

## Geography Lesson: Introduction to the Five Themes of Geography

**Purpose:** This lesson is intended as an introduction to the Five Themes of Geography for middle school or high school students.

**Time:** Two or three 50 minute class periods.

**Audience:** The audience for this packet is urban, middle school or high school students who have significant gaps in social studies background knowledge and are reading and writing significantly below grade level. This packet is also appropriate for a high school ELL learner.

**Assumption:** It is assumed that students would already have already been introduced to the text features and completed and scored 60 per cent or above on the *Cloze Procedure* using a passage from the text.

**Objectives:** Students will

- Name the five important themes of geography.
- Comprehend the basic geography terms *climate, coordinates, elevation, scale, location, region, equator, Prime Meridian, longitude, latitude, environment, equator, geography, migration, and trade.*
- Describe ways in which people affect the Earth around them.
- Describe ways in which the natural environment affects people.
- Describe two kinds of movement into and out of a community.
- Locate places on a globe or map.
- Compare longitude and latitude.

**Rationale:** Most of the students who come into our program are reading and writing significantly below grade level and are often missing knowledge of basic geography terms. At the same time, most of them have acquired a set of geographical knowledge with which they navigate around their community. This lesson attempts to activate the students prior geographical knowledge, introduce a limited amount of background images/knowledge about the wider world, and give explicit, sequential instruction on basic geography concepts.

**Materials:**

1. Anticipation Guide (Pretest)
2. World Map
3. Packet of photographs of scenes from around the world (from *National Geographic* or other magazine).
4. Tree Map graphic organizer.
5. First chapter (pp. 2-12) from *World Geography and Cultures* (Globe Fearon, 1994) by Robin E. Kelly. (Other geography textbooks usually cover similar ground in their opening chapter and could be substituted with minor alteration to this lesson.
6. Double Entry Journal sheet.
7. Impression Story writing prompt.

8. Posttest (same items as Anticipation Guide/Pretest)

**Procedure:**

1. Administer pretest. (5 to 10 minutes)
2. Introduce topic of the lesson, The Five Themes of Geography: “‘Theme’ means main subject, topic or train of thought, so the phrase ‘The Five Themes of Geography’ means?... (The five main topics that geographers study) The five themes that you are going to learn come out of two simple questions. Geography is concerned with the questions of ‘Where?’ and ‘Why there?’ Do you ever ask those questions? When? What were you trying to find?”  
“So you are already geographers. In fact you may already know a lot about the five themes even if you can not name them yet. I’ll prove you are already geographers with the next two activities.”
3. Distribute packs of photographs from around the world to small groups of students and direct them to discuss and come to a conclusion which part of the world each group of photographs show. If students cannot come up with city or country ask them to give region or continent. (5 to 10 minutes)
4. Ask groups to share their conclusions and discuss reasons for their answers. Point out that they were discussing two of the themes professional geographers discuss: location and place. (5 to 10 minutes)
5. Direct students to look at the photographs again and to group (categorize) them in some way other than by location. (5 to 10 minutes)
6. Ask students to share categories and the reasoning behind the categories they chose. Where appropriate provide students with basic geographic terms that are synonymous with or closely connected to their discussion and have them record the terms and their meanings. (5 to 10 minutes)
7. Write the word term *absolute location* and *relative location* on the board. Under *relative location* write *grid system* and under *relative location* write *next to, near to, across from, opposite, far away from, over, under*. Ask for examples of relative location and record student answers on the board. Ask students for the meaning of absolute and for guesses of what *absolute location* might mean. (5 minutes)
8. Discuss directions of streets and avenues in students’ neighborhoods. Discuss how house numbers work and ask where the streets and avenues and numbering begin (First Street and First Avenue). Point out that they have described a *grid system* with many features similar to the *grid system* of *longitude* and *latitude* that they are going to read about, but with some features that are not alike. (5 minutes)
9. Transition students to the selected reading: “Okay, we already have a start on some of the basic themes and related terms of professional geography from just talking about what you already know. Now we are going to see how professional geographers describe what they do in our chapter reading. Let’s see if they can help us take the discussion of categories and themes even deeper and give more order to it.”
10. Hand out the Tree Map graphic organizer and direct students to skim chapter for the title and the five themes and words or phrases that are highlighted or in bold. Direct students to fill in supporting information for the five themes as they read the chapter. (Reading and information gathering on the Tree Map can be begin with remaining time in class and be completed as homework or continued the next class session)

11. Ask students to share graphic organizers when they finish reading. Discuss parallels between what was read and what was discussed during the photo and neighborhood grid activities before the reading. (5 to 10 minutes)
12. Hand out Double Entry Journal sheet and have students complete it. Discuss entries if time permits. (10 to 15 minutes)
13. Hand out Story Impression writing prompt and direct students to write a story about their community using the terms and concepts they have learned. (20 minutes)
14. Share stories. (10 to 20 minutes)
15. Hand out and proctor post-test.(5 to 10 minutes)

Credits: Hans Verbeten, Broadway HS, Minneapolis

# Anticipation Guide

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Hour \_\_\_\_\_

For the statements below, put a **D** in the blank if you disagree with the statement or put an **A** in the blank if you agree with the statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Climate is the regular weather of a place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) The Prime Meridian marks 0 degrees longitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Longitude and latitude are used to describe how tall hills and mountains are.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) The Earth affects how people live, but people do not affect the earth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) The equator marks 0 degrees longitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) A relief map uses colors or patterns to show elevation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) Geography is the study of the Earth and the people that live on it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8) Migration is the name given to the system of time zones around the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9) Regions are the same thing as coordinates.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10) A small-scale map shows details in a small area.

