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Themes of Geography [9th grade]

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UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: The Themes of Geography

Grade Level: 9th

Subject/Topic Area(s): World Geography/ Five Themes of Geography

Designed By: Jessica Waltman

Time Frame: Two Weeks

School District: Spring Branch Independent School District

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Brief Summary of Unit (Including curricular context and unit goals):

Throughout this unit students will be introduced to the five themes of geography. These themes will be brought up in future units of study to help students better organize their understandings and perceptions of the world around them. In understanding the themes of Location, Place, Region, Movement, and Human-Environment Interaction, students will be prepared to answer the essential question of “Why is the where important?”

The activities and lessons of this unit are built to aid students in their understanding of how humans interact with one another and their environments and to begin to see the differences and similarities of the world around them. Students will make these discoveries through the study of local, national, and international geography. The performance assessment is designed to give students a structure for understanding how the themes of geography can help them better define the world and how humans have impacted it.

Unit: The Five Themes of Geography
Grade: 9th

Stage 1: Desired Results

Understandings

Students will understand that...

- Differences among perspective, experience, and culture reflect different environments.
- In defining the geography of a location, one must consider its location as well as its political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental characteristics.
- Throughout history humans have adapted their lives and environment to improve their own quality of life.

Essential Questions

- Why is the “where” important?
- How does my location affect my understanding and ideas of the world?
(How does the where influence the who?)
- Are humans the heroes or villains of the environment?

Knowledge & Skill

TEKS

WG.05A Analyze how the character of a place is related to its political, economic, social, and cultural characteristics.

WG.09A Identify physical or human factors that constitute a region such as soils, climate, vegetation, language, trade network, river systems, and religion.

WG.19B Analyze ways technological innovations have allowed humans to adapt to places shaped by physical processes such as floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes.

National Geography Standards

Standard 6 How culture and experience influence people’s perception of places and regions.

Standard 12 The process, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Standard 14 How human actions modify the physical environment

Standard 15 How physical systems affect human systems

Standard 17/18 To apply geography to interpret the past/present and plan for the future.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Performance Task:

In groups students will be given the responsibility of designing a building project (park, college, concert venue, airport, etc.) that the city of Houston needs or wants. They must decide where in Houston it will be located and explain why it is they chose the facility they did and how it will be built. They will use the five themes of geography to justify and analyze the project and its effects on Houston. The Houston City Council will listen to and look over their proposals and decide who will be given a permit to build.

Each group will write a written proposal to explain their project. They will also present a visual proposal to address the five themes of geography. The visual proposal can be a poster, pamphlet, or PowerPoint/computer presentation, but must answer the following:

- ❖ **Location:** Where is it located?—Include map with absolute location/ Directions providing a relative location
- ❖ **Place:** What is the area like? Why did you choose the area for your project?
- ❖ **Region:** How will your project affect the region Houston is located in? Why is the project appropriate for the region Houston is located in? Did you choose a specific region within Houston? Why?
- ❖ **Movement:** How will people get there? Is it easily accessible? How does the building project reflect the movement of cultures, ideas, and people into Houston? How might the building project change the culture of Houston?
- ❖ **Human Environment Interaction:** How would the project affect the relationship humans have with the environment? Will your project be environmentally conscious? Will the priority be making a profit?

Other evidence: (quizzes, tests, academic prompts, self-assessments, etc. note – these are usually included where appropriate in Stage 3 as well)

Themes of Geography Scenes in Notebook, Human-Environment Interaction T-Chart, Warm-Ups, Google Earth Activity, Movement Chart, Regions of School Map, Self-Assessment of *Houston Needs* Project

Stage 3: Learning Activities

(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)

Day 1: Human-Environment Interaction (80-90 minute period)

Begin by having students write about a trip they took or would like to take at some point in their lives. Have the students describe what they packed on the trip, what activities they did while they were there, and differences they noticed between their destination and Houston. Have them share their answers with a partner. Have students share their stories with the class and on the board create a visual that organizes the destinations with what was needed on the trip and the activities they participated in.

Introduce the essential question “Why is the where important?” Continue the discussion by asking them how life in New York City, College Station, TX, and Paris might be different than life in Houston. Students should begin to see differences in culture, language, geography, etc.

Choose a few images to look at as a class that show examples of Human-Environment Interactions. As a class, look at pictures that show humans interacting with their environment (deforestation, dams, farming, etc.). Display the large image in the front of the classroom and discuss what has happened in each of the images. The images should display both positive and negative interactions. Have students create a t-chart in their notebook to analyze what some of the pros and cons of human activity are in different regions of the world.

