Geographic Features and Human Settlements

Summary

Exploring the relationship between geography and settlements. Students will understand that people settle where there are geographical features that sustain life. They will take away that most major population centers are around water, food, and geographical features that help with safety and life sustaining supplies. Students might get confused that people just settle because of recreational or business attraction rather than life sustainability.

Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 3rd Grade

Standard 1 Objective 1

Time Frame

4 class periods of 30 minutes each

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Systems Thinking

Materials

- an apple
- a knife
- balloons
- newspaper strips
- white glue
- paint
- encyclopedias
- National Geographic Kids (or similar)
- non-fiction books about different areas of the world
- paper
- magazines (for cutting out photos)
- easel paper
- markers
- salt dough if wanted

Background for Teachers

Teachers should be familiar with Google Earth and how to use it (https://www.google.com/earth/); know how to make paper mache balloons; be familiar with world population centers and world geographic features

Student Prior Knowledge

The students should already be familiar with basic map skills (compass roses, cardinal directions) and familiar with geographic features such as mountains, rivers, oceans, etc. and how they are portrayed on maps.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to use map features to make logical inferences and describe relationships

between human settlement and physical geography (e.g. population density in relation to geographical features, cities' proximity to water, utilization of natural resources).We will answer "Why do people settle in the places they do and what makes settlements desirable or undesirable?"

Instructional Procedures

VOCABULARY TO BE USED (present before starting the lesson):
north, south, east, west, ocean, equator, desert, plain, tropic, tundra, grassland, mountain, forest, wetland, natural resources, cardinal directions.
Introduction-Pre-Assessment (Whole Group): Teacher asks "Why do people come to the United States? Why did they come in the past, and why do they come now?"(possible answers: education, better way of life, job, their country may be unsafe because of warfare, etc.)
(Whole group) After pre-assessment discussion, take the apple and cut it in half, then in fourths. Explain that 3/4 of the Earth is water. Take the remaining 1/4 and cut it in eighths. Explain that only one of the eight pieces portrays livable land and usable water.
Divide into 4-5 groups, depending on class size. Give each group some easel paper, markers, and ask them to make a list of 4 places on Earth they would like to live and WHY they want to live there. What does that place have that makes it a desirable place to live? Give each group books about the Earth, magazines, maps, a globe, etc. Each group has 10 minutes to make their decisions.
On the second day, have each group present their choices; as a whole group create a VENN diagram on what is similar and different about these places.
The teacher then can discuss whole-group the fact that people still settle in certain places for exactly the same reasons they always have. Discuss that a community is where a group of people live, work, play and survive together. Where people live is determined by temperature, natural resources, water, and affordability.
The teacher now can pull up Google Earth and explore population centers around the world and the specific geographical features that are common.
On the board, teacher draws a T-chart and as a class decide positive and negative examples of geographical features where people would like to live. The teacher should provide examples first and then let the students come up with their own positive and negative examples. Discuss why some features are easier to live with than others -- BUT, there will be a lesson on adaptations later, so don't dwell on this too much.
As a final assessment, have the students create their own globe, either with paper mache and a balloon or out of salt dough. If a student prefers to not make a globe they can create a poster or write a report on what their own planet would be like. The student needs to show where people would live on their world and WHY - they must be able to make inferences on where population centers would be based on the geographic features they incorporate into their world.
Assessment rubric is handed to each student prior to their creation of a world, and is used for their final assessment.
In the preliminary phases of their assignment, each student must present their ideas and progression to another student to receive feedback. The students use the rubric to provide insight into areas that "work" and areas to be improved before the final presentation.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Peer interaction, student-based learning (teacher is available for individual guidance), assessment is based on student's preference and knowledge; both written and verbal explanations accepted.

Extensions

As an extension for gifted students, they can explore why humans choose to live in non-geographically friendly environments and what they have to do to make them livable. This can be

presented to the class at the beginning of the next lesson.

Assessment Plan

Student performance will be assessed by evaluating the number of geographic features shown on the final project, and how well the student can infer why people would choose to live where they do on the student's imaginary planet. The student can choose to make a paper mache planet, draw a picture and label it, create a collage, or write a report about their planet and its features.

Rubrics

Geography & Population Rubric

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