

The following glossary is a basic list of commonly encountered terms with definitions written to meet the needs of primary students. It is not intended to be either comprehensive or to offer higher-level definitions.

- amenity** 'Amenity' describes how nice a place is to live in or visit – the liveability or quality that makes it pleasant to be in for individuals and the community. Amenity is important in both public and private areas and includes the enjoyment of sunlight, views, privacy and noise levels, even how safe you feel. Rural and urban places offer different amenity, more or less sunshine, views etc.
- apartment building** A building made up of a number of dwellings, which are attached to each other vertically and/or horizontally. They can share many things such as the entrance, parking, open space and other facilities. '**Low rise**' usually means up to three or four storeys. 'Medium rise' usually means four–eight storeys and '**high rise**' usually means more than eight storeys.
- architectural features** Prominent or significant parts or elements of a building or structure.
- architectural style** The characteristics of a building's design that are typical of a particular historical period or school of architecture, eg Victorian, Federation, '50s etc.
- arterial road** A road designed to carry high volumes of traffic between different suburbs. Usually arterial roads have two or three lanes in each direction and no on-street parking in peak hours.
- attached housing** A line of buildings (townhouses or terraces) that are attached instead of having spaces between them.
- block** A group of **lots** with streets on their edge.
- brownfield** Abandoned, idle or under-used industrial and commercial sites or vacant land that could be contaminated, making it difficult to develop for housing or most other uses (see **greenfield**).
- buffer** A strip of land that physically and/or visually separates two different sorts of buildings or land uses.

CBD	Central Business District; the part of a city that will often have tall office buildings, shops and businesses opening off the street, footpaths, slow traffic speeds, on-street parking and a compact grid street system.
centre	The area of a town or neighbourhood that normally has the shops, businesses and community buildings and sometimes housing. Some centres play a major part in an area's identity.
chicanes	Twists in the street with traffic islands and enlarged nature strips designed to slow down vehicles.
commercial building	See office building .
community	A group of people living in a particular place who share parts of their local environment (eg parks and schools) and together support its existence. A community may also be defined by groups of people who share similar cultural values or other interests or attachments.
community facility	A shared place such as a day care centre, library or youth centre.
compact	The form taken by buildings when grouped close together.
connectivity	How well surrounding streets, pathways and lanes are connected and whether you have a choice of routes to take to your destination.
conservation	The careful management of parts of the natural and built environment (eg forest or buildings) identified as being significant because of their natural, historic or other value.
consultation	Discussion between individuals, groups and organisations to get their input. The purpose may include the collection or providing of information, or the identification or resolution of issues or problems. Both sides must have enough information and time to make a decision and a willingness to listen and make changes.
cul-de-sac	A 'dead end' road that branches off another road at one end and is surrounded by houses or other buildings where it ends.
density	The average number of people, households or dwellings per hectare of land, which gives an idea of how intensely or heavily developed an area is.
design guidelines	Design guidelines are written by councils, government departments, developers and others to control the design of buildings and places as appropriate so they fit in or enhance a particular city or neighbourhood .
detached	A building that is separated from its neighbours by space on all sides; for example by a fence, walkway, driveway or garden bed.



drainage channel	An open or covered area that rainfall runs into and along. Channels include creeks, streams, rivers and man-made channels.
ecologically sustainable development (ESD)	Ecologically sustainable development means 'using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased'. ESD is development that aims to meet the needs of Australians today, while conserving our ecosystems for the benefit of future generations (Department of Heritage and Environment).
environmentally sensitive land	Natural areas, such as beaches, mountains and rivers, which need to be treated with extra care to ensure they are there to enjoy in the future.
façade	The face or front of a building. The façade, which usually faces the street, is often its most impressive or most ornate side.
frontage	The front part of a building.
gable	The upper, triangular portion of a façade , usually flanked by sloping roofs; or the triangular section at the top of a wall that is topped by the sloping edges of the roofs.
gateway (major)	A term used to describe a ceremonial entrance point into a district, neighbourhood or centre. It is generally not a 'gate', but may be formed by buildings, sculptural elements or other markers.
green corridors	The land put aside to connect larger areas of open space such as parks and national parks . Because they aren't developed, they are popular for recreation (eg cycling and bushwalking) and water and animals can pass through them freely. They often follow drainage channels .
greenfield	Rural (non-urban) land on the edge of a suburb, town or city that has been allocated for new/future urban development.
grid pattern	A pattern of usually parallel and perpendicular streets that defines the layout of houses, lots , blocks and neighbourhoods .
heritage item	A building, object, place or structure (eg a historic landmark) that has been classified as important by a local, state or commonwealth government.
high rise	A building, such as a block of flats or apartments , generally eight or more storeys high.
historic	Having a value because of its age (used to describe elements of the built or natural environment).
historic landmark	An object, building, place or structure that is recognised as being part of the history of an area, and is a recognisable icon or symbol.
house type	The form of housing, including apartment , terrace , semidetached , detached and others.



