

# Somewhere, USA: Creating a Community, Part II

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson students will continue working with the imaginary community they created in Part I of the lesson. They learn to distinguish human characteristics from physical characteristics and determine which physical characteristics can be added to their map. Students also evaluate the advantages of the physical characteristics added to their map as well as some of the problems a few might cause.

## Grade Level

Primary

## Duration

1 class period

## Geography Theme

Place

- Places have physical characteristics
- Places have human characteristics

## Geography Standards

The geographically informed person knows and understands...

(#4) the physical and human characteristics of place.

(#14) how human actions modify the physical environment.

## Materials Needed

For Teacher:

- Bulletin board (or "floor") community map from Part I, some symbols for physical features cut from construction paper (e.g., lake, hill, trees, etc.)

For Students:

- Drawing paper and crayons, construction paper, scissors, glue

## Main Objectives of the Lesson

Students are expected to:

1. identify physical characteristics of a place and distinguish them from human characteristics;
2. evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of selected physical characteristics in an imaginary community.

# Suggested Teaching Procedure

## Preparing for the Lesson

1. You will need the community bulletin board already designed in Part I of Somewhere, USA. You will also need to prepare symbols for some physical characteristics (e.g., lake, pond, river, hill) especially those that are found in the real surrounding community. The symbols will be added to the map in spaces that had previously been left available in the previous lesson.

*Note:* You may want the students to prepare the physical features. This could be done in "Developing the Lesson", Step 1.

## Opening the Lesson

1. Define the terms *physical characteristics* (characteristics created by nature) and *human characteristics* (those created by human beings) for the students and give some examples of each.
2. Ask students to give examples of each kind found in their local community. Using the chalkboard or chart paper, make a list of the examples of each under their headings. Point out the human and physical characteristics that are found on the community map they have made [see Part I]. (Note: It is likely that there are very few physical characteristics on the map made in Part I of this lesson.)

## Developing the Lesson

1. Ask the students which physical characteristics can be shown on their community map. They should decide on some land forms, water bodies, vegetation and perhaps some wildlife. Note that domesticated animals such as cows would be classified as human characteristics, as would grass that is used to landscape an area. Climate, because it changes, would be difficult to include on the map, but the students should discuss what the climate might be like. If you have not created symbols for the physical features ahead of time, the students should create them. It would be useful to provide a template showing the students what size each feature should be, so the map scale is reasonable.
2. The teacher should now add some landform and water bodies to the community in spaces available. Ask the students to identify and name the added physical characteristics (e.g., Muddy River, Oak Forest, Blue Lake). Ask the students to name some other physical characteristics that might be in the community. Explain that some are too small to show on the map (e.g., birds, squirrels).
3. Have the students make trees and wildlife and add them to the community map. Some students could draw pictures to illustrate the climate in different seasons for posting near the map.
4. The teacher should invent labels for the streets on the map making use of names which reflect the surrounding physical and human characteristics such as Lake Road or School Street. Compare such names with those in your school community.
5. If the students made an individual map of the community in Part I, have them add the additional features to their map, putting new symbols in the key as needed.

## Concluding the Lesson

1. Ask the students to tell how the added physical characteristics may improve the existing community and what problems they may present. Some possible answers might include:
  - the area around the lake might be made into a park;
  - the hilly area might be used for skiing;
  - the addition of a river would possibly cause a need for bridges to be built; the river might cause floods during heavy rains;
  - a flat open area might be used to build an airport;
  - open areas may be designated as places for future development of residential areas or possible transportation centers such as a train station or airport.

## Extending the Lesson

1. Take another photograph of the community map at this point. Post the photograph taken at the end of Part I and the new photograph so students can see how the community has changed.
2. Make an overhead transparency of the community map as it now looks. Use this for further work on map skills. The teacher might ask students to describe various ways to go from one area of the community to another using street names and direction words. They might identify and evaluate different ways to go from one place to another (e.g., shortest, fastest, most scenic routes).
3. A game of Where Am I? could be played by presenting information such as, "If I am south of the river and east of the forest preserve, what area of town would I be in?" Or more specifically, street names and directions could be given to identify a particular location such as the grocery store or the library. Students also might be encouraged to make-up game questions themselves for the class or one another. This would provide the teacher with a good method of evaluating students' progress in map skills as well as good opportunities for peer tutoring.