

Community Connections With Geography and the Newspaper



Level Two:
How Communities Are Created

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Introduction

Geography and Civic Engagement

Geography is at the core of social studies. Whether the subject matter is history, economics, civics or current events, students must begin with a sense of where things are and how they fit into the world.

In social studies, civic engagement answers the question, “Why do we have to learn this?” Before we can care about the world and the people in it, before we can wonder about what came before, what is happening now and what is likely to happen in the future, we must feel we are part of a community connected to the greater world around us.

Without a sense of community, without a sense of place, civic engagement doesn’t happen. Without a sense of belonging and participating in the various communities that surround us, we have no reason to care or learn about them.

Instructional Levels

This curriculum is divided into two levels by complexity of the concepts in each.

Level One blends mapping skills with a discussion of the various communities to which everyone belongs as individuals. As students learn to make and interpret maps, the curriculum addresses local, regional, state and national identity, as well as government and community. This section is written with elementary students in mind, but the clarity of language will be helpful for anyone working to grasp these basic elements.

Level Two is designed for students with a basic grasp of maps and a sense of the levels of government and geographic division. It expands that understanding while discussing how communities create and maintain their identities, and while emphasizing how geography affects local economies, lifestyles and community identity. It is written with middle-school and older students in mind, but younger students who can grasp the more complex concepts will be likely to understand the language.

Lessons in both levels can be used independently or together. The cumulative assessment project is optional.

We hope that you and your students will enjoy learning about your community through this curriculum and through your local newspaper.

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Format Notes

Newspapers

Newspapers today come in several formats, including print, electronic or “e” editions, websites and mobile applications. The term “newspaper” refers to the format you prefer to use in class.

Students who have difficulty finding enough examples from today’s newspaper should review editions from previous days, either in print or in the archives for e-editions and websites.

Other Resources

These lessons are written in a way that encourages use of computers and interactive whiteboards as teaching and learning tools. However, we have attempted to pose questions so students can complete the activities using atlases, city maps, encyclopedias and other traditional reference materials.

Student handouts may be reproduced and distributed, or used with interactive whiteboards, overheads and other projection methods.

The appendix includes graphic organizers that are general and applicable to all lessons, as well as others designed for specific lessons. Review and select graphic organizers to use before, during and after your study of geography and the news. The first two organizers in the general category assess students’ knowledge and learning about community before and after using the curriculum.

Lesson Structure

Each lesson follows this outline:

- ▶ Standards (National Council for Geographic Education)
- ▶ Anticipatory Set
- ▶ Required Materials/Equipment
- ▶ Direct Instruction (handouts and online resources with information for classroom presentation)
- ▶ Extensions/Practice (graphic organizers)
- ▶ Assessment (exit slips or questions)

Optional Cumulative Assessment

In notebooks set aside for that purpose, have students respond to the question raised in the title of each lesson, keeping track of what they learn. Explain that they will use their notes to complete a project at the end of their study of how communities work. Ask them to include illustrations and other visual aids in their notebooks. Instruct them that they may choose from the following options or suggest their own creative approaches.

- ▶ Design an ad or brochure touting your community, including unique geographic features.
- ▶ Create a video that features key people and places in your community.
- ▶ Construct a representation of your community, including its geography.
- ▶ Develop a wiki about your community and its geography.
- ▶ Use a podcast or other medium to broadcast stories about your community.
- ▶ Construct a plan to address a local environmental concern.
- ▶ Blog about what you learn about geography and your community over the course of your study.
- ▶ Create a sculpture to stand at the entrance to a park in your community.

Design a rubric or develop one with your students to evaluate the culminating activity.

Geography Standards

This curriculum has been created with the specific intention of helping you meet national geography learning standards. You also will find it helpful in meeting geography standards of your state, which may vary from national standards.

Activities are also likely to help you address or meet standards in other social studies subjects, English language arts and other subject areas.

These national geography standards, endorsed by the [National Council for Geographic Education](#), were used in developing this curriculum.

The geographically informed person knows and understands:

The World in Spatial Terms

Geography studies relationships among people, places and environments by mapping information about them into a spatial context.

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools and technologies to acquire, process and report information from a spatial perspective.
2. How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places and environments in a spatial context.
3. How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places and environments on Earth's surface.

Places and Regions

The identities and lives of individuals and peoples are rooted in particular places in those human constructs called regions.

4. The physical and human characteristics of places.
5. That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity.
6. How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Physical Systems

Physical processes shape Earth's surface and interact with plant and animal life to create, sustain and modify ecosystems.

7. The physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth's surface.
8. The characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on Earth's surface.

Human Systems

People are central to geography in that human activities help shape Earth's surface, human settlements and structures are part of Earth's surface, and humans compete for control of Earth's surface.

9. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human population on Earth's surface.
10. The characteristics, distribution and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.
11. The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.
12. The processes, patterns and functions of human settlement.
13. How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.
14. How human actions modify the physical environment.

Environment and Society

The physical environment is modified by human activities, largely as a consequence of the ways in which human societies value and use Earth's natural resources. Human activities are also influenced by Earth's physical features and processes.

15. How physical systems affect human systems.
16. The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources.

The Uses of Geography

Knowledge of geography enables people to develop an understanding of the relationships among people, places and environments over time — that is, of Earth as it was, is and might be.

17. How to apply geography to interpret the past.
18. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Lesson 1: What Is Your Community?

Standards: 9, 10, 12

Anticipatory Set:

Students will begin to explore links between geography and history, and how various geographic factors influence choices.

Required Materials/Equipment:

Provide the three student handouts and print or digital newspapers. Use related and/or recommended websites.

Direct Instruction:

Present the handouts by reproducing or projecting them, sharing them verbally or having students offer the information in an oral presentation. Students should already know something about the pre-Columbian and colonial periods, but geographic issues may not have been emphasized. Encourage discussion of these basic, practical choices – why a community is built where it is and what a community's basic needs are. If desired, supplement the handouts with information from relevant websites. Allow 25-35 minutes for direct instruction.

Use the following information to check students' answers on the *Functional Locations* handout.

St. Louis, New Orleans and New York City are transport hubs situated on major rivers. The latter two are located at the junction of a major river with the sea, while the first is located near the junction of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

Auburn, Calif., was a gold-rush town built where gold was found. **Vail, Colo.**, was built as a resort at the foot of a mountain with ski-friendly slopes,

oriented so the sun wouldn't melt the snow too quickly. **Abilene, Kan.**, was a cow town built at the end of a rail line. It became a focal point for cattle drives from Texas and elsewhere in the region as cattle were moved to the slaughterhouses of Chicago.

Extension/Practice:

Select from the graphic organizers published in the appendix of this curriculum:

- ▶ Three graphic organizers (Needs vs. Wants, Basic Needs, So What About Your Community?) for Lesson 1.
- ▶ General organizers designed to introduce key terms and concepts that apply to all lessons in the curriculum.

Assessment:

Use answers to the following as exit slips to evaluate learning.

- ▶ Five things I learned today were ...
- ▶ One thing I learned that surprised me was ...
- ▶ I would like to learn more about ...

Optional Cumulative Assessment:

Prepare students for the final projects explained in the introduction to this curriculum. In their notebooks, they should respond to this question: "What is your community?"

Lesson 1: Student Handout 1

Why Are We Here?

To understand a community, one should know why it was built where it was.

People choose a place to live where they can find food, housing and other necessities. From earliest times, people have made these decisions based on where they live. As an example, let's look at some choices Native Americans made about where they lived before Europeans came to this hemisphere.

Great Plains people were mostly hunters who also farmed and fished. Their main food sources were bison, deer and other animals that roamed the plains seeking fresh grass. As the animals traveled, people followed the herds, moving their villages sometimes four or five times a year. Not just wanderers, they stayed in an area they knew and considered home but that might be in a circle 100 miles in diameter. Needing houses that could be moved easily, most lived in teepees made of buffalo hide wrapped around long poles.

The Eastern Woodlands had a greater variety of animals. Rich soil and plentiful water provided many other foods. Some animals migrated or hibernated in winter, but many stayed in one place most of the year. The people followed suit, hunting, farming

and fishing. An Iroquois village might not move for 20 or 30 years. Homes were large longhouses, so moving meant building wooden structures at the new site. The Iroquois people usually moved only after cutting most of the firewood in the area. They might shift only a few miles, just enough to reach a fresh patch of mature forest while young trees grew taller in the previous location.



In the Southwest, Pueblo tribes rarely moved. Because water can be scarce in the desert, they built villages near a large river or where they could dig productive wells to provide water for themselves and their crops. They often stayed for hundreds and even thousands of years in homes made of adobe bricks or carved out of caves.

Lesson 1: Student Handout 2

Functional Locations

Basic needs don't change.

By the time Europeans settled in America, they were doing much more farming than hunting for food. Many Europeans didn't hunt, farm or gather food at all. They bought it.

While Native Americans often traded among tribes, the trading process frequently incorporated a personal element. Events similar to modern-day craft fairs enabled people to swap their best work.

Trading was a full-time job for Europeans, so their economy was based on making large quantities of



things to sell. In fact, they first learned about North America because they were trying to reach China and India to buy and sell in those countries. Europeans built large, permanent cities. Although they traveled on business, they didn't move their cities.

For European traders, transportation was key. Ships carried large numbers of people and goods, so places for ships to load and unload became important. In the Old World, choosing a location for a city involved two decisions: where farmers, hunters and fishermen could bring food from the countryside; and where ships could dock on the seacoast or a large river.

Even when the details change, the basics do not. For pre-industrial and industrial cultures alike, communities must provide people with ways to feed themselves and obtain goods they need.

With an atlas of the United States or an online mapping service, find the following cities. For each, tell how geography determined why the city was built there.

1. St. Louis _____

2. New York City _____

3. New Orleans _____

Use an encyclopedia or online resource to learn why these communities were built where they were, and what role geography played in that decision.

