Celebrating Geography: Geography in Everyday Life.

The paper suggests that the five fundamental themes of geography can serve as a good starting point for understanding how geography affects lives everyday in every way. Geography serves to remind people how interwoven geographic concepts are in individuals' lives. Ten activities are suggested to incorporate the five fundamental themes into a literature-based program. Some of the activities introduce vocabulary and geography to students in a non-traditional way. Other activities include biographies of family migration, songs, speech, dispersion of animals throughout the world, foods, clothing, dogs of the world, fabric, literature, and an ice-breaking activity requiring participants to locate places on a map. (EH)

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CELEBRATING GEOGRAPHY:
GEOGRAPHY IN EVERYDAY LIFE
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CELEBRATING GEOGRAPHY:

GEOGRAPHY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In everyday life, we take the importance of geography for granted. Yet, the impact of geography cannot be ignored. As teachers, we need to be aware of the impact geography has in almost every facet of life. School is a good place to introduce geography in everyday life and its continuing importance throughout our lives and the lives of our students. Vocabulary development goes hand in hand with geography education.

The five fundamental themes of geography can serve as a good starting point for understanding how geography affects our lives everyday in every way. The activities introduced below serve as starting points for understanding how far reaching geography's impact is on our lives. Students and teachers may need more practice in each of these skill areas to understand this impact fully. These activities may be too difficult for many students. They serve as "ideas" for teachers to use and think about. These activities increase our knowledge of geography's impact on our language. Geography serves to remind us of how interwoven geographic concepts are in our lives.

The first fundamental theme is LOCATION. Whenever we give or receive directions, we use the theme of location. This theme can be introduced to students as part of literature based reading. In the story "Lyle, the Crocodile" the author purposely gives an exact location- East 88th St., New York City, as the setting of the story. The setting is a geographical concept. In each activity locate the country on the map and discuss the vocabulary word under discussion. Locating the place and talking about the word reinforces both.

The second theme is that of PLACE. The author in a text creates a sense of mood by describing a place so vividly that the reader feels as if he/she were there. The opening chapter of "Rebecca" describes such a place. How often people, while visiting new places, think back to the settings authors have described in novels. At an elementary level, "The Secret Garden" is an excellent example of how the theme of place sets the mood for the story. As Mary matures, we see the changes the children bring about in their garden. Describing words affect the sense of place in literature.

The third geographical theme is one of MOVEMENT. Ideas, concepts, languages, and vocabulary move. English has borrowed many words from other languages. Without the addition of words from other languages our
own language would seem dull and lifeless. Many of the activities included later in this article reinforce the concept of movement. Our language is dependent upon other languages for its colorfulness.

"Mike Mulligan and His Steam shovel" is a good book to use when introducing the concept of movement to students. This book was written over fifty years ago. It still has literary merit and does a fantastic job of teaching the theme of movement to students. Of course, there are newer texts available, but many "classics" deserve to be read and reread by succeeding generations.

The ENVIRONMENT places an increasingly important part of science curriculum. The changes man has wrought on the environment and the ways man has adapted to his environment are important parts of geography. "The Great Kapok Tree" is a good book to introduce children to the concept of human environmental interaction.

The last theme is that of PLACE. "The Story About Ping", written over fifty years ago, is a good literature based text to introduce this concept to children. There are many examples of location, place, environment, and movement in this book which teach children about life in China. The illustrations are adequate, but I recommend cutting pictures out of the National Geographic Magazine to augment the text. The photographs in the magazine better show the themes of geography to the children. A good discussion of illustration techniques can evolve from comparing the artist's technique with actual photographs.


Examples of each of these activities are reproduced later in the article. These activities are a fun way to introduce vocabulary and geography to students.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF ME AND MY FAMILY offers students the opportunity to write an autobiographical sketch with a geographic emphasis. As the story is written, students locate and label the places in their lives on maps of the United States and World. The finished biographies should be displayed in the school to share with parents and other students. A book of first names from the library is necessary to complete this activity. Input from parents is
always helpful. This activity can serve as an interactive homework assignment for students.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF SONG introduces children to geography and music. Many songs which we recall memorably have geography in them. Singing the song and showing children the location of the place in the song is important.

