Nature conservation

The topics of this section are dealt with in more detail during the biology course.

What kinds of environmental problems are there in your municipality? What has been done to answer these problems?

What is the role of individual citizens of the municipality in causing and solving these problems?

12. Land use planning

Gather information on the land use of your municipality and the changes that have been planned for it in the future. What kinds of problems and challenges affect the land use planning in your municipality? What could be done better

Does the municipality have a twin town or municipality in another nation?

Plan a dream neighborhood in your municipality. Where would it be located? What would it be like? What kinds of services would there be?

13. Our global future

Find a map of the world and mark the location of your municipality in it. Begin to draw arrows on the map depending on the information you find on the following subjects:

- From what kinds of countries or regions have people moved into your municipality?
- What kinds of languages are spoken in your municipality?
- Where do the goods, consumer products, and groceries used in your municipality come from?
- What are the political relationships between the municipality's country and other nations like?

Explain and describe the significances of the arrows you have drawn on the map. What are the global relationships of the municipality like?