1. Auburn, Calif. _____

2. Vail, Colo. _____

3. Abilene, Kan. _____

Lesson 1: Student Handout 3

Community Characteristics

Let's start with important questions: What is your community? Is it a city, a town or several towns?

Some communities are one town or city with a very distinct personality. Others are a larger area with a regional name that people agree fits them. Several towns may be in the area, which may even stretch over a state border. But people who live there work and shop in the same places. School sports teams play each other and individuals feel like a community.

One way to help define a community is by what it shares. That often begins with geography. A river, mountains or another geographic feature may dominate the area and may even be why the community was founded.

To discuss communities, you will use the local newspaper – a good tool because of how newspapers work. Some magazines serve sports fans, some appeal to music lovers, some target older readers and some are for kids. The same is true with radio stations, which vary in format: country, rock, rap, news, sports, talk and more.



Newspapers try to reach everyone in their communities, regardless of age, gender or interests. Geography shapes newspapers, so news coverage reflects the physical boundaries of local, state and regional communities.

Lesson 2: Why Live Here?

Standard: 12

Anticipatory Set:

Students will assess their community to examine geographic features that attracted people before industrialization.

Required Materials/Equipment:

Provide the student handout and print or digital newspapers. Use related and/or recommended websites.

Direct Instruction:

Present the handout by reproducing or projecting it, sharing it verbally or having students offer the information in an oral presentation. Allow 35-45 minutes for direct instruction, including online instruction.

Discuss the significance of choices outlined on the handout.

1. Existing Native American settlements suggest good soil, access to water and other factors that made living there equally attractive to European settlers.
2. Places that Native Americans visited occasionally suggest specific attributes that may have the same or different significance in later times. For instance, a place with accessible deposits of flint or obsidian might have inspired regular visits for toolmaking. Some people visited a specific area to fish or gather berries before winter.
3. Areas such as a major river that could be forded or a pass through a mountain range were roadways then, just as they would be later.
4. Places that were not attractive to pre-industrial people may have had attributes that drew future settlers. For instance, neither Iroquois nor Algonquins went into New York's Adirondack Mountains often because the forests were too thick and game was too scarce. But the need for timber brought loggers in later years and almost destroyed the forests.

Note: The Associated Press Stylebook was used as a style guide for this curriculum. For the indigenous tribes of the United States, the stylebook says: "American Indian or Native American is acceptable for those in the U.S. Follow the person's preference. Where possible, be precise and use the name of the tribe."

Online Instruction: Place Names

Ask students to search online for place names derived from languages of indigenous tribes. Start the research with this Wikipedia article and its references: <http://tinyurl.com/yz9xv15>. Discuss why facts need to be verified and have students verify what they learn from Wikipedia and other websites.

Extension/Practice:

Select from graphic organizers published in the appendix of this curriculum:

- ▶ Four graphic organizers (My Community, Another Community, Whole Community, Learning From Classmates) for Lesson 2.
- ▶ General organizers designed to introduce key terms and concepts that apply to all lessons in the curriculum.

Assessment: Use answers to the following as exit slips to evaluate learning.

- ▶ Something that really helped me in my learning today was ...
- ▶ The connection that made me say "I get it!" was ...
- ▶ Something I still don't understand is ...

Optional Cumulative Assessment:

Prepare students for the final projects explained in the introduction to this curriculum. In their notebooks, they should respond to this question: Why would anyone pick this place to live?

Lesson 2: Student Handout

Why Are We Here?

The first step to understanding your community is to determine why people live there. With a little research, you'll find that the answer mixes history and geography.

Start at the beginning:

Before European settlers arrived, how did people who lived here use this area?

_____ They had villages in the area.

_____ They visited for specific reasons.

What reasons?

_____ They passed through on their way elsewhere.

Traveling how? _____

_____ They rarely came here.

See what evidence you can find in your newspaper of people who lived or visited here before settlers arrived. In looking at news and feature stories, photographs and advertisements, how many of the following items can you find? Give examples in the blanks. (NOTE: Look for specific local terms. A sports team called "Chiefs" or a store called "Trading Post" does not reflect local heritage.)

Place names based on Native American words _____

People descended from Native Americans who lived here _____

Lesson 2: Student Handout *(Continued)*

Tourist attractions highlighting Native American culture _____

Businesses using Native American names or logos _____

Below, list some physical features of your area and explain how they might have influenced the way Native Americans viewed your area before settlers arrived.



Lesson 3: What Is the Geography of Your Community?

Standards: 14, 15

Anticipatory Set:

Students will build on the previous lesson by examining the geography of their community in light of its appeal to settlers.

Required Materials/Equipment:

Provide the student handout and print or digital newspapers. Use related and/or recommended websites.

Direct Instruction:

Make students aware of how place names reflect geography and history. Besides the ethnicity of early settlers that may be revealed in names of towns, streets and other features, they should know that, for instance, words such as “mills” or “quarry” in place names suggest early industry.

Also, explain that even minor stories can reflect geography and history. While a story about required cleanup from old mining operations may seem more reflective of history, even news of a new parking lot at a public beach may involve a geographic feature that lured early settlers to stop at that particular spot. Allow 45-55 minutes for direct instruction, including online instruction.

Online Instruction: Google Earth

Google Earth gives you the ability to “fly over” your area, tilting your perspective as you zoom in to reveal a variety of geographic features. Identify each and discuss whether it would be seen as a positive or negative for early settlers. In addition, Google Earth shows areas such as quarries that can prompt discussion of local industries based on geographic features.

If you have not used Google Earth, be aware that while it is user-friendly, you should plan to familiarize yourself with it before using it in class. A guide for educators is available: <http://sitescontent.google.com/google-earth-for-educators>. For other examples, see the online resources at the end of this curriculum.

Extension/Practice:

Select from graphic organizers published in the appendix of this curriculum:

- ▶ Two graphic organizers (Natural Environment, Drawing Conclusions) for Lesson 3.
- ▶ General organizers designed to introduce key terms and concepts that apply to all lessons in the curriculum.

Assessment:

Use answers to the following as exit slips to evaluate learning.

- ▶ Two things I found interesting were ...
- ▶ The most important thing I learned today is ...
- ▶ I still have a question about ...

Optional Cumulative Assessment:

Prepare students for the final projects explained in the introduction to this curriculum. In their notebooks, they should respond to this question: What are the geographic features of your community?

Lesson 3: Student Handout

Geographic Features and Your Community

What are the main physical features of your community that settlers looking to establish themselves would notice? List specific names of rivers, lakes, mountains, etc., but also give general descriptions of the land.

What are names of towns and villages in your community? What can you learn about the first settlers in your area from some of those names?

Write down three place names from your area that reflect local history or early settlers and tell what each name reveals.

1.

2.

3.

Lesson 4: What Built Your Community's Economy?

Standards: 11, 17

Anticipatory Set:

Students will focus on specific ways in which geography contributed to growth of their community.

Required Materials/Equipment:

Provide the student handout and print or digital newspapers. Use related and/or recommended websites.

Direct Instruction:

Present the handout by reproducing or projecting it, sharing it verbally or having students offer the information in an oral presentation. Allow 20-30 minutes for direct instruction, not including online instruction.

Online Instruction: Newspaper Archives

Some newspapers have extensive online archives – going back decades or even a century or more – that you can use with your class. Newspaper archives also may be available on microfilm at your local library. In some cases, you may be able to make digital images for classroom use. You also may want to extend extra credit to students who visit the library and conduct research in your local newspaper's archives as well as the archives of newspapers that once existed in your community.

Have students look through at least two weeks' worth of newspapers from a century ago and 125 years ago. Ask: What prominent products and services were offered by businesses in your community, according to news reports and advertisements? What transportation improvements were discussed? What jobs were discussed or advertised?



Extension/Practice:

Select from graphic organizers published in the appendix of this curriculum:

- ▶ Two graphic organizers (Available Goods and Services, Local Goods and Services) for Lesson 4.
- ▶ General organizers designed to introduce key terms and concepts that apply to all lessons in the curriculum.

Assessment:

Use answers to the following as exit slips to evaluate learning.

- ▶ Two things that I found interesting were ...
- ▶ The most important thing I learned today is ...
- ▶ I still have a question about ...

Optional Cumulative Assessment:

Prepare students for the final projects explained in the introduction to this curriculum. In their notebooks, they should respond to this question: What built your community's economy?

Lesson 4: Student Handout

Building an Economy

What were the best methods of transportation in your community when it was founded? How did those encourage or discourage certain types of businesses?



How did the climate affect the types of work people could do in your community?

What natural resources were used in creating work when your community was young?

Lesson 5: How Does Geography Affect Lifestyles?

Standards: 5, 6

Anticipatory Set:

Students will examine the ways geography affects daily choices in areas such as architecture, clothing, food and recreation.

Required Materials/Equipment:

Provide the student handout and print or digital newspapers. Use related and/or recommended websites.

Direct Instruction:

Present the handout by reproducing or projecting it, sharing it verbally or having students offer the information in an oral presentation. Allow 45-55 minutes for direct instruction, including online instruction and additional discussion.

Online Instruction:

Different Communities

Have students visit 50states.com to find the online edition of the newspaper serving the community they want to contrast with their own. Perform the same exercise using that newspaper to find advertisements, photos and stories featuring consumer goods that, because of climate differences, would not sell well in your community.

After students have shared their findings, turn to more serious discussions of climate, terrain and architecture. For instance, in a hurricane-prone area like the Caribbean, concrete block construction is used to withstand strong winds. But as seen in Haiti, this type of rigid construction

turned deadly in the 2010 earthquake because forces acting on buildings were different than those that occur during hurricanes. Geographic areas reflect distinctive architectural traditions that give people protection against the most likely threats to safety.