Explain to students that this is the first theme of five themes of geography that they will be looking at throughout the school year. On a page in their interactive notebook have them divide the page into five sections. Have them write “Human-Environment Interaction” in one of the sections and sketch a

scene that displays this theme.

Assessment: T-Chart, Human-Environment Interaction Theme Scene

Day 2: Location and Place

Warm-Up: Distribute an image to students and have them glue it into their notebook. Have them identify what is happening in the picture and write down what it is they see. Display the same image in the front of the room. Discuss with students what they notice about the human impact on the environment. **Begin to introduce the essential question “Are humans the heroes or villains of the environment?”** Under the image in their notebook have students identify what parts of the image are natural features of the city/location and what features are the products of human-environment interaction. Have students create a visual summary of possible advantages and disadvantages of the human-environment interactions in these different areas (perspective/view point characters).

Continue with the same image(s) and ask students where in the world they think the city/location is. As students begin to guess, ask them why they guessed those specific areas of the world. What hints does the image provide? What would make the image more helpful in determining where it is in the world? Based on what you see in the image, what do you think the place is like? Provide different images of the location to give students a bigger picture of the city/location.

Introduce the themes of Location and Place. In describing the details of the image, they answered the question “what is it like?” which refers to place. With a partner on a computer have students research different locations on the Earth. Using Google Earth students can see satellite images of specific locations. Have them identify the absolute location (including the longitude and latitude coordinates) and describe its relative location, describe human interactions they can see from the satellite pictures, and list the pros and cons of humans in the area. By answering the question “where is it?” students are identifying the location.

Once students have located the selected areas have them identify two locations of their choice. They must complete the same information as they did for the teacher selected locations. They must choose one that has been impacted by humans and one that has not been impacted by humans at all.

Have students open to the page in their notebook where they created their scene describing Human-Environment interaction. Next to that scene, have them title one scene “Location” and one scene “Place” and draw a scene that represents these two themes.

Homework: Have students research their favorite out of school activity (to watch or participate in— sport, type of music, type of art, meal to cook, etc.) and find out where it originated from and from what time period.

Assessment: Warm-Up Natural Features vs. man made features, Google Earth Activity, Location and Place Theme Scenes

Day 3: Region and Movement

Warm Up: Have students refer to their homework and write about how the activity they researched changed since the time it originated and from the place it originated. Why did it change? Does it take on different forms in other cities/states/countries? Why do they think it has different formats?

Provide students with a movement chart or handout in which they will record the linear, time, and psychological distance of their activity and a few other activities. Students should begin to see that their chosen activities have developed and changed over time and distance from their origins. They also are influenced by the resources, culture, economies, and other factors of the location they are being practiced. **This discussion should begin to introduce the understanding of “Differences among perspective, experience, and culture reflect different environments.”** During the discussion refer back to images the class viewed in previous days and look for signs of movement. Once the class as a whole has looked at these images together distribute objects or images to each group for them to analyze and fill out the rest of the their movement chart where they explain the linear, time, and psychological distance of each of the objects or images. (Objects and or images should be something that is in city of the school, but did not originate in the city— Soccer, Rodeos, Music, Dance, Language, etc.)

Once students complete their chart have them refer to their Scenes of the Five Themes of Geography

and draw and title the next scene of "Movement".

Students will now begin to look at the idea of region. Begin by having them list differences and similarities of different parts of the school (math department vs. English department; Freshmen wing vs. senior wing, middle school vs. high school). They can list physical differences, differences in beliefs/values, interests, etc. Have the students share with a partner how they organized the school. Explain that they have just divided the school into different regions. The regions are perceptual regions because they are defined by their beliefs, not by specific lines or boundaries. Show students maps that have different types of regions (formal, functional, and perceptual regions) drawn and ask students to identify the type of region and explain why. **The discussion of regions introduces the essential question "How does my location affect my understanding and ideas of the world?"**

Have students enter their scene of "Region". Have students include what type of region their drawing represents.

Assessment: Movement & Region Theme Scenes, Movement Chart, School Regions Division, Discussion throughout class period

Day 4: Introduction of Performance Task

Students will begin to work on their project *Houston Needs*. Before they begin working on the actual project, they need to develop a plan of action for their group. Students, in groups of three, must first submit a "bid" to the teacher which provides details as to who will be responsible for what in the project. They must also include a brief (3-5 sentences) explanation of what they are going to design and why. Once the bid is approved students may begin working on the project in class.