Why Cities Are Where They Are

Overview
We usually build cities and houses in places that are best suited to our human needs. Students will see how many U.S. cities were built at certain locations because of the physical features of the environment.

Purpose
In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of the relationship between physical features and the location of human activity by creating pictograms.

Objectives
The student will be able to:
1. Understand maps showing water bodies and cities.
2. Identify cities in the U.S. and discuss why these cities are located where they are.
3. Practice graphing activities.

Materials
- Rivers and Cities in the United States map—1 copy per student and transparency for teacher.
- Why Cities Are Where They Are Activity Worksheet and Answer Key
- A Good Place for a City by Stevie Prince
- Materials to construct a class pictograph (white board or chart paper and markers or a transparency of the student worksheet)

Prerequisite knowledge: Students need to have knowledge of bodies of water and how to find water bodies on a map. They should know how to construct and interpret a pictograph.

Procedures
1. Review the elements of water bodies (rivers, oceans, and lakes) and how to find these on a map.
2. Read aloud the book, A Good Place for a City by Stevie Prince. Discuss the possible reasons for the location of cities. For instance, cities are built by a river for transportation, fresh water, industry, and agriculture; by a lake for fresh water and agriculture; and by an ocean for fishing and transportation.
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3. Display a transparency of the map of Rivers and Cities in the United States while students look at their copy. Have students identify the bodies of water.

4. As a class, make a pictograph showing the number of cities on the map located by rivers, oceans, and lakes. Determine the symbol for a city and have them draw it in the box on the worksheet. Have students make their own copy of the pictograph as the class model is made.

5. Using their copy of the pictograph chart, have students complete the student worksheet on the location of cities interpreting data from their graph.

6. Have the students answer the questions concerning more, less, etc.

Assessment
The student worksheet can be used for assessment. Math will be assessed with questions 1-4 (5 points) and geography with questions 5-6 (5 points).

Extensions
Have students look at a map of Arizona cities and see which cities are located by rivers or by lakes.

Identify the physical features of a city near the school.

Sources
A Good Place for a City by Stevie Prince.