Extension/Practice:

Select from graphic organizers published in the appendix of this curriculum:

- ▶ Three graphic organizers (Special Events, Things Change, Food Reflects Community) for Lesson 5.
- ▶ General organizers designed to introduce key terms and concepts that apply to all lessons in the curriculum.

Assessment:

Use answers to the following as exit slips to evaluate learning.

- ▶ Outside of class, I can apply knowledge from this lesson to ...
- ▶ Three things I learned today were ...
- ▶ I wish we could spend more time on ...

Optional Cumulative Assessment:

Prepare students for the final projects explained in the introduction to this curriculum. In their notebooks, they should respond to this question: How does geography affect lifestyles?

Lesson 5: Student Handout

Geography and Lifestyles

Climate and weather are not the same. But weather averages out in a way that reflects climate, and people make decisions about their lives based on the climates of their communities.

For instance, in a community with a warm climate, you could build a school comprised of smaller buildings with open walkways between them so students could breathe fresh air as they walk from class to class. But in a cold climate with frosty winters, students would get more than a breath of fresh air on that walk. In such a place, one large building makes more sense.



Other geographic features of your community affect simple decisions. If you live near mountains, you may ski regularly. If you live near the ocean, you may own a surfboard. If you live in the desert, you probably don't have a snowmobile.

Climate and terrain help determine the types of buildings in a community, as well as the way people dress, the types of recreation they enjoy and even what kinds of food they eat.

Identify an American community whose climate and terrain differ greatly from your community's climate and terrain. _____

Look through the newspaper for stories, photos and advertisements that feature products and services suitable for your community's climate and terrain, but that might not sell at all in the other community. Note your findings here.

Lesson 5: Student Handout *(Continued)*

Name a well-known building in your community that might have to be redesigned for the other community, then list two of the necessary changes.

Building _____

Change #1 _____

Change #2 _____



Lesson 6: Who Lives in Your Community?

Standards: 6, 10

Anticipatory Set:

Students will examine demographics, including ethnicity, of their community.

Required Materials/Equipment:

Provide the student handout and print or digital newspapers. Use related and/or recommended websites.

Direct Instruction:

Present the handout by reproducing or projecting it, sharing it verbally or having students offer the information in an oral presentation. Allow 35-45 minutes for direct and online instruction.

Make students aware that simple reasons may explain patterns of immigration. Cornish tin miners once came to U.S. mining communities seeking work. Cuban refugees clustered in Miami to remain close to their homeland. But geography does not explain the community of Somali refugees in Lewiston, Maine, which has little in common with the Horn of Africa. Exploring the current ethnic mix of your community may spark interesting extra-credit research projects involving oral histories and other sources.

Online Instruction: Who Lives Here?

For further exploration of who lives in the community, provide students with access to information available online. If students do not have access to individual computers, use an LCD projector or interactive whiteboard to display information.

Access the latest information available from the 2010 U.S. Census: quick facts at <http://quickfacts.census.gov> and teaching materials at www.census.gov/schools.

Access information available from The Nielsen Company, best known for its television program ratings.

Nielsen offers a Web page, www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp, where you can enter a ZIP code and see profiles of types of people who live there. These informal snapshots provide a fun way to start classroom discussions about where “stereotyping” and “smart marketing” come together. You must be a subscriber to delve deeply into the details.

Acquire charts of demographic information by entering a ZIP code at www.zipskinny.com. At the bottom of the page, click on “schools” to find your school’s demographic information. You may also compare demographics for different ZIP codes.

Extension/Practice:

Select from graphic organizers published in the appendix of this curriculum:

- ▶ Two graphic organizers (Photos, A Planned Community) for Lesson 6.
- ▶ General organizers designed to introduce key terms and concepts that apply to all lessons in the curriculum.

Assessment:

Use answers to the following as exit slips to evaluate learning.

- ▶ I think the most important thing to remember from today’s class is ...
- ▶ What I learned today will be useful in my life because ...
- ▶ Please explain more about ...

Optional Cumulative Assessment:

Prepare students for the final projects explained in the introduction to this curriculum. In their notebooks, they should respond to this question: Who are the people in your community?

Lesson 6: Student Handout

Who Are the People in Your Community?

We've talked about people who were here before the settlers, and about the settlers. What about people who came later?

Why do people come to a new community? Some choose to do so, hoping to find new jobs and new sights. Some are forced to leave their former homes because of physical danger or a collapsing economy. Whatever the reason, they decide based on what they expect to find in their new home.

Who has chosen to come to your community?

Visit www.epodunk.com and look up your community. In the box in the upper right corner, type your town or city name. Once on your community's page, look for "Census" in the left column. Under "Census and Demographics," click on the ancestry link. Write down the top 10 major ancestry groups of people in your community. Compare this to lists compiled by students looking at other towns in your area.

How does this information differ from what you have learned in history classes about groups that settled in your area? Have historical changes occurred in your community that might explain these differences? Have changes taken place in the world that might explain them?

How are ethnicity and culture evident in your community? Do names of people, towns or streets reveal something of the heritage of your community?

Look through the newspaper and write brief descriptions below of stories, photographs and advertisements that reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of your community.

Lesson 7: What Environmental Challenges Affect Your Community?

Standards: 16, 18

Anticipatory Set:

Students will examine and discuss their community in terms of current and future environmental challenges.

Required Materials/Equipment:

Provide the student handout and print or digital newspapers. Use related and/or recommended websites.

Direct Instruction:

Present the handout by reproducing or projecting it, sharing it verbally or having students offer the information in an oral presentation. Allow 40-50 minutes for direct instruction, including online instruction.

Online Instruction: The Environment

Help students identify environmental concerns in the news. While Superfund cleanup sites, landfill issues and emissions testing of vehicles will be clearly topical for this exercise, students may need prompting to consider news items about noise ordinances and other issues that affect fewer people as environmental challenges.

What should be done about solid waste?

Visit www.learner.org/interactives/garbage/intro.html. This Annenberg Foundation site discusses various options, along with their pros and cons.

Visit www.epa.gov/superfund/students/class_act/haz-ed/hazindex.htm. Here, the Environmental Protection Agency engages students in a study of science and public policy. The site offers lesson plans, tools and information about hazardous waste sites and Superfund.

Extension/Practice:

Select from graphic organizers published in the appendix of this curriculum:

- ▶ Two graphic organizers (Researching a Problem, Essential Questions: Two Sides) that apply to Lesson 7.
- ▶ General organizers designed to introduce key terms and concepts that apply to all lessons in the curriculum.

Assessment:

Use answers to the following as exit slips to evaluate learning.

- ▶ Four new things I learned today were ...
- ▶ I think this lesson was important because ...
- ▶ I wish we could ...

Optional Cumulative Assessment:

Before choosing projects explained in the introduction to this curriculum, have students complete their note-taking. In their notebooks, they should respond to this question: What environmental challenges does your community face?

Lesson 7: Student Handout

Environmental Challenges Over Time

In the early days of the United States, people who lived here thought the bounty of this land would last forever.

But excessive hunting brought about extermination of the passenger pigeon. Irresponsible logging devastated forests and clogged rivers and streams with erosion. Poor agricultural practices brought about the disasters of the Dust Bowl.

Meanwhile, cities were choked with smoke and soot from wood and coal furnaces that powered factories and heated homes. Rivers and lakes became dumping areas for garbage and sewage.

Much damage done then was unintentional. People didn't understand how their actions could hurt what they felt was an enormous natural world.

Today's citizens are beginning to understand the importance of environmental practices in industry and in their personal lives.

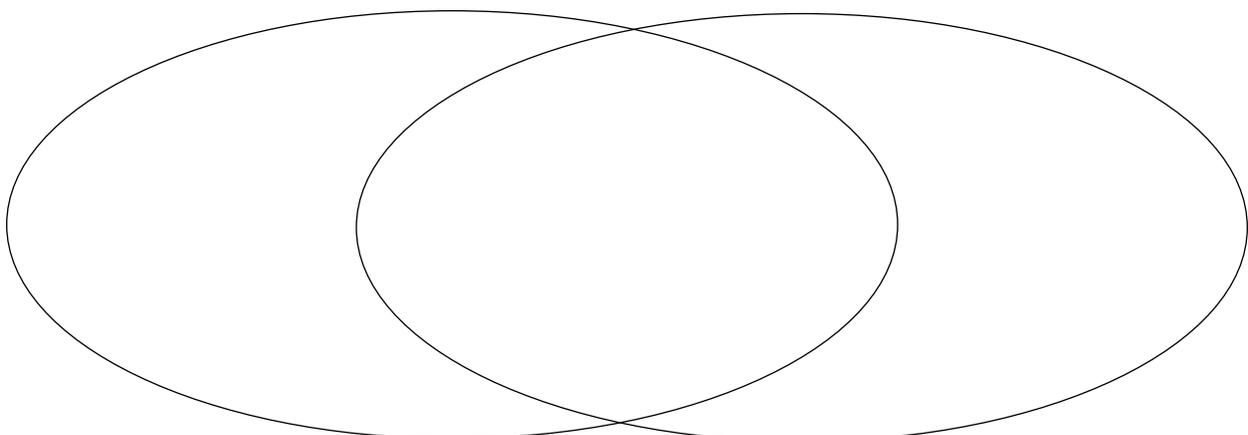
What will our communities look like a century from now? How will people make a living then? What will the climate be like? What sorts of recreation will be popular? Whatever happens then will be a result of what happens now, and that is up to us. Let's start by looking at our communities.

Search the newspaper for stories and photos that touch on environmental challenges facing your community. On a separate sheet, draw a larger version of the diagram below. Write brief descriptions on your diagram of challenges involving business and industry, challenges involving individuals, and challenges facing both groups.

Business and Industry

Both

Individual



Graphic Organizers

The following graphic organizers provide students with background for effective use of newspapers and geography lessons in this guide. The general organizers apply to any lesson, while the other organizers extend the work on concepts in specific lessons.

General

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Specific

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General Graphic Organizer

Before – What Do You Know?

