

HEDGE (& WALL) IMPORTANCE TEST (HIT)

Please read the help note with each question. Although the questions are simple, the notes contain essential information. It is useful to take with you the local Ordnance Survey 1:25 000 map. The recording may be done from either side of the hedge, as convenient. Walk quietly along the hedge at a distance of a few feet while filling in the form. Return along the same line pacing the distance for the final question, or take it from the map.

Note that the term “hedge” includes hedgerow, hedgerow, hedgerow and dry-stone or mortared wall.

1. Proximity to town/village. Enter A for hedges within the town, including the main part of villages. Enter B for urban fringe or village outskirts. For C and D measure from edge of town/village.

Hedge in or near village or town (a dozen or more houses) :-

Within village/town A, Urban fringe B, ½-1mile C, more than 1 mile D.

2. Distant view. If you have answered A to question 1, enter N in the box for questions 2, 3 and 4, and go to question 5. Otherwise, divide the all-around view into four equal quadrants. A simple method of viewing one quadrant is to hold out arms at right angles (one arm out sideways and one pointing ahead) and look at the horizon between hands. Look at each quadrant in turn. What is the furthest view that can be seen for the whole of one quadrant? Check distance on map, measure from hedge to furthest higher contour.

What is the furthest you can see from any point along the hedge ?

0-1 mile A, 1-5 miles B, 5-10 miles C, more than 10 miles D.

3. Screening. The hedge should hide more than a quarter of the structure (including main road, car park). In winter, assess as if leaves are on trees. For Yes/No answers, enter Y in box for Yes, N for No, not tick or cross.

Does the hedge help to screen a man-made structure ? (Y or N)

4. Seen from highway. If leaves are on the trees, assess whether at least half of the hedge would be clearly seen when the trees are bare in winter. Check map for rights of way (footpaths, bridleways etc) as these may not be evident looking from the hedge.

Is the hedge visible from a highway/right of way/open-access land? (Y or N)

5. Coastal exposure. Divide the all-around view into four equal quadrants. Count the number of quadrants in which you can see the sea. If fog hides the view, questions 2, 4 and 5 may be determined from the map.

Can you see the sea from anywhere along the hedge ?

In one quadrant A, 2 quadrants B, 3 or 4 quadrants C. No sea view N.

6. County distinctiveness. To identify county distinctiveness, the hedge type may occur in that county alone, or may be the predominant type of hedge in that county or region. For example, a Cornish hedge or a Cotswold dry stone wall would be distinctive on a county basis. In some counties, single species hedgerows eg thorn may predominate, so qualify as county distinctiveness.

Is the hedge of a style distinctive to the county or region ? (Y or N)

7. Local distinctiveness. Predominant or idiosyncratic local style, not county-wide. A style of hedging or walling individual to a local area or estate, or a particular craftsman, qualifies, so may certain types of shrub hedge eg beech, fuchsia, tamarisk. May also be county-distinctive if rarely or never found in other counties.

Is the hedge of a style or pattern particular to the local area ? (Y or N)

8. Hedgebank structure. This applies to any type of hedgebank, wall or single-sided bank eg hollow lane, lynchet or ha-ha. Record : *Dry-stone* for dry-stone wall or stone or boulder hedge with no earth fill; *Stone-faced earth* for Cornish hedge or retaining wall; *Turf-faced earth* for Devon bank or any earth bank supporting shrub or tree hedge; *Stone/concrete/brick* for mortared walls. Record None if the hedgerow has no hedgebank, wall or bank. Disregard state of repair eg if stones have fallen off a stone-faced bank. A stone-and-earth hedge overgrown with matted grass is not a turf (earth) hedge, though its hedge growth type (see question 12) is turf.

Structure of hedgebank or wall :- Dry stone A, Stone-faced earth B,
Turf-faced earth C, Mortared stone/concrete/brick D. No hedgebank N.

9. Hedgebank height. Estimate typical height (in metres) of both sides of hedgebank, wall, or bank to nearest half-metre . Fill in both boxes even if two sides are the same, or one side zero height. No hedgebank, enter N.

Estimate average height (metres) of hedgebank or wall on each side to nearest 0.5m (enter both sides even if they are the same). No hedgebank N.

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10. Hedge furniture. Include (even if disused) gateway, stile, trough, sheep-creep, hare-hole etc, iron railings (eg Victorian) but *not* fencing.) More than one of a kind, enter number after letter in same box eg three gateways A3. More than 4 different items, enter gateways and stiles first. Describe unusual items in Notes box.

