

Creating Detail in the Setting of a Short Story Using Geography

Created by: Deborah Vroom

WisdomQuest Education Center, Mt. Pleasant, IA

Grade Level (Req.): 11th-12th grade	Content Area (Req.): English III/IV – Creative Writing	Unit (Opt.):
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography • • 		
Time Frame (Req.): Entire project is seven class periods: one 50 minute class period to explain and begin; two class periods to find information and begin creating characters, plot maps, and write out setting details; two class periods to write; two class periods to edit, rewrite and finish copy.	Goal (Req.): To help students create the setting of a short story by incorporating and using the themes of geography.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will be able to create a short story, rich in detail and set in another area other than Mt. Pleasant, Iowa or the United States.	
Materials Needed (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Themes of Geography worksheet – to gain an understanding of what they are (will need a second copy, slightly different for day 2) • Almanacs and on-line sources • Overhead projector or LCD projector with PowerPoint • Computer access for Day 2 and beyond • • • 	New Vocabulary (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	
Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): What geography themes can we incorporate or use to create the setting and details of a short story?		
Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start the first lesson by reading each of the 5 Themes aloud in class and discussing each one. Possible discussion questions: Location – 1) Get out atlases and find Absolute Locations for various world or US cities; 2) What is the Relative Location of Mt. Pleasant? Answer: Mt. Pleasant is north of Keokuk, south of Iowa City, east of Fairfield, west of Burlington. Place – 1) What are the Human Characteristics of Mt. Pleasant? Answers: Speak English, mostly Christian; 2) What are the Physical Characteristics of Iowa? Answers: Great Plains, Mississippi River, flat, prairie, good farmland, 4 seasons. Human-Environmental Interaction – 1) How do people in Iowa affect the environment? Answers: Farming, plowing, fertilizing, using pesticides, and building dikes; 2) How does the environment affect the people in Iowa? Answers: Tornadoes, flooding, thunderstorms, and blizzards. Movement – 1) What are the imports of Mt. Pleasant? Answers: 		

Cars, oil, gas, coffee; 2) What are some exports of Mt. Pleasant? Answers: Rubber hoses, Heatilator Fireplaces, West Liberty Foods (turkey); 3) What are some ideas that have come to Mt. Pleasant from somewhere else? Answers: Christian Church (Israel), Pizza (Italy), Mexican foods, Asian foods (Laos, Thailand, and China). Region – 1) What is a Functional Region in Iowa and why? Answer: Des Moines, because the laws made there affect the entire state. WisdomQuest, because students go to school there and rules made there affect those who attend; 2) How many Formal Regions are you in right now? Answers: Your chair, the classroom, the building, the area code, the zip code, school district, township, county, state, country, continent, hemisphere.

2. On the second day, I hand out maps to each student – sometimes I let them choose a map. This begins for each of them a journey to a new country. They also get a new worksheet from the day before and get to fill in the information using their map and an atlas or on-line sources. They need to choose a city or area on their map – or perhaps they have the entire country. The information that they obtain becomes the basis for the setting of their short story. They are to include as much detail as possible about the country and area in their story as possible. They also create character profiles (how to create a character profile is an earlier lesson in this course) and at least one character must be from the country they are using. In order to create the plot for their story they will create a plot diagram (this is also a previous lesson in this class).
3. Day 3 – Continue on with gathering information and creating profiles and plot maps.
4. Day 4 and 5 – Writing.
5. Day 6 and 7 – Editing, revising.
6. Later – after all are completed those who feel comfortable may share their writings with others – we do use peer editing as part of the process so their stories have been read by at least two members of the class.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

Formative Evaluation (Req.): Using an overhead projector or LCD, show pictures and have the students pick out the 5 Themes of Geography. This can be done individually or in groups.

Assessment (Req.): Short story

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand the use of geographic tools to locate and analyze information about people, places, and environments.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how physical and human characteristics create and define regions.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development of society and the movement of populations.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how physical and human processes shape the Earth's surface and major ecosystems.

- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how culture affects the interaction of human populations through time and space.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how cultural factors influence the design of human communities.
-
-
-

Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

-
-
-
-
-

NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information
- The physical and human characteristics of places
- How culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions
- The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth’s surface
- How human actions modify the physical environment
- How physical systems affect human systems
-
-
-
-

Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):

- Location
- Place
- Human-Environmental Interaction
- Movement
- Region

School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):

- Understands how to apply skills and strategies of the writing process. A) Be able to use the strategies of drafting, revising, proofreading and editing to improve writing skills. (1,2,3,4) B) Be able to use correct grammar and mechanics for expression. (1,2,3,4) C) Be able to demonstrate effective use of the writing process. (1,2,3,4)
- Understands how to write in a variety of forms. A) Be able to express an idea through poetry. (1,2,3,4) B) Be able to write a short story using elements of a story. (1,2,3,4)
- Understands how to use a variety of sources as a means of inspiration. A) Be able to locate and gather materials from a variety of sources. (1,2,3,4,6) B) Be able to evaluate material for relevance and bias. (1,2,3,4,6)

21st Century Universal Constructs (Opt.):

Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):

-
-
-
-
-

Other Essential Information (Opt.):

Other Resources (Opt.):

-
-
-
-