

RESOURCE LIBRARY | ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

Geography Matters

Students use text resources to learn about the focal geographic area they will be using for their game board and the region of North America that the area lies within. They write a descriptive summary paragraph of the geographic area to use as the setting description for their games.

GRADES

6, 7, 8

SUBJECTS

Geography, Social Studies

CONTENTS

1 Resource, 7 PDFs, 1 Video

OVERVIEW

Students use text resources to learn about the focal geographic area they will be using for their game board and the region of North America that the area lies within. They write a descriptive summary paragraph of the geographic area to use as the setting description for their games.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/geography-matters/>

In collaboration with



DIRECTIONS

Interrupted Migrations Unit Driving Question: *How can human activities help or hinder animal migrations?*

Mapping Human Interruptions to Migration Unit Driving Question: *How has human activity changed the environment?*

1. Introduce students to their focal geographic areas for the project.

- For their game, students will be focusing on a particular area of the United States. Remind students how many elk migration routes crossed through the Yellowstone area of the United States. Similarly, the focal area for each group's game may not encompass the entire migration route of animals in that area, but migration routes will begin, end, or pass through the area.
- Divide students into six groups and use the *Geographic Area Information Sheets* to assign student groups to the different geographic areas. The six areas are:
 - The Sonoran Desert Borderlands
 - The Chesapeake Bay Region
 - The Snake River
 - Gulf Coast
 - Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area
 - Hudson River Estuary

2. Students read about the geographic regions in the United States.

- Explain to students that geographers have categorized the United States into regions. This means that the places in a region share common geographic characteristics.
 - An example of this would be a desert region, which includes all the places in the desert, even if they cross national boundaries or state lines. A single place can also be part of multiple regions because many places have multiple geographic characteristics.
- Have students think back to the *Yellowstone's Great Migration* video. Just as it was important to consider the geography beyond Yellowstone to understand elk migration patterns, groups will need to consider the larger region beyond their focal area to better understand animal migrations.

- Have students use the [North America: Physical Geography](#) encyclopedic entry to identify which region their assigned geographic area is in.
- Then, have students read about their region on their *Geographic Area Information Sheet*, annotating for key information that will help them create their games.
 - As students are reading, have them look for: geographic features, human impacts on land, and important information about wildlife.

3. Students complete their second set of *Human Impact Cards*.

- Distribute the [Human Impact Cards Set 2](#) to each group of students. Have groups select from the deck of cards ones that are relevant to their geographic area based on the information they read.
- Have students fill out the back of the cards they selected with answers to the following two questions:
 1. How does this type of human impact benefit people?
 2. How does it change the environment?

4. Students write a geographic description of their area to contribute to their game board development.

- Games often provide descriptions of the setting in which the game takes place. This helps players understand and visualize things about the setting that might not appear on the game board.
- Have student groups write a one-paragraph summary of their geographic area that includes the following information:
 - Region in the United States
 - Climate
 - Key geographic features
 - Human impacts/developments
 - Wildlife in the area

Tip

Step 2: If students are not familiar with annotation techniques, you may want to teach them the following three annotation symbols: 1) identify important information with a check mark; 2) circle key vocabulary; 3) put a question mark next to words, phrases, or sections that are confusing.

Informal Assessment

Summary Paragraph: This brief writing assignment assesses student understanding of geographic content, including regions, geographic features, climate, human development, and regional wildlife.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

Social Studies

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Research geographic areas and corresponding regions of North America with text sources.

Teaching Approach

- Project-based learning

Teaching Methods

- Reading
- Research
- Writing

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

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

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7:

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.2:

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Preparation

What You'll Need

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Optional
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per pair

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction
- Small-group work

RESOURCES PROVIDED: UNDEFINED

- [Yellowstone's Great Migration](#)

RESOURCES PROVIDED: HANDOUTS & WORKSHEETS

- [The Sonoran Desert Borderlands](#)
- [The Chesapeake Bay Region](#)
- [The Snake River](#)
- [The Gulf Coast](#)
- [The Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area](#)
- [The Hudson River Estuary](#)
- [Human Impact Cards Set 2](#)

RESOURCES PROVIDED: REFERENCE

- North America: Physical Geography

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

As a field of study, regional geography is focused on the specificity of regions around the world. It highlights what is unique about social and environmental relationships that occur in these different regions. By studying geographic content within various regions, it is possible to see how regional habitats are unique. We can also examine how animals might move across or between regions during their migration journeys. Ecosystems studied in regional geography have different needs and specifications, which are impacted by human activity. Understanding how geographic information impacts the way systems work together may prove essential to preserving and restoring animal migratory routes.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- [Intersecting Actions](#)

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
climate	<i>noun</i>	all weather conditions for a given location over a period of time.
migration	<i>noun</i>	movement of a group of people or animals from one place to another.
region	<i>noun</i>	any area on Earth with one or more common characteristics. Regions are the basic units of geography.
regional geography	<i>noun</i>	branch of geography devoted to the study of characteristics of a specific region.
wildlife	<i>noun</i>	organisms living in a natural environment.
Yellowstone National Park	<i>noun</i>	large national park in the U.S. states of Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana.



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