Does the hedge or wall include any gateways, stiles or other furniture ?

Gateway A, Stile B, Water trough C, Stone cross or other carved stone relic D, Any other E. None N. (Letter and number)

11. Associated features. Record any given features within 50 metres all around the hedge. Check map. Record no more than two of any feature eg a hedge associated with several fields, enter 2 fields only. Sample record for hedge associated with 3 fields, 5 hedges, 1 ditch and 2 marshy areas: A2,B2,C1,F2. "Water" refers to non-seasonal running or standing fresh water. "Garden" includes churchyard, park, brown-field site etc. For SSSI enter also the feature it comprises eg marsh/bog SSSI as L1, F1. Consult local council or wildlife trust for location of SSSIs. Enter urban environment only if you answered A to question 1.

Name the associated features (max 2 of each):-

Field A, Hedge B, Ditch C, Wood/copse D, Heath/scrub E,
Marsh /bog F, Water G, Garden H, Urban environment J,
Rail/motorway K, SSSI L. (Put letter and number in same box)

12. Hedge growth type. Applies to the growth either if there is no hedgebank, or to the growth rooted on top or sides of the hedgebank, of whatever type. If growth has been recently removed, assess as for pre-removal (observe remains and consult nearby hedges). Ignore management techniques eg bushy hedge-top may be trimmed down very short but still qualifies. *Tall trees* means hedge with trees over the height of telephone poles (7m, 24ft) making up more than one quarter of its length. Include stumps of felled trees. *Mixed scrub or bushy* means any woody species, excluding bramble. *Single-species* hedges may be of any kind eg hawthorn, beech, with up to 10% intrusion by other tree species allowed. A *turf* hedge has grassy/herbaceous growth for at least three-quarters of its length. A stone-faced or turf hedgebank with bushy cover adding up to more than one quarter of its length qualifies as mixed scrub or bushy. Dry-stone/mortared walls or stone-faced banks, enter E if *lichens/mosses* are the main growth. Include those lichens that look like splodges of paint.

Which is the predominant type of growth on the hedge or wall ?

Tall trees A, Mixed scrub and bushy B, Single species hedgerow C,
Turf /herbaceous D, Lichens/mosses E.

13. Tree species. Count the number of different tree species (naming species is not needed but use Notes box if liked). Include any size of tree, sapling or coppice stool along the whole hedge length, even if laid or tightly trimmed. Count all tree species proper (eg oak, sycamore) and include smaller species such as hawthorn, elder, field maple, spindle, hazel, holly &c, but not blackthorn, gorse or other woody shrubs which are not capable of making trees. If trees have been recently cut down it should still be possible to determine the number of different kinds by examining the stumps and bark. Looking at species in nearby hedges helps. In a single-species hedge count the single species as one, if it qualifies as a tree species, plus any intruding tree species. For a drystone wall, include (also in Questions 14 and 15) trees that are within 2m from base of wall.

How many different tree species are in the hedge ? Enter N for no tree species.

14. Tree count. Count number of trees in the hedge, up to 11. Trees must be at least as high as a telephone pole, taken from ground level ie including height of hedgebank if trees are on top. Include any stumps of cut-down trees, of more than estimated 30cm (1ft) diameter. Enter in the box the number of trees. For 11 or more trees, enter 11. If none of the trees in the hedge reaches this height, or if there are no trees, enter N.

Count (max 11) trees in the hedge (telephone pole height). No tall trees, enter N.

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15. Largest tree. Estimate diameter (width) in centimetres of the largest tree trunk in the hedge at estimated 1.3m (chest height) include pollard or coppice stools and stumps of cut-down trees. No trees, enter N.

Estimate the diameter (in centimetres) of largest tree trunk. No trees, enter N.

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16. Indicator plants. For help with recognising these plants when not in bloom, go to HIT Plants picture gallery on HIT website. Do not gather specimens. Enter in separate boxes the letter for each of the indicator plants that is growing in the hedge (applies to all types of hedgerow, hedgebank or wall). The presence of several species of one indicator, eg ferns, counts as one. The number of plants present of any one indicator species is immaterial, ie 1 foxglove plant counts the same as 100 foxglove plants. Where two plants are named together, eg foxglove/mullein, enter one letter in box if either (or both) is present. Heather includes heath/ling. The fern may be of any species, but not bracken. Lichen/moss and stonecrop apply to dry-stone and mortared walls (or if 8B and 12E are filled in) only. Wildlife niches (holes or crevices between the stones), and any of the other indicators A to J also apply to these walls. Ivy and dandelion apply to village/town only, and indicators A to J, K to M, also apply to village/town hedges or walls. If the hedge has been sprayed with herbicide, record indicator plants in the nearest un-sprayed hedge.

