

Chicago, Chicago!

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, students use the City of Chicago and portray their images of the city on paper. The resulting displays and students' explanations can give the teacher an idea of each student's perceptions of a city. This activity can also be the springboard for a discussion of what constitutes a city and the advantages as well as disadvantages of living there. Note that other cities can be substituted as the focus of this lesson, if appropriate.

Grade Level

7-12

Duration

2-3 class periods

Geography Themes

Place

- Places have physical and human characteristics
- Places can be described in different ways

Geography Standards

The geographically informed person knows and understands...

(#6) how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Materials Needed

For students:

- White, unlined 8x14 paper (or larger) to sketch several ideas
- Colored pencils or markers

Main Objectives of the Lesson

Students are expected to:

1. express their images of the city of Chicago;
2. draw a collage of images that represent Chicago;
3. explain the meaning of their collages;
4. write an essay to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of life in a large city.

Suggested Teaching Procedure

Preparing for the Lesson

1. Getis, Getis, and Fellman provides a useful definition for the term city - "a multifunctional nucleated [having a central core] settlement with a central business district and both residential and non residential land uses."

Opening the Lesson

1. Ask groups of students to arrive at their own definitions of the term city. As each group finishes, have a student write the definition on the chalkboard. Have all the students identify and list the common characteristics found in the definitions noted on the board.
2. Raise questions to guide the class toward a satisfactory definition that combines the following elements. A city is a place that has area and many people as well as many functions and land uses (industrial, commercial, governmental, recreational, residential) - a central business district that is the primary core of the city. Record this definition to be used later in the lesson.
3. Announce to the students that they will be asked now to brainstorm some ideas that best represent Chicago.
4. Assign students to groups of 3-4. Have each group move to its own space and choose a recorder who will write down the group's brainstorming ideas. Remind the students that in brainstorming no one is to belittle another person's ideas and that all ideas must be written down. When you give the students the topic they must be ready to begin.
5. Allow 10 minutes for brainstorming.
6. At the end of the 10 minutes, have the students review their lists and pick out 5-8 ideas that they think best represents the City of Chicago.

Developing the Lesson

1. Give each group a large sheet of paper on which to sketch out a collage of their ideas.
2. After a group finishes, have the students bring the sketch to you for feedback. (Optional: Give each group a second sheet of paper that they can use for a new method of representing their ideas.)

Concluding the Lesson

1. Ask each group to explain its collage and the ideas it represents.
2. After everyone has the opportunity to present and explain the collages, go back to the class definition of a city and see if there are any things that need to be added or changed.
3. Post each collage and work with students to categorize both positive and negative points that are presented. Seek the opinions of several students regarding their perceptions about both advantages and disadvantages of living in a city. Ask for reasons to accompany their comments.

Extending the Lesson

1. Have individuals or groups select a different place (either urban or rural) and portray it in a collage. Groups should include the brainstorming step before choosing final ideas. Then have them compare the second to the first collages that were made and talk about reasons for differences in their perceptions.

Source Information

The definition for the term city was taken from Arthur Getis, Judith Getis, and Jerome Fellmann, *Introduction to Geography*, Dubuque, Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1994, p. 472.