Name as many of the five themes (main topics) of geography as you can on the lines below:

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Tree Map

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

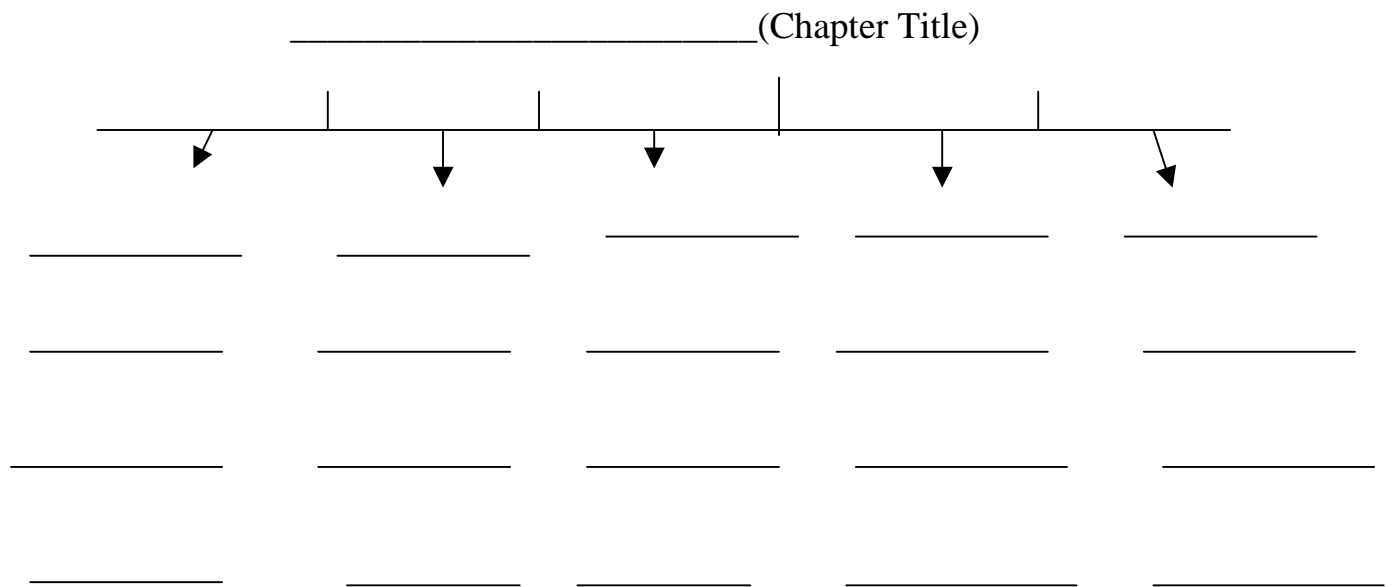
Hour \_\_\_\_\_

## Before you read skim the chapter and

1. Fill in the title of the chapter.
2. Find the five themes of geography and fill them in the five blanks of the second row.

## As you read the read the chapter

3. List supporting ideas and examples for each theme under the theme it belongs to.



## Double Entry Journal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Hour \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you have read the chapter and recorded the concepts and terms that were new to you, let's go over those important concepts and terms and get them in your long-term memory.

First, complete the double entry journal below.

| <b>List the terms and concepts that you have learned.</b> | <b>Tell what you know about these concepts.</b> |
|---|---|
| 1.  | 1.  |
| 2.  | 2.  |
| 3.  | 3.  |
| 4.  | 4.  |
| 5.  | 5.  |
| 6.  | 6.  |
| 7.  | 7.  |
| 8.  | 8.  |
| 9.  | 9.  |
| 10.   | 10.   |



**Post-Test**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Hour \_\_\_\_\_

For the statements below, put a **D** in the blank if you disagree with the statement or put an **A** in the blank if you agree with the statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Climate is the regular weather of a place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) The Prime Meridian marks 0 degrees longitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Longitude and latitude are used to describe how tall hills and mountains are.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) The Earth affects how people live, but people do not affect the earth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) The equator marks 0 degrees longitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) A relief map uses colors or patterns to show elevation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) Geography is the study of the Earth and the people that live on it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8) Migration is the name given to the system of time zones around the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9) Regions are the same thing as coordinates.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10) A small-scale map shows details in a small area.

Name as many of the five themes (main topics) of geography as you can on the lines below:

---

---

---

---

---