



Name That Place: Cultural Place Names in the United States

Students learn about settlement patterns in the U.S. by tracing the origin of place names.

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Grade Level	6-8
Duration	2 class periods

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT FOUR: HUMAN SYSTEMS
 12. The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

ELEMENT SIX: THE USES OF GEOGRAPHY
 17. How to apply geography to interpret the past.

Arizona Social Studies Standard

Grade 6
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 1 The World in Spatial Terms
 PO 4 Locate physical and human features in the United States and in regions of the world on a map (e.g., continents, significant waterways, mountain ranges, cities, countries).
Concept 4 Human Systems
 PO 3 Analyze the causes and effects of settlement patterns.
Grades 7 & 8
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 1 The World in Spatial Terms
 PO 4 Locate physical and cultural features (e.g., continents, cities, countries, bodies of water, landforms, mountain ranges, climate zones) throughout the world.
Concept 4 Human Systems
Grade 7
 PO 6 Describe the distributions and patterns of cultural characteristics (e.g., religions, language, standard of living) over time.
Grade 8
Concept 4 Human Systems
 PO 3 Describe the characteristics and locations of various cultures throughout the world.

Strand 1 American History
Concept 7 Emergence of the

Arizona Language Arts Standards

READING STANDARD:
Strand 1: Reading Process
Concept 4: Vocabulary
Grade 6
 PO 1. Determine the effect of affixes on root words.
Grades 7 and 8
 PO 1. Determine the meaning of vocabulary using linguistic roots and affixes (e.g., Greek, Anglo-Saxon, Latin).

WRITING STANDARD:
Grades 6, 7, and 8
Strand 2: Writing Components
Concept 1: Ideas and Content
 PO 1. Use clear, focused ideas and details to support the topic.
 PO 2. Provide content and selected details that are well-suited to audience and purpose.
 PO 3. Develop a sufficient explanation or exploration of the topic.
 PO 4. Include ideas and details that show original perspective.
Concept 2: Organization
 PO 1. Use a structure that fits the type of writing (e.g., letter format, narrative, play, essay).
 PO 2. Develop a strong beginning or introduction that draws in the reader.
 PO 3. Place details appropriately to support the main idea.
 PO 4. Include effective transitions among all elements (sentences, paragraphs, ideas).
 PO 5. Construct paragraphs by arranging sentences with an organizing principle (e.g., to develop a topic, to indicate a chronology).
 PO 6. Create an ending that provides a sense of resolution or closure.

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Modern United States

PO 1 Examine the reasons why people emigrated from their homelands to settle in the United States during the late 19th century.

Overview

Place names can lead to an understanding about the people who settled in different areas of the United States. This lesson will help students understand word origin and place names in the United States, thus gaining an understanding of the people who lived there.

Purpose

Students will observe how different cultures and their languages contributed to place names. Students will look for migration and early settlement patterns in the United States. They will demonstrate this knowledge in a summary paragraph.

Materials

- Place Name Worksheet and Answer Key
- Summary Writing Prompt
- U.S. Map
- Classroom atlases
- Colored pencils, pen, and paper

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- locate place names on a map.
- trace language origins by identifying settlement patterns in the United States.
- write a summary of his or her findings.

Procedures

1. Referring to the Place Name Worksheet, discuss the four different groups that are on it. Discuss reasons why each group settled on the North American continent.
2. Divide class into groups of 4 or 5 students.
3. Distribute One Place Name worksheet, map, and atlas per group.

4. As a group, students will locate the words (places) on a U.S. map and plot their locations. Students only need to find one example of each word. Often there is more than one place. Have students use a different color pen or pencil for each ethnic group of place name. (For example, Spanish could be blue, French could be red, Native American could be green, and English could be orange.

5. Students should look for patterns of immigration and settlement and answer the questions on the worksheet.

6. Have students summarize their findings using the Summary Writing Prompt.

Assessment

Students can be graded on their summary paragraphs using the 6-Trait Writing Rubric in the areas of Organization and Ideas. Students should score 4 or higher to obtain mastery.

Extensions

Students could do this activity with regions. They could look at a specific region and research the word origins of the place.

Have students locate place names that are similar to the ones in England or other countries.

Students can have fun with looking for place names that tie to a certain theme: Biblical names, musical terms, world capitals, foods. An excellent source for this activity is Jouris, David. *All Over the Map*. Berkley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1994. ISBN 0-89815-649-1

Sources

www.mapquest.com