Enter for each of these indicator plants growing in the hedge or wall:-

Bramble A, Foxglove/Mullein B, Honeysuckle C, Wild Rose D, Traveller's Joy E, Gorse/Broom F, Heather G, Fern H, Primrose I, Thrift J. DRY STONE/MORTARED WALLS may also have : Lichens/mosses K, Stonecrop L, Wildlife niches M. VILLAGE/TOWN may also have: Ivy R, Dandelion S. No indicator plants N.

17. Historic sites or monuments. Consult County Historic Environment, Archaeological Department. OS maps or GIS (Geographical Information Systems) show sites. If no information is available, enter P in the box.

Is the hedge within 50m of a scheduled historic site or monument ?

Scheduled Monument A, Listed Building B, Sites & Monuments Record C. If none, enter N. Not known P.

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18. Historic function, story and tradition. A particular historic function would be, for example, historic field system or boundary, drove road, turnpike, pound, farmstead, rifle range, millpool, quarry, mine, deer park, canal &c. Story examples would include a hedge said traditionally to have been built or planted by a giant or the devil, by unemployed miners, by Napoleonic or German/Italian prisoners-of-war, or one which featured in a battle or which has an interesting story attached to it. Use Notes box. Consult local history societies, parish or town clerk for sources of information. Anything interesting should be written down and sent in to the County archaeologist.

Is the hedge associated with: Historic function A, Story B. None N.

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19. Historic maps. Consult historic and OS maps in County Records or Estate Offices. Pre-1850 maps include Tithe Map, Estate maps, Parliamentary Inclosure maps &c. If no map available, enter P in the box.

Is the hedge first shown on : Pre-1850 map A, Post -1850 OS map B,
Post-1900 OS map C, Post-1940 OS map D. Map not consulted P.

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20. Boundary patterns. Consult the County Historic Environment or Archaeological Department. Recognised field systems require expert verification. Relic boundary hedges might be, for example, next to a common, woodland, hollow lane, old road or farm boundary. If no information is available, enter P in the box.

Is the hedge part of a recognised field system or boundary pattern ?

Prehistoric field system, or parish or manor boundary A,
Mediæval field system or relic boundary B,
Internal hedge of other historic field system C. None N. Not known P.

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21. Run-off erosion and flood prevention. Compare the average direction of the hedge with the average direction of the nearest contour. Measure, with a ruler on 1:25 000 map, 15cm from the centre of the hedge *uphill*, ignoring hedges and other features, and count the number of *rising* contours within the 15cm. Enter number in lower box. If no contour within 15cm, enter 0. If you entered A for question 1 (in village/town), enter N in both boxes here.

Using the 1:25 000 map, is the hedge parallel with the nearest contour A,
at 45 degrees B, or at right angles to the contour C. (Enter nearest.)

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Using the 1:25 000 map, measuring *uphill* from the middle of the hedge,
how many *rising* contour lines lie within 15cm from the hedge ? None, 0.

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22. Altitude. To find altitude in metres, consult map or GIS. Take contour nearest to centre of hedge.

What is the altitude (metres) of the contour line nearest centre of hedge ?

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23. Adjacent to highway. Enter each type of highway within 50 metres of hedge, max 4 highways, higher values first (values fall from A to E). Put number, eg. two footpaths E2, in same box. If no highway, enter N.

Is the hedge adjacent to a highway/right of way/open-access land:-

Class A road/motorway/railway A, Class B road B, Minor road/urban street C, Bridleway D, Footpath/open-access E. No highway N.

24. Hedge length. Measure the single length of hedge between physical, legal or notional intersections eg hedge junction, sharp change in direction, property boundary, or other obvious point. A gateway does not count as an intersection. A separate HIT form is needed for each length, because the hedge may change in character.

Length of hedge (metres), either paced or measured from map.

Notes (no points score)

Hedge location. Nearest village/town, and county. 6 figure grid ref. at hedge centre (read how on OS map).

Hedge location (grid letters and 6 figures)

Nearest village/town and county

Recorder's name

Date (dd/mm/yy)