

RESOURCE LIBRARY
LESSON

Your School: Using a Geographic Perspective

Students learn how to use a geographic perspective by asking *where* and *what* as they explore the concepts of location and place with their classroom and school.

GRADES

3 - 5

SUBJECTS

Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography

CONTENTS

3 Activities

ACTIVITY 1: LOCATION AND PLACE: A GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE | 30 MINS

DIRECTIONS

1. Discuss the meaning of the terms *location* and *place*.

Write the words *location* and *place* on the board. Ask: *Have you ever traveled to a different location?* If anyone has, ask him or her to describe it to the rest of the class. For each, write some of the describing words on the board. Then have a whole-class discussion to explore the following questions:

- Did the student describe it in terms of location (where it is, such as the city, state, or country)?
- Did the student describe it in terms of place (what it is like, such as hot, cold, urban, or country)?

2. Compare and contrast the descriptions.

Ask students: *How are the experiences alike? How are they different?*

3. Use a globe to illustrate the concept.

Using a globe, pinpoint your location to show students that *location* is where the place is on the Earth's surface. Then show them photographs of your neighborhood, town, city, or state to illustrate that *place* describes what it is like there.

4. Have students determine location or place.

Have students return to the descriptions in Step 1 and decide if the original description was of the location or the place. Have them say "L" if it was a description of the location and "P" if it was a description of the place.

Extending the Learning

Have students imagine that an exchange student is coming to their house. Ask students to explain the locations of their homes and to describe what those places are like.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- [Human Geography](#)
- [Physical Geography](#)

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- explain the difference between the terms location and place

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Geographic Skills
 - [Acquiring Geographic Information](#)
 - [Answering Geographic Questions](#)
 - [Organizing Geographic Information](#)

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- [Standard 4:](#)

The physical and human characteristics of places

Preparation

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

A geographic perspective is a way of looking at the world. Location helps you answer *where*.

Place helps you answer *what* or *who*.

Prior Knowledge

[]

Recommended Prior Activities

- [Location and Place in Your Classroom](#)
- [Location and Place in Your School](#)

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
geographic perspective	<i>noun</i>	a way to understand a topic or area using spatial features and relationships.
location	<i>noun</i>	position of a particular point on the surface of the Earth.
place	<i>noun</i>	area having unique physical and human characteristics.

ACTIVITY 2: LOCATION AND PLACE IN YOUR CLASSROOM | 40 MINS

DIRECTIONS

1. Have students brainstorm descriptions of your classroom.

As a class, brainstorm a list of descriptions about your classroom. Write students' ideas on the board. Make sure the descriptions include the following information:

- the location of the classroom, such as its floor, its end of the hall, and what other rooms it is near
- information about the classroom itself, such as what it looks like, who uses it, and what happens there

2. Categorize the descriptions by location and place.

Ask students if their responses are about the location of the classroom or the place. Place an "L" next to descriptions of the location. Place a "P" next to those that describe place.

3. Discuss the location and place of your classroom using the 5 Ws and a geographic perspective.

Continue to model a geographic perspective by asking students to think about how the location and place of their classroom affects them. Discuss the following questions:

- **Where:** *Where is our classroom located in the school? Is it close to the cafeteria? Or gym? Or exit doors? Does that make it noisy? Does it mean our class gets to lunch, gym, or recess first? Is the classroom on the ground floor or second floor?*
- **What:** *What is our classroom like? What goes on in our classroom? What subjects are taught? What events happen? What do you personally like best about our classroom? Why?*

- **Who:** *Who belongs to this class? Why is each person (student, teacher, aide) important?*
- **When:** *When does our class leave for the day? When do other classrooms leave for the day? Is ours the first or last class to get dismissed because of its location?*
- **How:** *How is our classroom arranged? Is it large enough for the entire class? How are desks and learning centers arranged? How do we use the different spaces within the classroom? How is it decorated? Why? Does everything work well in it? How do things like the condition of the heating or air conditioning or having computers in the classrooms affect you and your learning?*
- **Why:** *Why is our classroom special? What makes it different from other classrooms?*

Informal Assessment

Ask students to imagine that a new student will be coming to the class. Have students draw a picture of their favorite part of the classroom and, orally or in writing, describe for the new student where it is located (location) and what it is like (place).

Extending the Learning

Ask students to imagine that a new student will be coming to their class. They need to make the new student feel comfortable by sharing information about their class. As a class, develop a simple map or picture of the classroom. Have students take turns identifying where their own desks or specific learning areas are located.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- Human Geography
- Physical Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- describe the location and place of their classroom
- explain how the location and place characteristics of the classroom affect them

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Geographic Skills
 - Acquiring Geographic Information
 - Answering Geographic Questions
 - Organizing Geographic Information

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 4:

The physical and human characteristics of places

Preparation

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

A geographic perspective is a way of looking at the world. Location helps you answer *where*. Place helps you answer *what* or *who*. You can use a geographic perspective to learn more about your classroom.

Prior Knowledge

["meanings of terms *location* and *place*"]

Recommended Prior Activities

- Location and Place: A Geographic Perspective
- Location and Place in Your School

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
geographic perspective	<i>noun</i>	a way to understand a topic or area using spatial features and relationships.
location	<i>noun</i>	position of a particular point on the surface of the Earth.
place	<i>noun</i>	area having unique physical and human characteristics.

ACTIVITY 3: LOCATION AND PLACE IN YOUR SCHOOL | 25 MINS

DIRECTIONS

1. Have students brainstorm descriptions of your school.

As a class, brainstorm a list of descriptions about your school. Write students' ideas on the board. Make sure the descriptions include the following information:

- the location of the school, such as what it is near and how far most kids travel to get to it
- information about the school itself, such as what its name is and what it looks like

2. Categorize the descriptions by location and place.

Ask students if their responses are about the location of the school or the place. Place an "L" next to descriptions of the location. Place a "P" next to those that describe place.

3. Have students complete the worksheet to apply a geographic perspective to your school.

Divide students into pairs and provide each pair with the worksheet *Your School: A Geographic Perspective*. Have pairs work together to complete the worksheet.

Informal Assessment

Use the provided rubric for Your School: A Geographic Perspective to assess pairs' completed worksheets.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- [Human Geography](#)
- [Physical Geography](#)

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify the difference between location and place as it applies to their school

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Hands-on learning

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Geographic Skills
 - [Acquiring Geographic Information](#)
 - [Answering Geographic Questions](#)
 - [Organizing Geographic Information](#)

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 4:

The physical and human characteristics of places

Preparation

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

A geographic perspective is a way of looking at the world. Location helps you answer *where*. Place helps you answer *what* or *who*. You can use a geographic perspective to learn more about your school.

Prior Knowledge

["understanding location versus place"]

Recommended Prior Activities

- Location and Place: A Geographic Perspective
- Location and Place in Your Classroom

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
geographic perspective	<i>noun</i>	a way to understand a topic or area using spatial features and relationships.
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