DOWN ON THE FARM WITH GEOGRAPHY introduces teachers and students to the fact that farm animals were bred in different parts of the world. Many animals were developed for a specific purpose and are better adapted to one region than another.

TRITE BUT TRUE GEOGRAPHY demonstrates the impact of geography on our everyday speech. These bromides have passed into everyday speech and have geographic (sometimes historical) origins. The richness of our language depends on the use of expressions such as these.

EDIBLE GEOGRAPHY shows how our culture has borrowed from the dietary habits of other regions of the world. Our diet would be bland without contributions from many countries. There are many more examples available. A tasting party can accompany this lesson. Locations of countries from which we have borrowed these dishes should be found and labeled on the map. Reading food labels is another good way to introduce children to the concept of eating your way around the world. At trip to the supermarket for this purpose would be a great way to spend a long afternoon. Our economy is dependent on foods from other places. Imagine the long winter without grapes from Chile or no bananas from Costa Rica.

THINGS TO WEAR WITH GEOGRAPHY teaches us that many articles of clothing with which we are familiar and perhaps wear everyday were originally worn in a particular region of the world.

GOING TO THE DOGS WITH GEOGRAPHY presents pets in a new light. Most dog owners are only too happy to discuss the origin and pedigree of their pets. Magazine pictures of each pet placed next to the country of origin on a bulletin board is a great way to introduce the concept of place to children. Asking "why" each animal was bred for a specific purpose helps children develop critical thinking skills.

ALL DRESSED UP AND READY TO GO WITH GEOGRAPHY introduces students to
the fabric of life. The kinds of clothing we wear are made with different fabrics.

GEOGRAPHY AND LITERATURE builds upon the theme of place. The setting of the story has an impact on the characterization and plot. Think of the location of each of these stories. How would the action change in a different locale?

GEOGRAPHY WARMS US UP is a method of helping members of a staff development training session get to know each other as well as a means of getting participants to think geographically. Items can be added at will. Locating the places on the map helps participants see the amount of geography which is part of them. Each item can be used separately in the classroom. Children can have parents help them complete this activity as homework. The data for each item can be plotted and labeled on the map. Numbers for each category can be tallied. The tallies can be used to make graphs. This becomes your geography/mathematics connection!
THE GEOGRAPHY OF ME AND MY FAMILY TREE

Each child will write the sentence starter on his/her paper. Parents can help the child answer the fill-in-the-blank questions. Write the answer out so the child can see what the whole word looks like. Locate each place on the map of the U.S. or world. Recopy the story and paste together.

1. I live in ____________________.
2. I was born in ____________________.
3. Last year we went to visit ____________________.
4. If I could visit any place in the world it would be ____________________.
5. If I could live any place in the world it would be ____________________.
6. My last name is ____________________.
7. My ancestors came from ____________________.
8. My first name is ____________________.
9. It comes from a language spoken in ____________________.
10. My name means ____________________.
11. I have relatives who live in ____________________, and ____________________.
THE GEOGRAPHY OF SONG

Write the location of each song. Find the location on your map.