Before starting the lessons on geography and the news, rate your knowledge below:

Topic	Not familiar	A little familiar	Very familiar
My community			
My state			
My country			
Other countries			

What sources of information have you used to learn about your community?

Your state?

Your country?

Other countries?

What else would you like to know?

General Graphic Organizer

After – What Do You Know?

Having studied geography and the news, rate your knowledge below:

Topic	Not familiar	A little familiar	Very familiar
My community			
My state			
My country			
Other countries			

For the lessons on geography and the news, what sources did you use to learn about your community?

Your state? _____

Your country? _____

Other countries? _____

What else do you want to know? _____

Where will you look for information about your community, state, nation and other countries in the future?

Will you use newspapers and other news sources to learn about your community?

How will you share interesting and significant news stories with your friends?

General Graphic Organizer

Get Acquainted With Community Newspapers

Do you know the different sources of news for your community, state, nation and other countries? Explain your answers using specific examples. Be sure to look for datelines and note whether your newspaper places them on local stories. Your newspaper might include references to local places in stories and photo captions as an alternative to using datelines.

Primary Newspaper

1. What's the name of your local newspaper? _____
2. Does it publish only local news? (circle one) yes no
3. What areas does it serve? _____

4. Does it include state news? (circle one) yes no
5. Does it include stories from The Associated Press or other wire services?
(circle one) yes no
6. What sections or special pages explain what it includes? _____

Secondary Newspaper

1. What's the name of your regional newspaper? _____
2. What areas does it serve? _____

3. Does it include news about the state? (circle one) yes no
4. Does it include news about the nation? (circle one) yes no
5. What sections or special pages explain what it includes? _____

NEXT STEP: What other information sources exist in your community? Interview students in your class and school as well as adults in your community to find out where they obtain news and information. If you know people involved in local government or people who are particularly informed about news, be sure to ask them where they obtain information. Why do they use those news sources? What makes their sources reliable?

General Graphic Organizer

Understanding Community

Define community using a print or online dictionary. Complete the chart using what you and other students know and learn from studying your own and other newspapers.

What is it?

Our community

What other communities are like ours?

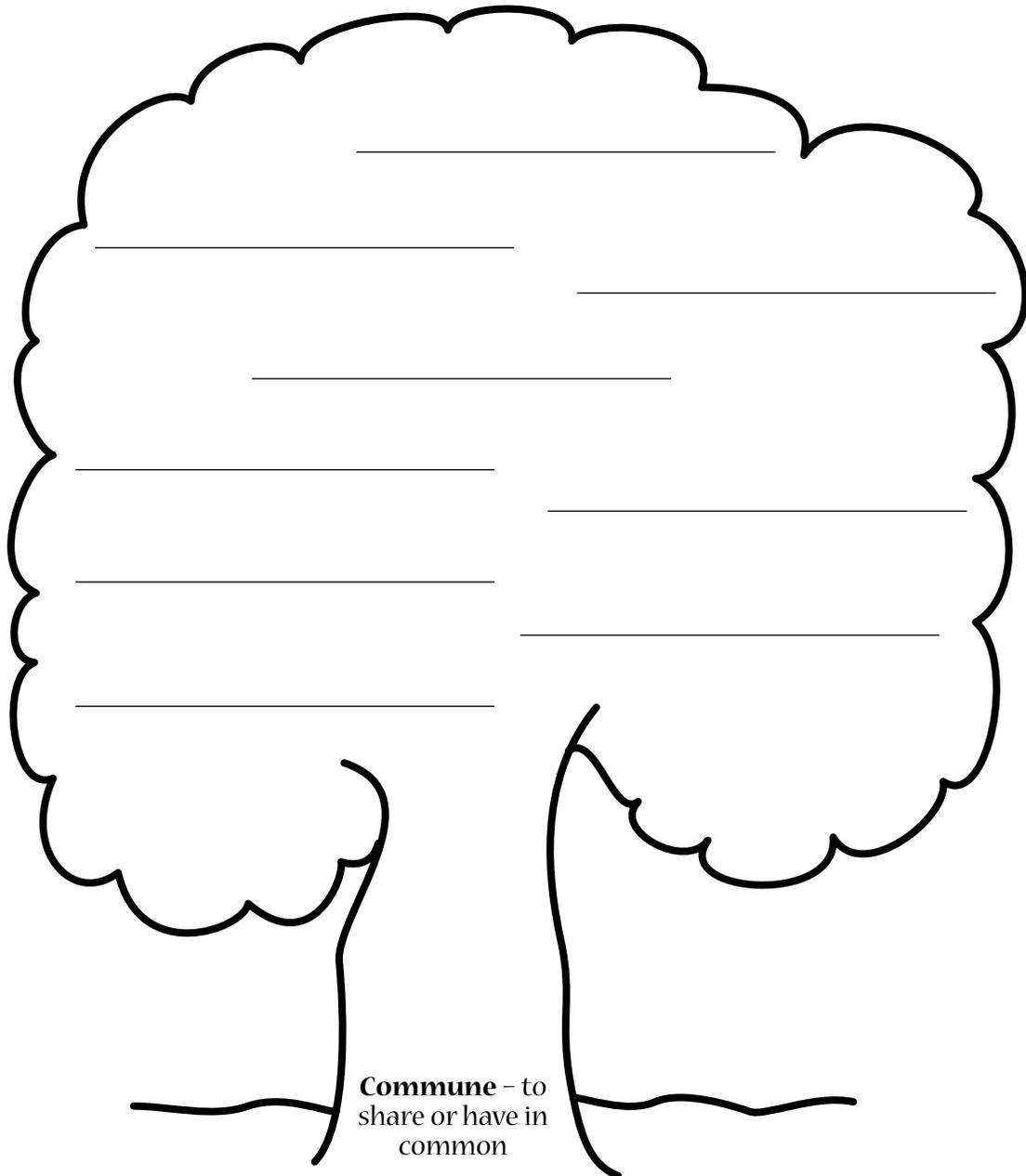
What are some examples of community or sharing?

Identify a community that is divided. What is causing citizens to disagree?

General Graphic Organizer

The Root Word for "Community"

Use newspapers to locate words that share the word "**commune**," the root word on which "**community**" is based. Search available newspaper archives. Write the words you find on the tree.



Check (✓) words you know and use. Underline words new to you. When you use the new words in writing or conversation or find them in other reading, check them.

General Graphic Organizer

The Root for "Geography"

Use newspapers to locate words that include "geo," the root for the word "geography." Search available newspaper archives. Write the words you find on the tree.

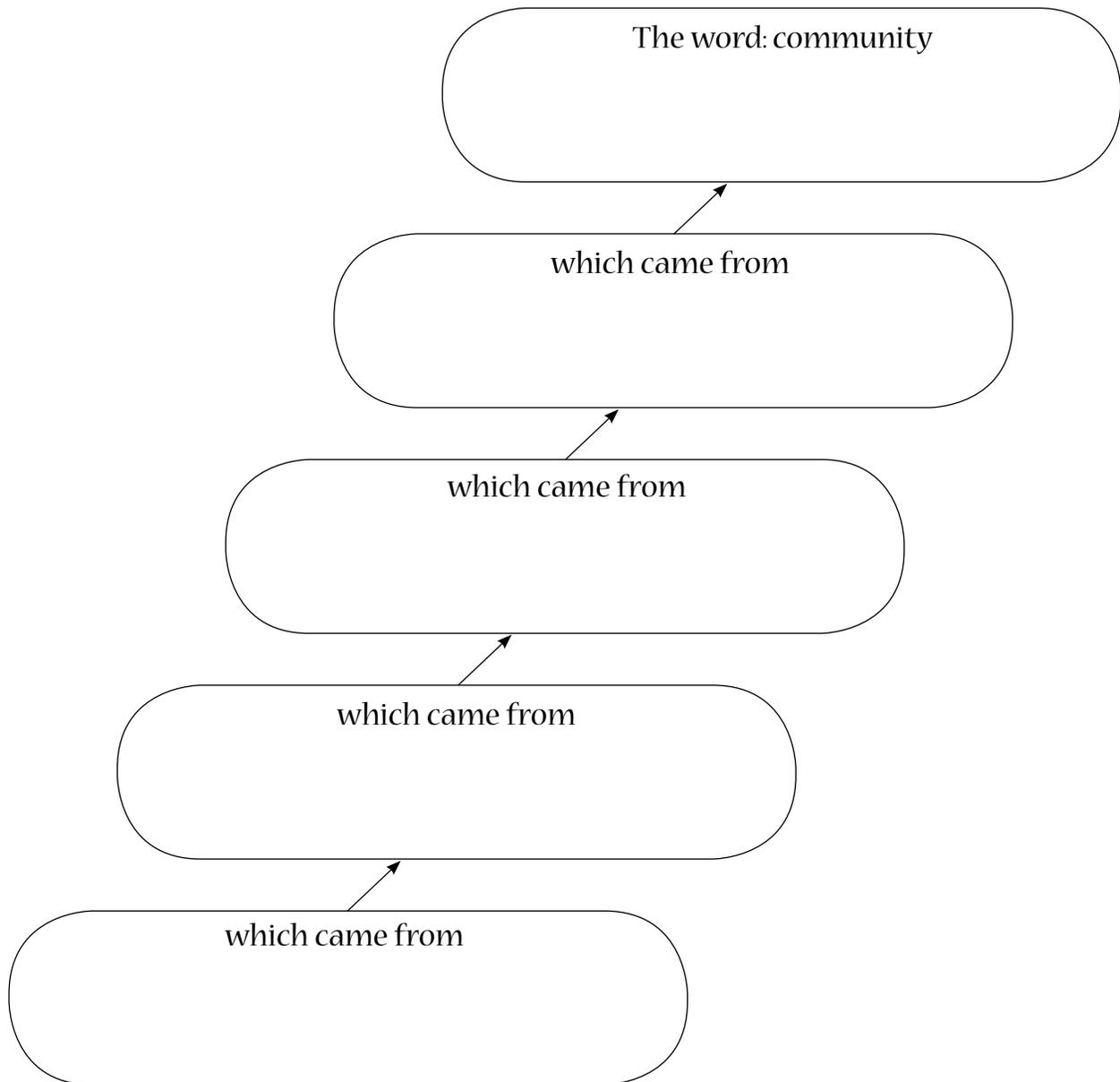
Geo - of or
relating to Earth

Check (✓) words that you know and use. Underline words new to you. When you use the new words in writing or conversation or find them in other reading, check them.

