

**RESOURCE LIBRARY**  
ACTIVITY : 1 HR

## Characteristics of Place

Students learn about and brainstorm natural and cultural characteristics of places. Then students identify those characteristics in their own community.

### GRADES

1, 2

### SUBJECTS

*Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography*

## OVERVIEW

Students learn about and brainstorm natural and cultural characteristics of places. Then students identify those characteristics in their own community.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/characteristics-of-place/>

## DIRECTIONS

### 1. Introduce the concept of natural characteristics of places.

Explain to students that certain things in nature help to define a place. Write the following list of natural characteristics on chart paper:

- weather and temperature
- land and soil
- plant life
- animal life

Have students brainstorm and add their ideas to the list.

## 2. Introduce the concept of cultural characteristics of places.

Explain to students that the people and cultures in a place also help to define a place. Write the following list of cultural characteristics on chart paper:

- languages
- religions
- where people settle
- how people get from place to place
- how money is exchanged
- government

Have students brainstorm and add their ideas to the list. Students may include number of people, how people dress, what they eat, and more. Post the list in the classroom for students to refer to in future activities.

## 3. Have students identify these characteristics in your community.

Tell students to think about their own community and what defines it as a place. For each of the natural and cultural characteristics in Steps 1 and 2, discuss them as a class. Ask: *What is this like in our community?*

# Extending the Learning

Have students pick one natural characteristic and one cultural characteristic of their community to illustrate. Ask them to draw those features. When students are finished, have each show their drawing to the class and explain what feature it shows and why they chose that one. Display the drawings.

## OBJECTIVES

# Subjects & Disciplines

### Geography

- Human Geography
- Physical Geography

# Learning Objectives

Students will:

- describe natural and cultural characteristics of places
- identify natural and cultural characteristics of their community

## Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

## Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Discussions

## Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Remembering
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information
  - Organizing Geographic Information

## National Standards, Principles, and Practices

### NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- Theme 3:

People, Places, and Environments

### NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 4:

The physical and human characteristics of places

## Preparation

## What You'll Need

### MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Chart paper
- Markers

### PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

### GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

## BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

# Background Information

A place is defined by its natural and human features. You can learn a lot about what defines a place by looking at your own community.

# Prior Knowledge

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# Recommended Prior Activities

- [Exploring the Characteristics of Places](#)
- [Introduction to Place](#)

# Vocabulary

**Term**

**Part of  
Speech**

**Definition**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Part of Speech</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>human features</b>	<i>noun</i>	characteristics of the environment created by human beings.
<b>natural feature</b>	<i>noun</i>	characteristic of a geographic region that was not created by humans.
<b>place</b>	<i>noun</i>	area having unique physical and human characteristics.



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