The Yellow Rose of _____________________________
My Girl _____________________________ Home
The Blue _____________________________ Waltz
Oh, _____________________________ I Want to Hear You
 _____________________________ On My Mind
Born in the _____________________________
I Left My Heart in _____________________________
Remember the _____________________________ Valley
Shuttiie Off to _____________________________
 _____________________________ Dreamin'
When _____________________________ Eyes Are Smiling
Ain't Got Nothin' _____________________________
Little Old Lady From _____________________________
A Foggy Day in _____________________________ Town
April in _____________________________
__________________________ Ober Alles

Bye Bye Miss________________________Pie

All My Xes Line in _________________

Back Home Again in __________________

Deep in the Heart of __________________

My Kind of Town, __________________ is

Write one of your own to share.
down on the farm... and other places with geography

1. ______________ horse
2. ______________ chicken
3. ____________ pig
4. ____________ cow
5. ____________ cow
6. ____________ hen
7. ____________ goose
8. ____________ sheep
9. ____________ goat
10. ____________ cat
11. ____________ deerhound
12. ____________ terrier
13. ____________ husky
14. ____________ guniea pig
15. ______________

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TRITE BUT TRUE GEOGRAPHY

1. like carrying coals to ________________

2. being sent to ________________

3. buying swampland in ________________

4. the big apple is ________________

5. from here to ________________

6. dig a well all the way to ________________

7. exiled to ________________

8. the source of the ________________

9. show me! I'm from ________________

10. but will it play in ________________

11. as dry as the ________________

12. all roads lead to ________________

13. something's rotten in ________________

14. when in __________ do as the __________ do

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edible geography

1. ______________ cheese

2. salad ____________

3. ______________ ham

4. ______________ = hot dog

5. ______________ = ground beef

6. ___________ bread

7. ___________ sausage

8. ___________ muffin

9. ___________ baked beans

10. ___________ taffy

11.

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It helps to have swatches of material available. Then students can paste the swatch near the country of origin and draw an arrow to the country. Designing the fabric helps as in the case of paisley or madras.

THINGS TO WEAR WITH GEOGRAPHY
Write the country of origin of each article of clothing. Locate the country on your map. Illustrate each article of clothing. Having examples of each article makes the lesson more authentic.

1. beret
2. sombrero
3. fez
4. turban
5. toque
6. serape
7. djelbah
8. kimono
9. kilt
10. sari
11. moccasin
GOING TO THE DOGS WITH GEOGRAPHY
Name the country of origin of each of the following dogs. Locate the country on your map of the U.S. or the world. Is there a dog for each continent?

1. ___________setter
2. ___________shepherd
3. ___________terrier
4. ___________cattle dog
5. ___________spaniel
6. ___________husky
7. ___________malemute
8. ___________foxhound
9. ___________ridgeback

Think of an example of your own ___________
All Dressed Up And Ready To Go With Geography

I use this activity with "Corduroy" and "A Pocket for Corduroy", both by Don Freeman.

LOCATE THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING.

1. cashmere________________
2. damask_________________
3. jersey_________________
4. khaki_________________
5. batik__________________
6. paisley________________
7. corduroy________________
8. madras________________
9. denim__________________
10. calico________________
11. tweed_________________
12. peau de soie_____________
GEOGRAPHY AND LITERATURE

Write the setting of each story. Find the setting on your world map.

The Elves and the Shoemaker
Hill of Fire
How Pizza Comes to Queens
I Hate English
Jungle Book
King Midas
Legend of the Bluebonnet
The Little Mermaid
Lon PoPo
Madeleine
Make Way For Ducklings
Miss Nelson Is Missing
The Mitten
The Story About Ping
Ming Lo Moves the Mountain
It Could Always Be Worse
How Anasi Obtained the Sky God's Stories

The Secret Garden
Witch of Blackbird Pond
Lyle, the Crocodile
Little House in the Big Woods
Island of the Blue Dolphin
Wizard of Oz
James and the Giant Peach
A Christmas Carol
Ferdinand the Bull
Strega Nona
Gone With the Wind
WARMING UP TO GEOGRAPHY
WELCOME!

Find Someone Who...

was not born in the US _________________________________

vacationed outside of the US this Year _____________________________

drives a "foreign" car _________________________________

speaks an "international" language _________________________________

enjoys international cuisine _________________________________

has a purebred pet _________________________________

has a favorite professional sports team _________________________________

What kind of each pertains to each category?

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