General Graphic Organizer

How Words Develop

Use print and online dictionaries to learn when and how the word “community” developed. In each oval, report the language, word and meaning of the word that explains the origin and current use of the word “community.” Ignore ovals you do not need.



Use print and online dictionaries to trace development of the word “geography.” Record your findings on the back of this sheet.

General Graphic Organizer

Time and Place

Choose a story from your newspaper and answer the following questions about its setting.

What is the topic? _____

TIME

When does the story take place?

How do you know?

PLACE

Where does the story take place?

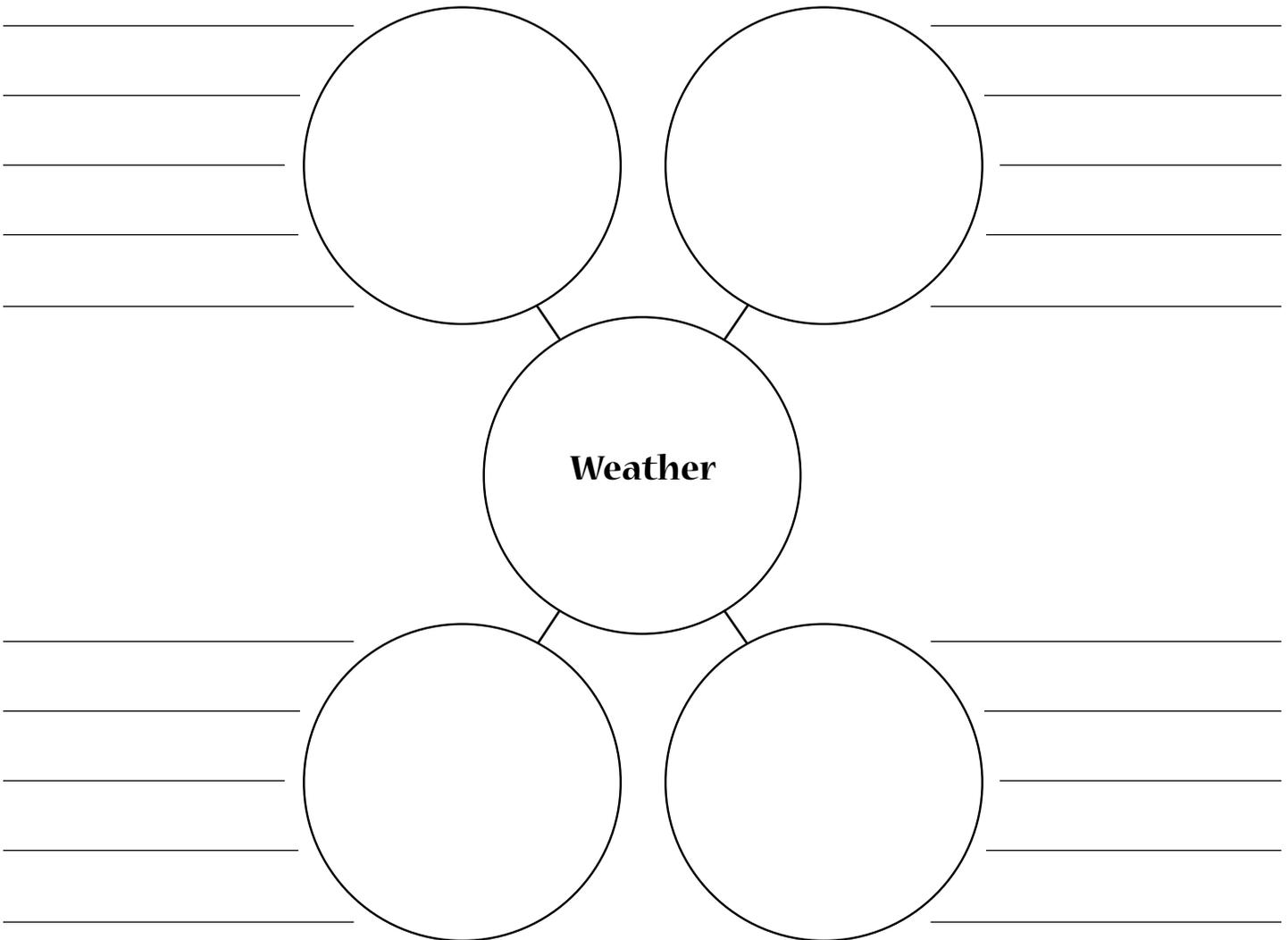
How do you know?

Why do you and other readers need to know the setting? How does the setting affect events described in the story?

General Graphic Organizer

Weather

Using news stories and reports about area weather, record what occurs over an extended period. List the different weather conditions in the circles and characteristics of each on the lines.



What clues do weather conditions provide about the climate of your community?

General Graphic Organizer

Study Guide

Working in groups of no more than five, choose and carefully study a newspaper story about your community. Below, answer the questions about the story.

1. Remembering (retrieve)

Who committed the action? _____

What is the action? _____

When did the action take place? _____

Where did the action take place? _____

2. Understanding (summarize)

Retell or give the main idea. _____

3. Applying (carry out)

Why is (the specific event) significant? _____

4. Analyzing (compare)

How does (the problem in the story) compare with (another problem)? _____

5. Evaluating (judge)

Do you agree with a viewpoint offered by someone in the story? _____

What do you think? _____

6. Creating (plan)

Devise an action plan to solve the problem and present your plan to a group of students, parents, school and/or community officials. _____

What feedback did you receive on your plan? How did that affect your thinking?

General Graphic Organizer

Levels of Thinking and Reasoning

From your newspaper, choose a story about your community that interests and/or involves you and is likely to appeal to other students in your class. Write a question for each level, then have a classmate read the story and answer the questions. Ask for a critique of the questions.

Headline: _____ Writer: _____ Newspaper: _____ Date: _____
Create
Evaluate
Analyze
Apply
Understand
Remember

NEXT STEP: Answer the following questions.

- Did the story appeal to your classmate?
- Did your classmate offer complete answers to the questions?
- Did your classmate recommend any changes to the questions?

Specific Graphic Organizer

What Is Your Community?

Needs Vs. Wants (Lesson 1, Extension 1)

Even though basic needs don't change, people often decide they "need" many things after those things become important to maintaining their lifestyles. How would you classify transportation and communication? How would you classify intangibles such as connections with family and friends?

From your newspaper, select and compile a list that represents today's needs and wants.

Needs	Wants

NEXT STEP: Answer the following questions.

- Do you and your classmates agree on what belongs in each category?
- How do you acquire items that you need or want?
- Do items appear under needs and wants today that would not appear when Native Americans and/or early European settlers populated the land?

Specific Graphic Organizer

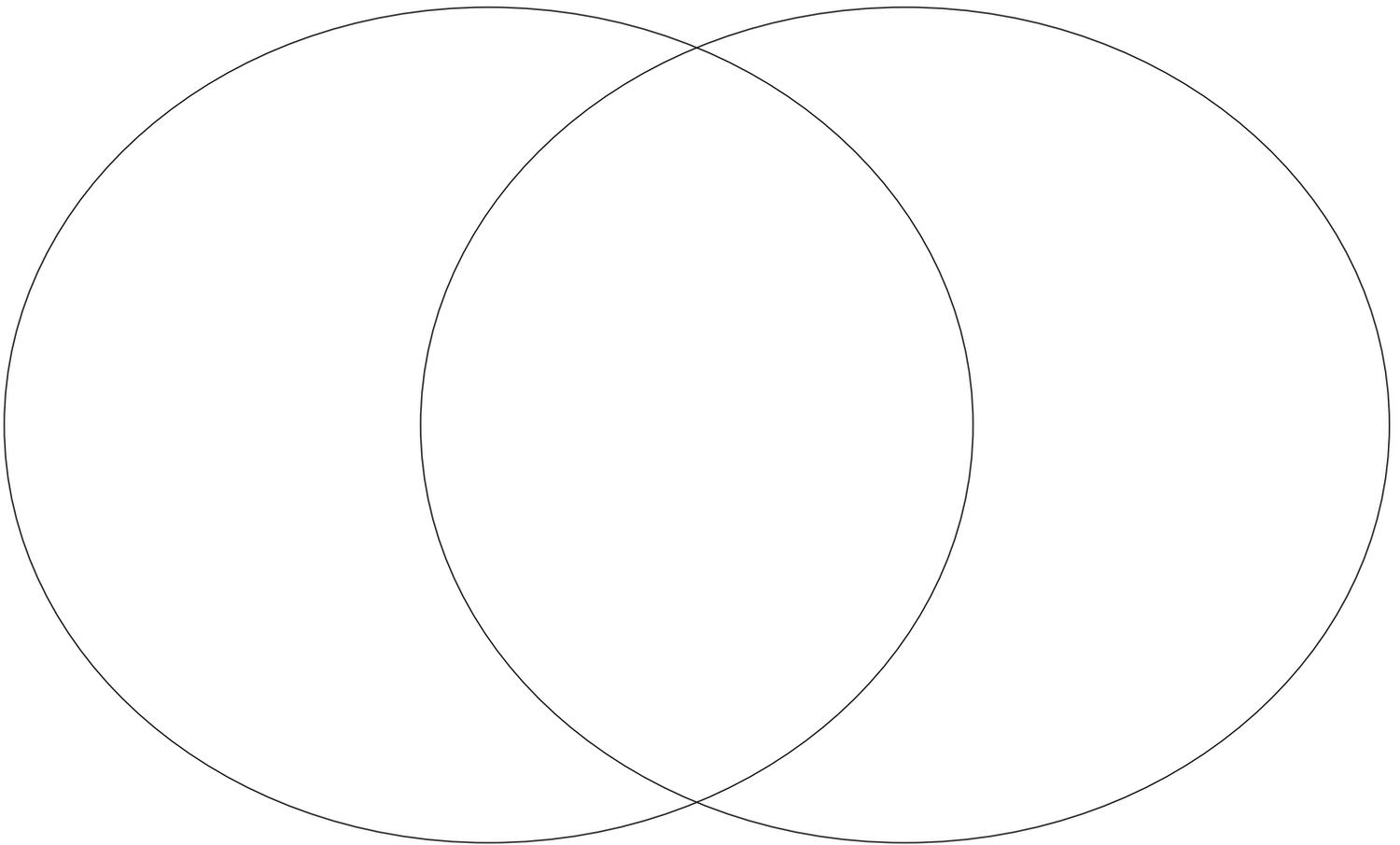
What Is Your Community?

