

GEOGRAPHY

FOR EDEXCEL

A LEVEL YEAR 1 AND AS

This book is endorsed for Pearson Edexcel GCE Geography A Level and AS specifications. It provides:

- ◆ co-teachable and engaging content for A Level and AS
- ◆ a stimulating approach that enables students to engage with real-world issues and places
- ◆ exam-style questions and support for skills and fieldwork

5.3 Changing places – London's East End

In this section, you'll learn how places change their functions and characteristics over time.

Global changes, local places

Every day, huge container ships arrive at Britain's newest container port – London Gateway in Essex (see Figure 1). This new port is 30 km east of Central London, and it can cope with the world's largest container ships. In the 1970s, the development of container ships signified the death warrant for the original Port of London (to the east of Tower Bridge), see Figure 2. The Thames simply wasn't deep enough that close to Central London to accommodate them. From being Europe's largest port in 1900, London's dock facilities have had to shift further and further downstream (see Figure 2 inset). The new facilities are still one of Europe's largest ports, but they bear no resemblance to the old port. It's one of many ways in which global changes (in this case, containerisation) affect local places.



Figure 1 A container ship arriving at the new London Gateway container port in Essex

Figure 2 London's port facilities, showing the original docks to the east of Tower Bridge (brown map), and the new docks further downstream at Tilbury and London Gateway



Figure 3 Dereliction in London's Docklands (Gentry Wharf on the left of Doge) in the early 1980s



London's changing East End

The last of London's original East End docks closed in 1981. Until the early 1970s, they were the UK's largest docks. Living close by were dockworkers and their families. They were poorly paid, and much of their housing was social housing rented from local councils. But as container ships became larger, and huge cranes replaced the traditional workers to unload them, the docks fell into disuse. Their closure was devastating!

- Between 1978 and 1983, over 12 000 jobs were lost. In the 1981 Census, over 60% of adult men were unemployed in some parts of East London.
- The riverside downstream from Tower Bridge consisted of abandoned docks and derelict wharves (see Figure 3) – not a good image for a major city.
- Nearby, industries in East London's Lea Valley (see Figure 2) also closed, because they needed the port to import raw materials and export finished products.

The population of the area declined, as people left to find work. Between 1971 and 1981, the population of the East End fell by 100 000.

5 Regenerating places

Re-imagining inner cities

Similarly, high unemployment in cities such as Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool (see Section 5.2), gave inner-city areas a poor image with little economic potential. The resultant lack of investment in these communities led to falls in the quality of the living environment, while crime rose considerably between 1975 and 1985 (see Figure 4). High levels of deprivation, combined with ethnic and community tensions, led to riots in Liverpool (Toxteth), Leeds (Chapeltown) and London (Brixton) in 1981.

	Burglary	Theft & handling stolen goods	Violent crime	Total crimes
1975	515 429	1 267 674	71 002	2 105 431
1985	866 697	1 884 269	125 727	3 617 983
Increase %	68.2%	48.6%	71.4%	71.5%

Figure 4 Increasing crime in the UK during the era of high unemployment, 1975–85

The Conservative government reacted by attempting to rebrand inner cities. Starting in 1984, Garden Festivals were held to develop a 'greener' image for inner cities – a process known as **re-imagining**. Later, European Capitals of Culture focused on cultural regeneration in cities (Liverpool won the honour in 2008), and the UK Government now awards City of Culture status – to Derry/Londonderry in 2013 and Hull in 2017.

Regenerating London Docklands

Imagine the potential of 21 km² of available building land – so close to Central London! An area of that size and importance needed a plan as part of a local and national strategy for dealing with dereliction and unemployment. The job went to a government agency, the LDDC (London Docklands Development Corporation). Formed in 1981, its focus was to encourage growth. It brought together key **players**, such as:

- property owners keen to purchase land (the former Port of London was government owned)
- architects
- construction companies
- investors.

The process was known as **market-led regeneration** – leaving the private sector (i.e. the free market) to make decisions about the future of Docklands. The LDDC was given planning powers that bypassed local councils in Newham, Tower Hamlets and Greenwich. As long as planning permission was granted by 1991, companies could obtain tax breaks on new buildings. These tax incentives were designed to attract investors – and they still apply. The LDDC focused on three things: economic growth, infrastructure and housing (see the next two pages).

Figure 5 New housing in Millwall, which was used to help re-imagine Docklands when it was built in the 1980s and early 1990s



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web www.oxfordsecondary.co.uk
email schools.enquiries.uk@oup.com
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