

OUTLINE

6th Grade Social Studies Network – 2015-6

Unit 1 – Foundations of World Geography

Part A. What is geographic inquiry? (MCCC Lessons 1 and 2)

GLCEs: 6G121 apply skills of geographic inquiry; 6G123 interpret maps of natural features

Activity: Where should we put our town? Choosing a location for something has been a fundamental geographic question throughout human history. To choose a settlement site, students must engage in the process of asking geographic questions and acquiring geographic information from maps.

Resources: desk maps and response forms; a powerpoint presentation serves as a discussion guide.

MCCC SuppMaterials.SS060101: Pages 1-3 graphic organizer, big idea page, word cards, Page 4 definitions of geography; Page 9 Graphic organizer; Pages 13-14 for teacher background

MCCC SS060102.Powerpoint: Steps in geographic inquiry.

Part B. Geographic tools/techniques (MCCC Lesson 3)

GLCEs: 6G122 maps vary; 6G123 interpret maps; 6G125 use GIS; 6G432 patterns of settlement

Activity: A map-based inquiry about locations of ancient cities (pattern, region, association, transition)

Resources: world ancient cities map; paper maps; markers; string; small movable objects; data table;

Powerpoint Presentations: Wake-up Call – Environments in Africa; 9 Books on 9 Tables

MCCC SuppMaterials.SS060103: Pages 1-3 graphic organizer, big idea page, word cards
4 geographic inquiry (as review of first lesson); 11-12ff What is GIS? (teacher background).

MCCC SS060103.Powerpoint: The maps in the MCCC supplements and presentations are useful in many ways; e.g. as a “mystery map of the week,” teaser to open discussion, example in other presentations, etc. CAVEAT: especially in diverse classrooms, where student experiences differ greatly, it is preferable in the first months to model a few specific inquiries rather than discuss a lot of maps abstractly or in ways that depend heavily on prior knowledge.

Part C. Themes of geography (MCCC Lessons 4 and 5)

GLCEs: 6G131 fundamental themes of geography; 6G21 and 6G22 characteristics of places

Activity: Where is my community? What are the conditions at this place?

How is this place connected to other places? How can I organize this geographic information?

Background: The human brain has several “hard-wired networks” to organize spatial information.

Region is just one of perhaps 7 or 8 different organizational “a priors.”

There are individual differences in student ability and preference for using these modes of reasoning.

How should these facts influence our choice of methods for teaching geography?

Here’s a key idea about all of the modes of spatial reasoning:

Preschoolers do them naturally, but grad students can still learn how to do them better.

Scaffolding Activities (if needed): All My Insides. Photos: How Are Places Similar or Different?

Resources: themes graphic organizer; themes presentation; photos of several other environments

MCC SS060104.doc Exploring maps, scale and symbols

MCCC SuppMaterials.SS060105 and SS060105. Powerpoint: Pages 1-3 perspectives; word cards

Part D. Asking geographic questions (MCCC Lesson 6)

GLCEs: 6G121 Skills of geographic inquiry; 6G131 fundamental themes; 6G111 map scales.

Activity: Snowfall in Michigan – asking geographic questions about simple thematic maps.

Resources: themes graphic organizer; clickable map of Michigan

MCCC SS060102.Powerpoint (repeat): Steps in geographic inquiry.

Note: MCCC Lessons 6 and 7 are useful background but do not address any of the new GLCEs.

MCCC Lesson 8 (“If the World Were a Village”) works better as a culminating activity. If you want a similar kind of discussion-provoking activity in Unit 1, we suggest comparing several pages in *Material World*.