Introduction to Place

What defines a place?

Overview

Students learn what defines a place and identify what defines their town as a place.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:
http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/introduction-to-place/

Directions

1. **Brainstorm what defines a place.**
   Ask students to brainstorm what defines a place. Provide examples to get them started, such as:
   - people
   - weather
   - landscape
   - plant life
   - animal life
   
   Have students work in small groups to write their own lists. Then, invite groups to share their ideas and write a class list on the board.

2. **Have students identify what defines your town as a place.**
   Ask students to think about what defines your town as a place. Have them use the discussion to add ideas to the original list. If needed, prompt them with questions,
such as:

- Who lives here? What languages do they speak?
- Is the neighborhood in a city, suburb, or the country?
- What is the weather like? How cold or warm does it get? Does it rain much?
- What does the land look like? Are there mountains, lakes, or beaches nearby?
- What plants and animals live here?

3. Generate a class list of questions about place.
Have students share any questions they have about what defines a place or why it is important. Ask: What are you curious about? What would you like to know more about?

Objectives

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography
- Human Geography
- Physical Geography

Social Studies
- Human behavior

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- explain what defines a place
- identify what defines their town as a place

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use
Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Discussions

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Remembering
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring 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

- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens

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

- Characteristics of Place
- Exploring the Characteristics of Places

Vocabulary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>human features</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>characteristics of the environment created by human beings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural feature</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>characteristic of a geographic region that was not created by humans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place</td>
<td>noun</td>
<td>area having unique physical and human characteristics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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