Basic Needs (Lesson 1, Extension 2)

Choose a time described in the student handout for this lesson. Compare your needs and wants with needs and wants during that period in history. Select one: food, clothing or shelter. In the diagram below, using your handout and information from the newspaper, write what represents wants and needs specific to that historical period and today.

Earlier Period

Now



NEXT STEP: Answer the following questions.

- What effects do pressing needs and wants have on your community?
- Are members of your community coming together in an effort to meet a specific need or want?
- Is there disagreement about how best to meet a specific need or want?

Specific Graphic Organizer

What Is Your Community?

So What About Your Community? (Lesson 1, Extension 3)

Newspapers aim to reach everyone. In your newspaper, you'll find information that appeals to different groups in your community and information that interests and/or affects everyone.

Identify stories, ads and any other items in your newspaper that affect and/or appeal to a broad range of citizens. Write short descriptions.

Identify stories, ads and any other items in the newspaper that affect and/or appeal to specific groups. Write short descriptions.

Broad appeal	Specific appeal – name of group

NEXT STEP: Answer the following questions.

- Why did you place items in the two categories?
- What makes something important to an entire community?
- What makes news and information in a newspaper appeal to specific groups?
- Do other students agree with you on news and information that appeal to all?

Specific Graphic Organizer

Why Live Here?

My Community (Lesson 2, Extension 1)

If you were explaining your community to a friend who lives somewhere else, what would you say? Choose items from the newspaper to support or illustrate your points. Look for people, places and events. Display what you choose, record your choices below and write your friend a letter.

Will you send the letter by regular mail or e-mail? Do you prefer receiving a letter in the mail or by e-mail? What is the difference?

Positive aspects of my community

Negative aspects of my community

Positive aspects of my community	Negative aspects of my community

NEXT STEP: Think about how you could promote your community. For example, consider one of these activities:

- Write an entry for a blog that focuses on your community.
- Design an ad that might run in faraway newspapers and attract visitors to your community.
- Design a brochure featuring the most positive attributes of your community.

What else could you do?

Specific Graphic Organizer

Why Live Here?

Another Community (Lesson 2, Extension 2)

Ask family members or friends to mail you a copy of their local newspapers. Check out the websites of those newspapers. Based on what you see in the newspapers, how would you describe the other community? Use the diagram below to record your answers. **Note:** You also may choose a website for a newspaper in a community that interests you and read stories on that site for this activity.

Positive aspects of the other community	Negative aspects of the other community

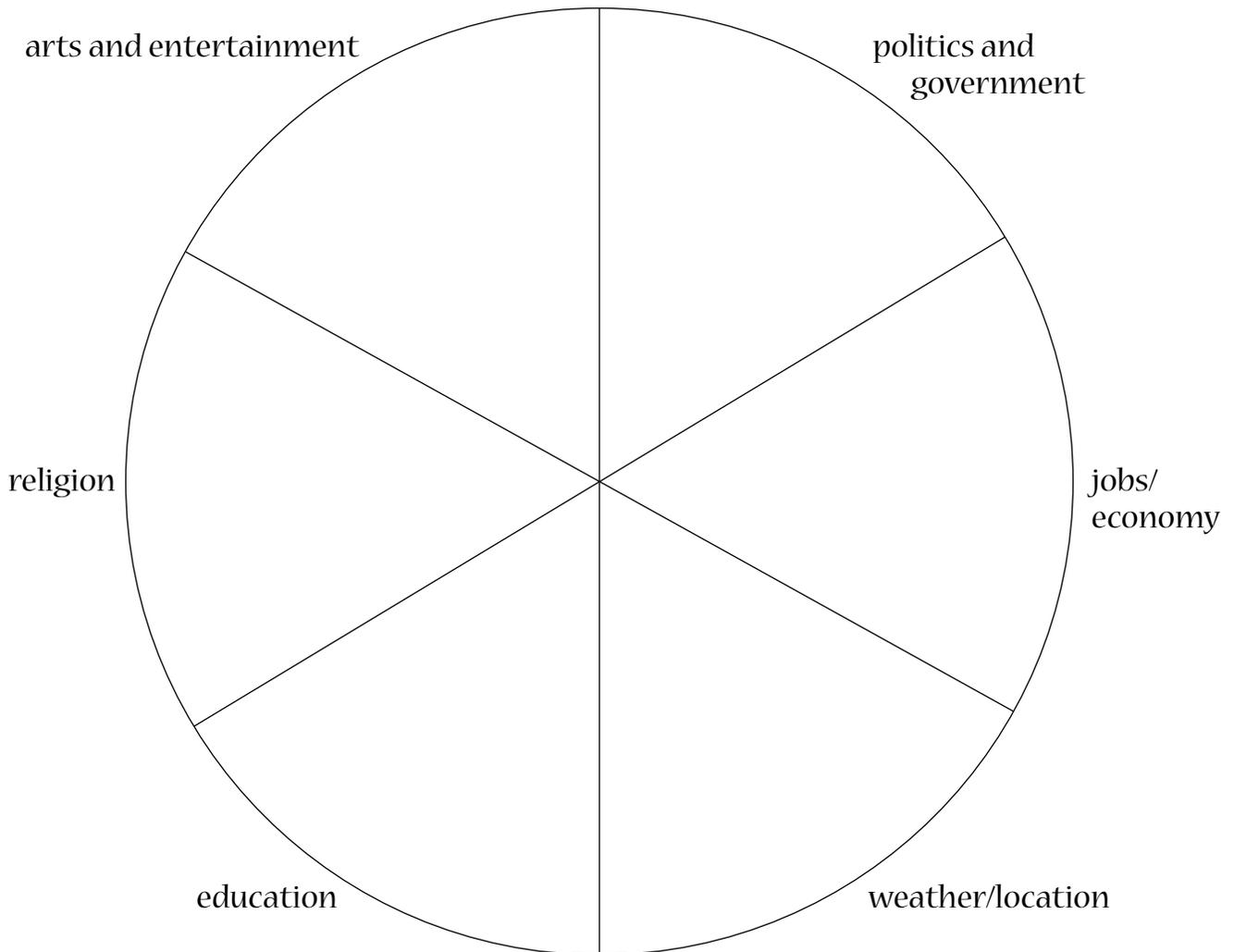
NEXT STEP: Share what you learned with a person who sent a newspaper. Create a diagram to compare your community with the one you studied.

Specific Graphic Organizer

Why Live Here?

Whole Community (Lesson 2, Extension 3)

Organize what you find in your newspaper to describe your community, using the chart below and these six categories: arts and entertainment, politics and government, religion, jobs/economy, education and weather/location.



What categories would you add to make your description complete?

Specific Graphic Organizer

Why Live Here?

Learning From Classmates (Lesson 2, Extension 4)

Classmates can be valuable sources of information. Use the list below to get to know and learn more from your classmates.

Find someone ...

What you learned ...

• Who was born in your county

• Who grew up in your neighborhood

• Who belongs to the same team, club
or organization

• Who has lived in a different state

• Who has relatives in other countries

• Whose family moved to your
community in the last few years

• Who speaks a second language

NEXT STEP: What do you share with classmates? What interests and concerns do your classmates share? Find items in the newspaper that you believe will interest everyone in your class. Choose items that will interest some of your classmates.

Specific Graphic Organizer

What Is the Geography of Your Community?

Natural Environment (Lesson 3, Extension 1)

How much can you learn about your community's geography from newspapers? Complete the chart below with details about your community's natural geographic features based on information found in local newspapers.

