



Teacher-to-Teacher

Video Series
for Secondary Educators

TITLE: The Five Themes of Geography

PRIMARY SUBJECT AREAS: Geography

GRADE LEVELS: 9 - 12

OVERVIEW: Geography is more than learning many names and places. The five themes of geography are location - absolute or relative; place – the unique physical or human characteristics of a place; human-environment interaction – how people use and change their environment; movement – how people, goods, and ideas move between places; and regions – how the world can be divided according to places with shared characteristics.

APPROXIMATE DURATION: one 50-minute class period

LOUISIANA CONTENT STANDARDS:

<http://www.doe.state.la.us/DOE/asps/home.asp?I=CONTENT>

Students develop a spatial understanding of Earth's surface and the processes that shape it, the connections between people and places, and the relationship between man and his environment.

Geography

G-1B-H1 determining how location and social, cultural, and economic processes affect the features and significance of places

Students develop a sense of historical time and historical perspective as they study the history of their community, state, nation, and world.

Geography

GLE 10 Evaluate how location, topography, climate, natural resources, and other physical characteristics affect human activities (e.g., cultural diversity, migration, physical features, historical events, plantation, subsistence farming) or the significance of a place (G-1B-H1)

United States History

H-1A-H1 applying key concepts, such as chronology and conflict, to explain and analyze patterns of historical change and continuity

United States History

GLE 4 Analyze change or continuity in the United States over time based on information in stimulus material (H-1A-H1)

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES:

<http://www.doe.state.la.us/DOE/LCET/curric/cats.asp>

Technology Communication Tools (*Communication Foundation Skill*)

- Students use telecommunications to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts and other audiences.
- Students use a variety of media and formats to communicate and present information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences.

Technology Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Tools (*Problem-Solving Foundation Skill*)

- Students use appropriate technology resources for solving problems and making informed decisions.
- Students employ technology for real world problem solving.
- Students evaluate the technology selected, the process, and the final results through the use of informed decision-making skills.

Technology Research Tools (*Linking and Generating Knowledge Foundation Skill*)

- Students use appropriate technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources.
- Students use technology tools to process data and report results.
- Students evaluate and select new information resources and technological innovations based on the appropriateness to specific tasks.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

NA

OBJECTIVES:

1. The learner will define the term *geography*.
2. The learner will identify the five themes of geography.
3. The learner will give examples of applications of the five themes.

MATERIALS:

World Geography Building a Global Perspective, Prentice Hall, Inc. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 1998.

Video: *Five Themes of Geography*, National Geographic, 1992.
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/education/teacher_store/products/WE51515.html

Pictures from magazines representing the 5 themes
<http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0206/features.html>
<http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine/>
<http://www.gibnet.com/tourist/history.htm>
<http://www.gibnet.com/tourist/basics.htm>

TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:

Hardware: Computers with Internet connection

Web Sites:

<http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0206/features.html>

<http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine/>

<http://www.gibnet.com/tourist/history.htm>

<http://www.gibnet.com/tourist/basics.htm>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This is the initial topic covered in high school level World Geography. Some prior knowledge is highly desirable, such as knowing the seven continents, some geographic features of the earth, and map basics, but all of these should be covered in a good course.

LESSON PROCEDURES:

Teacher will lecture

What is Geography? Geography comes from a Greek word meaning “writing about,” the earth. Geography is the study of where people, places, and things are located and of the ways in which things relate to each other. Geography provides a way to discover and organize information regarding many aspects of the world. It explores the earth’s surface and the various processes that shape it. Geography also examines the people of the world, their distinct cultures and economies, and the complex relationships that develop between people and their environments.

Ask questions:

1. Why is Texas among the fastest-growing states? (*movement*)
2. How many professional sports teams does San Francisco have? (*place*)
3. Is Michigan part of the Rust Belt? (*region*)
4. Where is Zanzibar? (*location*)
5. How did the inventions of the refrigerated train car affect farmers? (*interaction*)

By studying how people and natural phenomena interact at specific places and by examining movement between places, geographers can better understand the ways in which each of us operates as part of a greater whole.

Why are places on the earth so amazingly different from each other? Five important questions can help organize information about places:

- What is the location of a place?
- What is the character of a place?
- How do people interact with the natural environment of a place?
- How do people, goods, and ideas move between places?
- How are places similar to and different from other places?

Each of these questions is related to one of five themes that geographers use to organize their study of the world. The five themes are location, place, human-environment interaction, movement and regions. Each theme offers a way of looking at the world and its people. The themes are not mutually exclusive. To thoroughly understand a place or problem, you need to know how the different themes relate to each other.

Geographers studying a place usually begin by finding its location, which is described in either absolute or relative terms.

