



TLC Elementary School Lesson Plan U.S. Geography: The South

Subject

Geography

Grade level

3-5

Duration

Two to three class periods

Objectives

Students will

- learn about the South and its many geographic features;
- find and use media sources to research information on a specific physical feature of the South; and
- present information about the South's physical feature in a well-organized and well-researched oral report.

Materials

- Paper, pencils, and colored markers or crayons
- Posterboard
- Encyclopedias, atlases, and other library resources
- Computer with Internet access (optional)
- *U.S. Geography: The South* video and VCR

Procedure

1. Begin the lesson by reviewing the *U.S. Geography: The South* video. Ask students: What physical features does the program talk about? Make a class list of specific physical features that are found in the South.
2. Compare the following physical features, all found in the South, and have students note their differences and similarities:
 - Mississippi River
 - Chesapeake Bay
 - Florida Everglades
 - southern Appalachian Mountains (Blue Ridge and Great Smoky mountains)
 - South Carolina's Sea Islands
3. Briefly discuss the economy, culture, and geography of these Southern features. Help students become familiar with the terms *estuary*, *tributary*,

delta, and *wetland* and their association with any of the five physical features being discussed. Review the terms *weather* and *climate*, and then discuss the South's general weather and climate with students.

4. Divide the class into groups, and assign each one of the five physical features to research. Tell the groups to prepare an oral presentation for the class about their assigned feature. Each presentation should be a minimum of five minutes in length, maximum of 10 minutes. The presentations also should include the following aspects of each physical feature:
 - General overview of the feature, including its location and geographic definition
 - Physical map of the area
 - A visual aid
 - Weather and climate of the area
 - Environment, including types of animals and vegetation found in and around the area
 - Economy
 - Culture
 - Current environmental, cultural, or economic issues
5. Give students time in class and as a homework assignment to research their topics and prepare their oral reports. Then have each group present its information to the class. Students may use encyclopedias, atlases, and library and Internet resources to conduct their research. The Web sites listed below have information on each of the five physical features being researched.

Everglades

<http://www.nps.gov/ever/>
<http://www.florida-everglades.com/>

Mississippi River

<http://www.mississippiriverinfo.com/>
<http://www.greatriver.com/>

Chesapeake Bay

<http://www.acb-online.org/>
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/>
<http://chesapeake.usgs.gov/overview.html>

South Carolina Sea Islands

<http://www.co.beaufort.sc.us/bftlib/gullah.htm>
<http://www.islandpacket.com/man/gullah/index.html>
<http://www.discoversouthcarolina.com/scfacts/climate.asp>

Appalachian Mountains (Blue Ridge and Great Smoky mountains)

http://vulcan.wr.usgs.gov/LivingWith/VolcanicPast/Places/volcanic_past_appalachians.html
http://www.themoonlitroad.com/members/archives/mother/mother_cbg002.html
http://www.us-parks.com/US_National_Parks/great_smoky/great_smoky.shtml

6. Allow time for students to ask questions of their peers following each presentation. Once all presentations have been given, have students discuss what they learned about the South's physical features.

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students actively participated in class discussions and their group's oral presentation; worked cooperatively in research groups; oral presentation met time requirements and all eight criteria; delivered a well-organized, informative presentation; attentively listened to other presentations.

2 points: Students somewhat participated in class discussions and their group's oral presentation; worked somewhat cooperatively in research groups; oral presentation met time requirements and five criteria; delivered an informative presentation; somewhat listened to other presentations.

1 point: Students worked somewhat cooperatively in research groups; oral presentation met three or less criteria; delivered a disorganized or incomprehensive presentation; somewhat listened to other presentations.

Vocabulary

estuary

Definition: An area where freshwater and saltwater mix at the mouth of a river

Context: The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest estuary and the third largest in the world.

tributary

Definition: A smaller river that flow into a larger river

Context: The Mississippi River's tributaries are important for transporting food, equipment, and people, and they all provide water that creates the great power of the Mississippi.

wetland

Definition: Areas of land, such as tidal areas or swamps, where much of the soil is covered with water

Context: The Chesapeake Bay in Maryland has one of the largest wetland areas in the country.

delta

Definition: A large, triangular shape of land at the mouth of a river

Context: The marshes of the Mississippi Delta are some of the richest and most densely populated wildlife regions in North America.

weather

Definition: A description of the atmosphere's temperature, humidity, wind, and pressure on a daily basis

Context: The South's warmer weather and high rainfall each year create perfect conditions for farming.

climate

Definition: The measure of average weather patterns over a period of many years

Context: The South has a moderate climate, with hot summers and cold winters.

Academic Standards

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of the NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>.

This lesson plan addresses the following standards:

- Culture
- People, Places, and Environments
- Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- Global Connections

The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) provides 18 national geography standards that the geographically informed person knows and understands. To view the standards online, go to www.ncge.org.

This lesson plan addresses the following standards:

- Places and Regions
- Physical Systems
- Environment and Society

Credit

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