Topic	Brief description of what you learned	Newspaper, date, page #
Water (ponds, rivers, lakes, canals, wetlands, oceans)		
Landforms (hills, valleys, mountains, cliffs, plains)		
Vegetation (forests, grasslands, desert, tundra)		
Climate (tropical, arid, polar, temperate)		
Weather (temperature, wind, precipitation, cloudiness, humidity)		

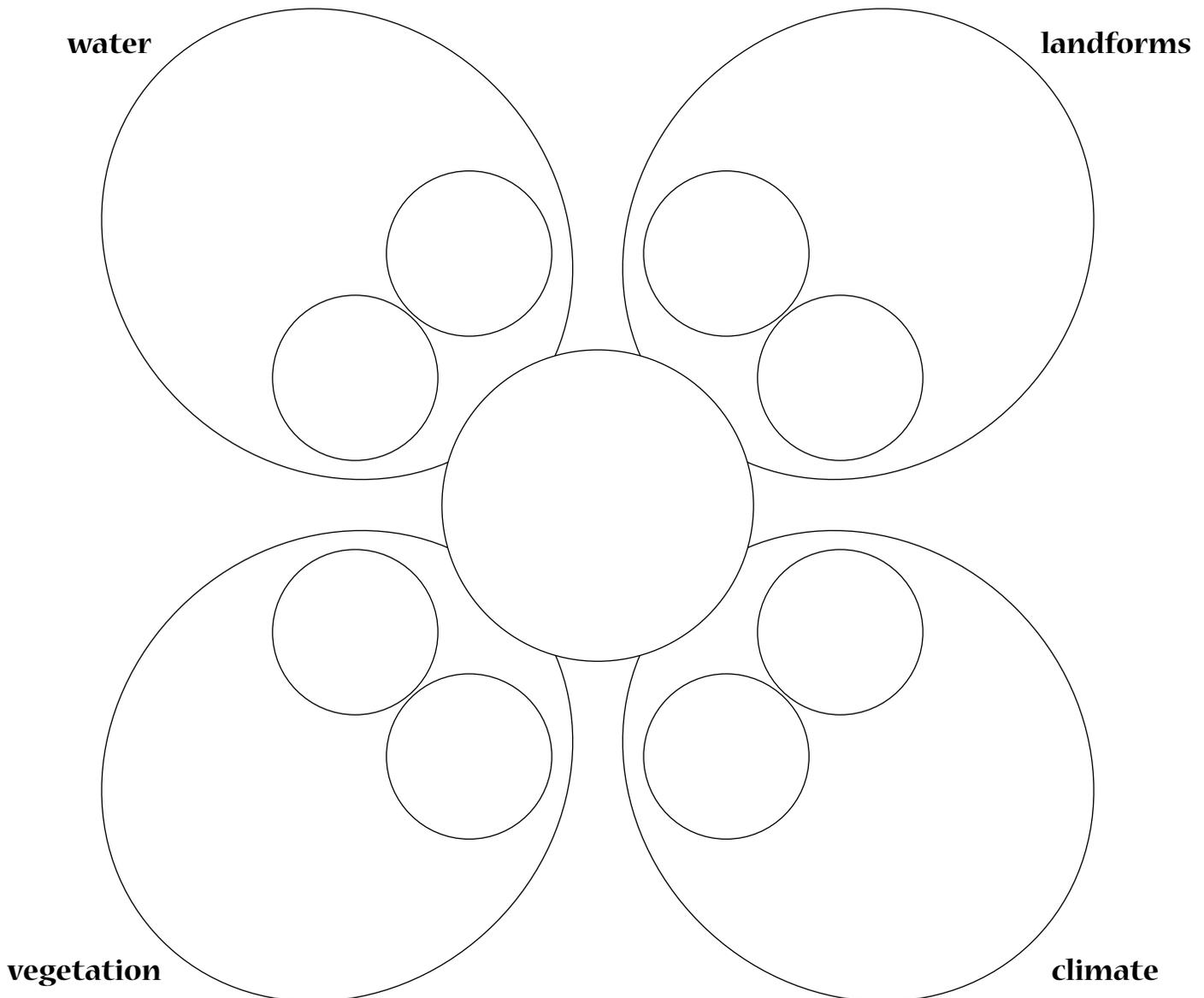
NEXT STEP: Review what you discovered about the natural geographic features of your community. Answer the following questions. What are advantages and disadvantages of your community? How easy or difficult is it for people in your community to obtain food, establish and maintain trade, move from place to place, find recreation and/or remain safe and secure?

Specific Graphic Organizer

What Is the Geography of Your Community?

Drawing Conclusions (Lesson 3, Extension 2)

Write the name of your community in the center of the diagram. From your observations and reading newspapers, select and record two details about your community that fall into these categories – water, landforms, vegetation and climate. Outside the small circles, write a complete sentence that includes both details.



NEXT STEP: Record details about another place, one you've visited or would like to visit. Use the newspaper (or its website) published in your chosen place as one source of information.

Specific Graphic Organizer

What Built Your Community's Economy?

Available Goods and Services (Lesson 4, Extension 1)

Identify goods and services offered in your community as you review advertisements in your newspaper. Where can each be purchased or obtained? Indicate where you found each item in the newspaper.

Section/ page #	Good	Service	Where is it?

Which goods and services would not be available in a community with different geographic features?

Specific Graphic Organizer

What Built Your Community's Economy?

Local Goods and Services (Lesson 4, Extension 2)

Use the local and business sections of your newspapers to identify goods and services produced in your community. Determine who or what produces these goods and services. Indicate where you found each item in the newspaper.

Section/ page #	Good	Service	Producer

NEXT STEP: Answer the following questions. What effects do location and other geographic features have on ways people earn a living? What else can you conclude about your community's economy and ways people earn a living from what you've read in your newspapers?

Specific Graphic Organizer

How Does Geography Affect Lifestyles?

Special Events (Lesson 5, Extension 1)

From a calendar of events or a story in your newspaper, select a recreational activity not available in other communities.

What's the activity or event? _____

Where does it take place? _____

How much does it cost? _____

What's its appeal? _____

Why does it take place in your community, but not all communities? _____

What is appropriate attire for this event/activity? _____

What food, if any, is associated with this event/activity? _____

Use ads in your newspaper to "shop" for the activity or event. What would you buy? Why? _____

NEXT STEP: Answer the following questions. Does this activity attract visitors to your community? What other activities take place in your area that attract visitors and/or make your community an appealing place to live?

Specific Graphic Organizer

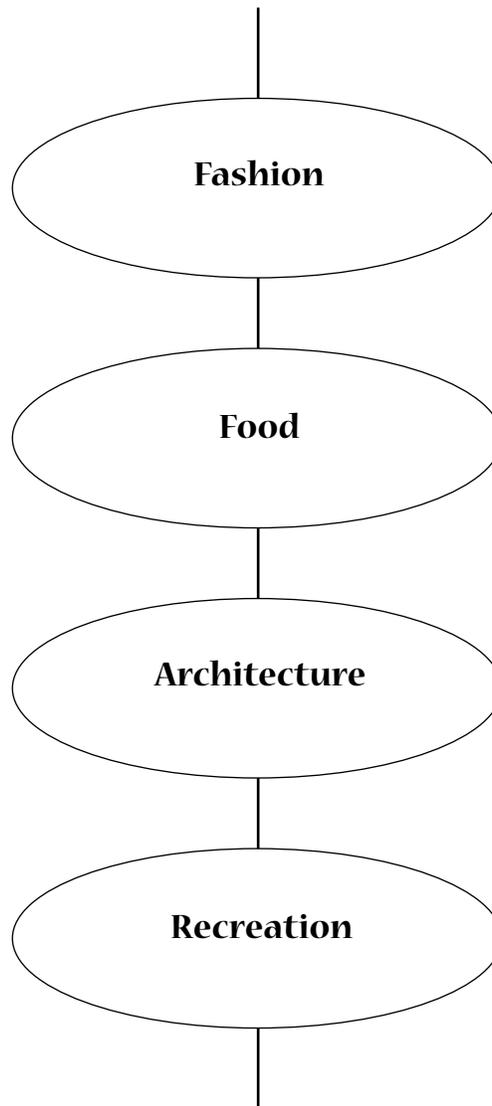
How Does Geography Affect Lifestyles?

Things Change (Lesson 5, Extension 2)

Using current newspapers and past editions (on paper or microfilm or in the electronic archives), describe fashion, food, architecture and recreation then and now.

Then

Now



NEXT STEPS: Answer the following questions.

- Which example represents the most radical change?
- Which change affects you most?

Specific Graphic Organizer

How Does Geography Affect Lifestyles?

Food Reflects Community (Lesson 5, Extension 3)

What do foods, restaurants and/or festivals advertised in your newspaper tell you about your community? What foods are typically bought and sold in your area? Where do the foods and dishes originate? Do festivals or celebrations reflect the culture and/or religion of a group that settled in your area? From your newspaper, select one or two items for each category and explain what each tells you about your community.

Item	What does it tell you about your community?
Foods:	
Restaurants:	
Festivals/celebrations:	

NEXT STEP: What would you write about in a food column for your local newspaper? Would you recommend specific foods? A recipe? A restaurant? A festival or celebration? Write a column about something food-related that you enjoy, or someone who prepares dishes that you enjoy.

Specific Graphic Organizer

Who Lives in Your Community?

Photos (Lesson 6, Extension 1)

A newspaper reflects its community. Photos and stories will show who lives there, as will ads for fashion, food and recreation. Collect and display photos, stories, ads and other items featuring people in your community. Cut and paste or list what you find in the space below or on other paper. From what you know about your community, is anyone missing from your newspaper?

