# 5 Themes of Geography

## A Basis for Understanding Geography

**Author**
- Alliance Network TCs

**Grade Level**
- Grades 5 through HS

**Duration**
- 1-2 class periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Geography Standards</th>
<th>Arizona Geography Strand</th>
<th>Other Arizona Standards</th>
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<tr>
<td>ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS 1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.</td>
<td>This lesson encompasses too many standards for various grade levels to include in this lesson plan. Therefore, Grade 5 will be featured in the AZ Geography Strand. Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms PO 2. Locate features in the world (e.g., continents, waterways, mountain ranges, cities) on a map using latitude and longitude. Concept 2: Places and Regions PO 2. Describe the geographic characteristics of a state in the United States with the assistance of maps, the internet, atlases, and other reference materials.</td>
<td>ELA Common Core Standards Reading Informational Text Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 5.RI.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently. 5.RI.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably. Writing Production and Distribution of Writing 5.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. AZ5.W.4 Produce clear and coherent functional writing (e.g., formal letters, recipes, experiments, notes/messages, labels, timelines, graphs/tables, procedures, invitations, envelopes) in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.</td>
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## Overview

A study of geography begins with knowing where cultural features and physical features are located. But a study of geography also requires knowledge of why these people or physical features are located in particular places and how those places influence our lives.

To provide a framework for such explorations, geographers have developed the five themes of geography. By using these themes as a basis for understanding geographic information, we can gain a better appreciation of cultural and environmental similarities and differences.

## Purpose

In this series of lessons, students will learn and apply the five themes of geography so that their study of geography can begin. Once students have mastered this geographic terminology, then students can correctly use these themes to identify how the earth is organized spatially.

## Materials

- Overview of the Five Themes of Geography
- Five Themes graphic organizer and answer key
- 5 Themes Quiz and answer key
Guidelines for Postcard Assignment
- Identifying Photos—Practice on the 5 Themes of Geography (Optional)
- Postcards from various places and regions
- Blank index cards
- Colored markers
- Internet, almanacs, other reference materials

**Objectives**

The student will be able to:

Identify and apply the terms: location, place, movement, human environment interaction, and region

Identify that the use of the five themes of geography is one way to organize the world spatially.

Draw information from a variety of sources

Organize important information in a graphic organizer

Produce a written message

**Procedures**

*Note: This lesson should follow a lesson on What is Geography? See Resources and Links Tab on the Arizona Geographic Alliance website under Standards and Geographic Literacy to get the Power Point with audio narration.*

http://geoalliance.asu.edu/azga/

**Session One:**

1. Begin the session by recalling that the definition of geography includes looking at the world in spatial terms. So what are these spatial terms?

2. Pass out the Five Themes graphic organizer. Students will take notes on their graphic organizer as the themes are explained.

3. Have a variety of postcards from various places and regions. Have the class practice identifying which theme is the strongest in the visual. Remember: More than one answer is possible as long as the explanation is plausible.

4. Divide the students into groups. Give each group 5 blank index cards and colored markers.

5. Each group will use reference materials or internet to create a postcard for each of the 5 themes of one state, place, or region. See example below. (This can also be done as homework.)

An example using Arizona as the one place or region follows:

On one side:
- **Card 1** Place: drawing of the Grand Canyon or a cactus
- **Card 2** Location: map of Arizona showing nearby states or latitude and longitude
- **Card 3** Region: map of the Southwest or drawing of the Sonoran desert
- **Card 4** Human Environment Interaction: drawing of people water skiing or an open pit mine
- **Card 5** Movement: drawing of immigrants coming to Arizona or map of major highways

On the writing side:
The students would identify the picture in a sentence or two as if this postcard is being sent to a friend. Student should address the card appropriately. (Each student in the group with the same address and recipient.) Hint: These postcards make a nice room display.

6. Have the groups share their postcards.

7. Give 5 Themes Quiz

Remember to refer to these 5 Themes as the year progresses.

**Assessment**

Cards can be graded for neatness and whether the theme was portrayed accurately. The Scoring Guide on the Guidelines for Postcard Assignment can be used for assessing the cards for reading and writing. The 5 Themes Quiz can be used as a geography assessment. Mastery is considered 80% or higher.

**Extensions**

Another way to practice the 5 themes is to gather slides or create a power point of photos that illustrate the 5 themes. Have the students categorize the pictures by the themes. A twist on this would be to give the students the photos and let them create the power point.

**Sources**

Overview of the Five Themes of Geography
TC Toolkit, National Geographic Society, p.107-109.