infill development	The development of vacant blocks of land in urban or suburban areas that are already substantially developed.
infrastructure (physical)	All the 'hardware' of urban areas, such as roads, railways, sewers, electricity lines, telephone lines and towers, pipes, drains and other facilities that give people services.
inter-village	Between villages .
local environmental plan (LEP)	A plan adopted by a local or city council that guides the development in an area. The LEP zones land for different uses and possibly addresses related issues such as housing, major institutions, transportation, economic development and other community development activities.
lot	The piece of defined land on which a house or other building sits, usually with a frontage to the street and side and rear fences or boundaries.
low rise	A building such as a block of flats or apartments generally up to four storeys high.
massing	Three-dimensional bulk of a structure referring to height, width and depth.
master plan	A vision of how a place should evolve over time. It can cover a place as small as a village centre or as large as a group of new towns. When it is less detailed it is often referred to as a 'structure plan'.
mixed-use development	The location of different types of uses in one locality, building or block usually including a mixture of activities such as residential, business, recreational, retail or hospitality. For example, an apartment building with shops, cafés and offices on the lower floors, or a town centre with a range of such activities.
multilevel/multistorey building	A building that is typically three floors or more in height.
national park	A large, important area of open space such as bushland, rivers and mountains, managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.
neighbourhood	A part of a suburb with its own local features, such as parks, local shops and primary school, and usually with an identifiable community .
office buildings	Places of business for accountants, lawyers, architects and other businesses that generally provide services rather than sell goods or manufacture things.
open space	The land and/or water area with its surface open to the sky kept for the community to provide active or passive recreational opportunities, conserve valuable natural resources or habitat, and enhance the places where people live.



passive recreation	Outdoor informal activities such as picnics, bushwalks and barbecues.
passive surveillance	A sense of safety and security that is achieved by having 'eyes on the street'. Not formal surveillance (ie by the police) but incidentally, eg porches looking onto footpaths, balconies looking onto parks etc.
pedestrian crossing	A clearly marked place for pedestrians to cross a road or street where drivers are required by law to stop.
pedestrian plaza	An area with no cars in a centre where people can walk around freely, play, eat or sit. Many plazas are closed roads that have been paved over.
pedestrian point of view	The perspective of an area as seen by people on foot rather than from cars, trains or from multistorey buildings , for example.
pocket parks	Small local parks, often the size of four to six house blocks or smaller.
population density	Number of people in an area.
private open space	Outdoor area for people to relax, play or get some fresh air, such as a backyard, courtyard or balcony. It is not open to the public.
proportion	The balanced relationship of parts of a building, landscape and structures to each other and to the whole.
public square	Outdoor place in a centre , generally surrounded by buildings and designed to attract a variety of activities; for example shopping, marketing, meeting people, relaxing, dining or just passing through.
public transport	Shared transport for moving large numbers of people, such as trains, buses and ferries.
redevelopment	The replacement of existing dwellings or buildings with new ones or with other infrastructure or facilities.
residential areas	Places where people live, as opposed to shopping or employment areas.
ridge	A long, narrow strip of high land.
road corridor	An arterial road , freeway or motorway that moves high volumes of vehicles.
road reserve	The area of land containing roadway, nature strip, trees and footpath.
roundabout	A round-shaped island used for managing traffic at intersecting roads (crossroads).
satellite town	Developments outside and separate from the major urban area.
scale	The spatial relationship among structures along a street including height and width.



scale, human	Elements of a building that relate to the size of a human being such as awnings, openings, doorways etc.
school crossing	A clearly marked place near a school that allows pedestrians to cross the road safely. There are warning signs for drivers telling them that they are approaching a 'school zone'. Usually a 'lollipop' person stops the cars, using a special sign, before and after school.
semidetached	A building that is attached to another building on one side and separated from its neighbour on the other.
setback	The distance the building is set back from the road, property line, or other structure.
shop-top housing	Housing on upper building levels above shops at ground level.
site plan	A detailed plan drawn as though looking down on it, showing the boundary of a property including the proposed placement of structures, parking areas, open space , landscaping and other development features, on a parcel of land.
social infrastructure	A system of social services, networks and facilities that support people and communities .
streetscape	The visual character of a street that is created by the scale and massing , design and colours of the buildings, trees and landscape, fences, roadway and street furniture (benches, public transport stops, sculpture etc).
suburb	An identified geographical part of a town or city which has its own name, and usually has its own centre and postcode.
sustainability	A description for how a place or community (big or small/the entire earth or one building) can continue to exist over time in a way that is healthy for the environment, business and the community.
terrace or row housing	Three or more attached dwellings, side-by-side, on an individual site, normally without shared land or facilities.
tourism	The process of people going to a place on holidays or to visit.
traffic calming	The way a street is designed to slow the movement of motor vehicles, particularly through urban areas.
traffic congestion	Roads getting too full of cars and other vehicles.
transport link	A means of getting from one place to another, usually by car, bus or train.
verge	The strip of land that runs alongside the street and includes the footpath and nature strip.



village Small town or group of **neighbourhoods**.

waste minimisation Process of making sure people produce as little garbage as possible by recycling, composting and avoiding products with lots of packaging. This is important because space for putting garbage is fast running out.

water sensitive urban design (WSUD) Urban design that considers the interactions between urban built places, including urban landscapes, and the urban water cycle. This includes the systems for distributing potable (drinking) water, removing wastewater and stormwater. The guiding principles are about achieving integrated water cycle management with a focus on **ecologically sustainable development**.