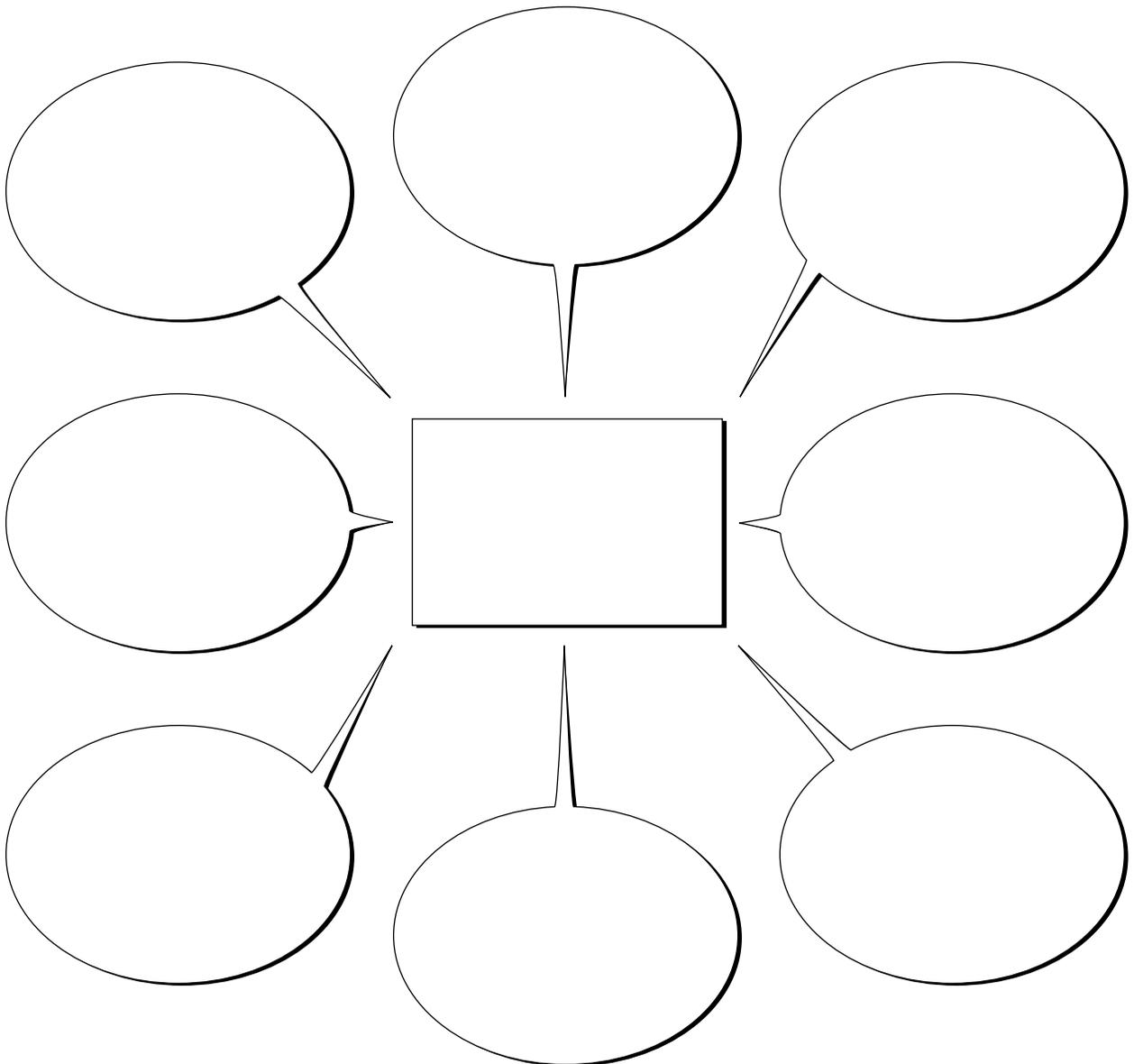
NEXT STEP: If cameras are available, work alone or with other students to take photos that represent people in your community and reflect its makeup. Be sure to ask permission before taking someone's photograph, and explain your project. From your newspaper and your photos, what do you conclude about movement in and out of your community?

Specific Graphic Organizer

Who Lives in Your Community?

A Planned Community (Lesson 6, Extension 2)

Pretend that you are organizing a community. Think of a name for your community and write it in the rectangle. Choose eight people from today's newspaper to lead your community. List their names, skills and attributes in the ovals outside the rectangle.



NEXT STEP: Answer the following questions. What critical needs do the eight people serve? What are the geographic characteristics – water, vegetation, climate, landscape – of your planned community?

Specific Graphic Organizer

What Environmental Challenges Affect Your Community?

Researching a Problem (Lesson 7, Extension 1)

Choose and study one environmental problem facing your community. Follow discussion and debate in your newspaper. Collect news stories, columns, letters to the editor and other opinions about the problem. If available, search archives in the library, on your newspaper's website and/or in its electronic edition. To learn more about the problem, use the stories and opinions to generate additional questions and identify stakeholders to interview.

After conducting research on the problem, answer these questions:

What's the environmental problem? _____

What caused the problem? _____

What effect(s) does the problem have? _____

What alternative solutions exist for the problem? _____

What are the obstacles to solving the problem? _____

What are likely solutions to the problem? _____

Which solution do you prefer? _____

NEXT STEP: Present your findings to classmates or those interested and/or involved in solving the problem.

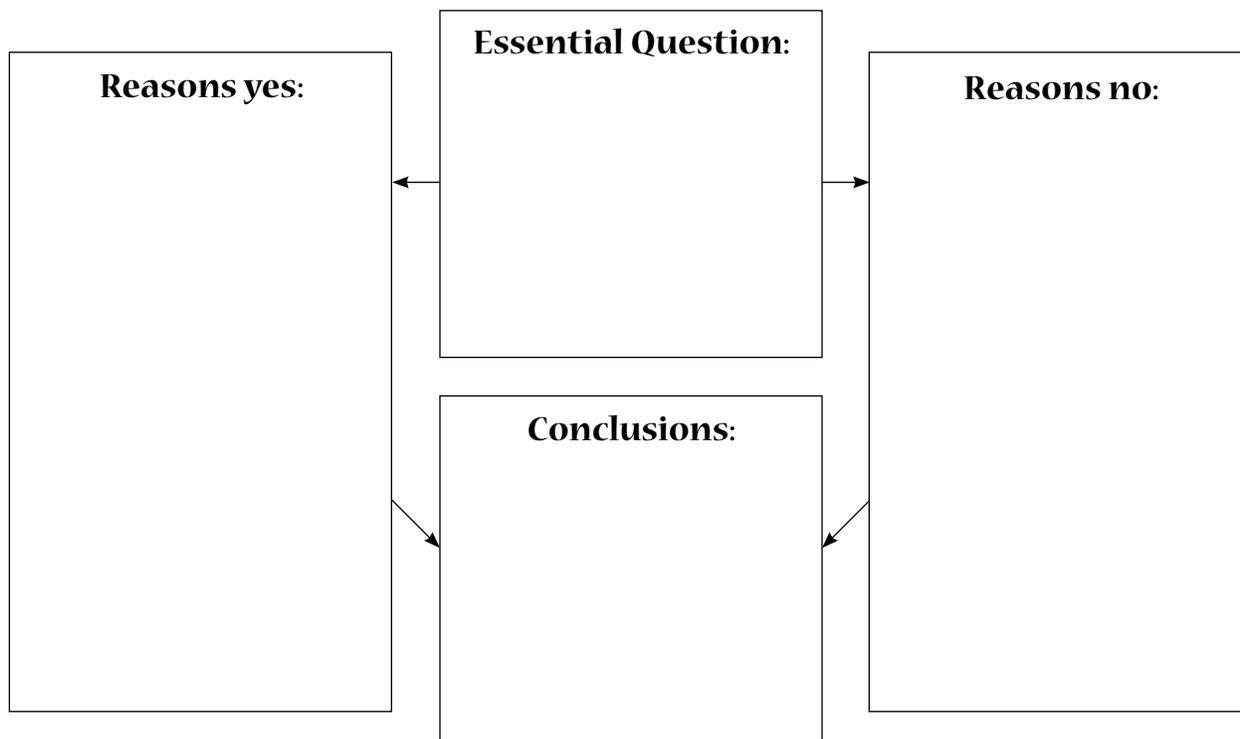
Specific Graphic Organizer

What Environmental Challenges Affect Your Community?

Essential Question: Two Sides (Lesson 7, Extension 2)

Read stories about your community and generate “should” questions based on news stories as well as opinions expressed in the editorial pages. (Examples: Should the county build its landfill in X area? Should the city allow development in X area?)

Choose and write an “essential question.” Work with classmates also interested in the question. Read as many reports as you can find in print and archived editions of your newspaper. List reasons that citizens and leaders might give for answering “yes” or “no” to the question. After studying the issue thoroughly, each classmate should write and draw conclusions. Each student should note his/her conclusion to the question in writing.



What more do you want to know about the question?

Where can you go for more information?

Online Resources

www.factmonster.com/homework

The geography section of Fact Monster's homework helper features helpful materials, including mapping resources, a glossary and information on famous explorers, online quizzes and other activities.

www.gatm.org.uk

Based in the United Kingdom, Geography at the Movies is a resource for sharing short videos on geography. Some videos address geography in that part of the world, but most are universal and help add spark to interactive presentations.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>

The Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook is one of the best sources for maps and information on countries worldwide. Besides maps, flags and copyright-free photos of each country, it offers physical and political maps of continents and of the world.

<http://sitescontent.google.com/google-earth-for-educators>

The teachers' guide to Google Earth makes use of the extensive resources available. Check out this cross-curricular social studies and technology project by Hartford High School in Hartford (White River Junction), Vt.:

www.creatinghartfordvt.com.

<http://gelessons.com/lessons>

This lesson plan site arranges information in useful clusters for those planning coursework around Google Earth.

www.infoplease.com/atlas

This is a good source of printable maps, including outline maps of your state.

www.census.gov/schools

You'll find information on the 2010 Census and curriculum materials created by Scholastic Inc. for the U.S. Census Bureau and divided into grade levels.

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>

This is another Census-related website with quick access to demographic materials nationwide for young researchers and to help you prepare teaching tools.

Online Resources *(Continued)*

www.nationalgeographic.com/education

National Geographic provides in-depth resources for applying critical thinking skills to geographic topics.

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/geog.html>

Discovery Education offers an extensive library of geography lesson plans.

www.smithsonianeducation.org/MyWonderfulWorld

The Smithsonian Institution offers educational plans, resources and graphics.

www.loc.gov/teachers/additionalresources/relatedresources/ss/geog.html

The Library of Congress lists geography resources for teachers.

<http://education.usgs.gov/common/lessons/geocaching.html>

The U.S. Geological Survey provides lessons, data, maps and more to support teaching, learning and K-12 education.

www.ncge.org

The National Council for Geographic Education offers a host of resources, including lessons, activities and information on professional development opportunities.

www.fsdb.k12.fl.us/rmc/content/interactivesites.html

This site lists resources for use on an interactive whiteboard (or computer) in a variety of subject areas, including geography resources in the social studies category.