LOCATION Where is a place? One way to answer this question is by describing its absolute location – its position on the globe. The most common way to do this is to use the imaginary lines marking positions on the surface of the earth. The Equator is such a line. It circles the globe halfway between the North and South poles, and divides the world into two halves, or hemispheres. All of the land and water between the Equator and the North Pole is located in the Northern Hemisphere, and everything between the Equator and the South Pole is located in the Southern Hemisphere.

Access website below to point out hemispheres

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/index.html?Parent=world&Rootmap=&Mode=d&SubMode=w>

Imaginary lines that run parallel (equal distances apart at all points) to the Equator are called lines of latitude. They measure distances 0° to 90° north and south of the Equator. The earth is tilted about 23.5° and the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn at 23.5° . North and south mark the boundaries of the places on the earth that receive the most direct sunlight and the greatest heat energy from the sun.

Another set of imaginary lines, lines of longitude (meridians) run north and south between the two poles. The Prime Meridian, at 0° , runs through the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England. Lines of longitude are measure in degrees from 0 to 180 east and west from the Prime Meridian. Lines of longitude are not parallel to each other, as they meet at the poles.

Point out using website above, lines of latitude and longitude

A place's absolute location is where a particular line of latitude meets a particular line of longitude. Let's look at the map. What is the absolute location of New Orleans, La? (30°N , 90.2°W)

Access website below to locate absolute location of New Orleans, LA

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/index.html?Parent=usofam&Rootmap=usla&Mode=d&SubMode=w>

There is an activity here where students may practice finding absolute location. Select *world map*; choose 6 or 7 world capitals. Have students orally find absolute location for 1 or 2 as an example. Then have them write their answers on paper, latitude first, and then longitude.

A place can also be located using its relative location, or where it is located in relation to other places. Atlanta, Georgia, can be described as being in the Western Hemisphere, southeast United States, southwest of Columbia, South Carolina. A place can have only one absolute location, but many relative locations.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/index.html?Parent=world&Rotmap=&Mode=d&SubMode=w>

Access the above website for practice in locating relative location of several places on the map of the world.

PLACE Every place on earth has features that distinguish it from other places – physical and human characteristics. These unique physical characteristics include landforms, vegetation, and climate. They vary around the world. Land may be mountainous, flat, or in between. Vegetation ranges from leafy, tropical, rain forests to sparse, moss-covered tundra. Climate includes not only normal weather patterns, but also more dramatic occurrences like hurricanes, blizzards, droughts, and floods.

How do people live and work; what are their languages, customs and beliefs; how does their economy work; how are they governed? These are human characteristics.

HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT How people use their environment, change it, the consequences of the changes, and their responses to these changes involve the third geographic theme. Humans have made enormous changes in their environment. Some changes are intentional and others are accidental; some are favorable and others are destructive. Because of swimming pools, air-conditioning, irrigation and automobiles, the hot, dry region of the American Southwest is one of the fastest-growing regions in the country. The lack of water in this area may cause problems in the future.

MOVEMENT Because places have different characteristic, it follows that people, goods, and ideas will move between them. Atlanta was established at the end of a section of railroad and served as a major Confederate supply center because of its rail connections. Modern Atlanta still depends on movement. Its transportation links have attracted not only manufacturers, but also companies that handle distribution tasks such as warehousing and trucking. Jobs have helped the city grow.

REGIONS A region is a group of places with at least one common characteristic. Geographers divide the world into many diverse regions. Formal regions are areas in which a certain characteristic is found throughout the area. States, countries, and cities are all political regions. All people are subject to the same

laws and are ruled by the same government. The steppe region in Northern Eurasia consists of temperate grasslands with rich soils. Functional regions consist of one central place and the surrounding places affected by it. Functional regions can be defined using several different criteria. The Amazon drainage basin in South America is the region drained by the Amazon River. The Denver, Colorado, metropolitan region consists of the city of Denver plus its surrounding suburbs. Physically, Mexico is part of the North American continental region. Culturally, Mexico is linked to the Spanish-speaking nations of Central and South America.

<http://www.gibnet.com/tourist/history.htm>

<http://www.gibnet.com/tourist/basics.htm>

Use the Five geographic themes to analyze the information about Gibraltar (access information from websites above).

1. Location- What is the absolute location of Gibraltar? Describe Gibraltar's relative location.
2. Place – Describe the characteristics that make the Strait of Gibraltar a unique place.
3. Human – Environment Interaction – Consider the impact people have had on Gibraltar.
4. Movement - Analyze how movement through the Strait of Gibraltar impacts the surrounding area.
5. Region – Determine the common characteristics that identify the region in which Gibraltar is located.

ACCOMMODATIONS/MODIFICATIONS:

N/A

REPRODUCIBLE MATERIALS:

N/A

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES:

N/A

EXPLORATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

N/A

RESOURCES:

<http://www.connectedteacher.com/newsletter/citeintres.asp>

REFLECTIONS:

N/A

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