Grade 8 – Social Studies

Topic A – Geography of Canada and the United States

Questions and Issues for Inquiry

Major: To what extent does physical environment influence a people’s way of life?

Related: To what extent should we consider physical environment when we develop our resources?

Knowledge Objectives - The student will demonstrate an understanding of the following:

Major Generalization:
• The interaction of people with their physical environment influences patterns of life.

Generalizations:
• Regions are the basic unit of geographic study and can be defined by a variety of criteria.
• All places have special human and physical characteristics that distinguish them.

Concepts:
• Region
• Place

Related Facts and Content:
• Physical region
• Environment/physical factors/landforms/bodies of water/climate/vegetation/natural resources

Skill Objectives – The student will be able to do the following:

Process Skills – Locating, Organizing, Interpreting Information
• Identify possible sources of information; e.g., print, non-print.
• Locate information, using library skills to choose appropriate resources for research.
• Acquire information by reading, differentiate between main and related ideas.
• Read and interpret maps to identify relationships between human and physical geography.
• Make notes (jottings, point form, webbing) that outline the main and related ideas from reading/listening/observing

Analyzing/Synthesizing/Evaluating
• Compare information about a topic drawn from two or more sources to see if it is identical, similar, parallel or inconsistent, unrelated or contradictory.
• Draw conclusions about relationship of geography to the patterns of life in Alberta

Communication Skills
• Convey information and explain thoughts, feelings and ideas in an oral presentation

Participation Skills
• Converse with others in a variety of settings, including informal, small groups and whole class discussions.
• Observe the courtesies of group discussion, such as speaking in turn, using appropriate tone and giving feedback in a non-threatening manner.
• Contribute to the group (leader, recorder, member) and group processes – staying on topic, extending the ideas of others, paraphrasing and working towards a decision.

Attitude Objectives – The student will be encouraged to develop:
• Appreciation for consequences of people’s interaction with their environment.
• Willingness to cooperate and work with others.
Lesson – Oral Presentation

Activity #1 – Introduction (30 min)

Start by probing existing student knowledge by brainstorming as a class. Ask students to copy the results of the session into their notebooks. You can use the following questions to initiate the discussion:

- To what extent does physical environment influence a people’s way of life?
- To what extent should we consider physical environment when we develop our resources?
- What is a region? A physical region?
- How many physical regions are there in Alberta?
- What are there names?
- How are they different? How are they the same?
- What natural resources does Alberta have?

Activity #2 – Groups (30 min)

Divide students into groups of three for the remainder of the project. Once students are in groups have them navigate through the Natural Regions section of the edukit to become familiar with the content. They can also check out the photo gallery and flash zone presentations. Try to allow groups to choose a region for study, but make sure all regions are being covered.

Explain to students that they are to research a natural region of Alberta and report on it for the rest of the class. Their presentation should include information regarding the location of the region, landforms found in that region, how those influence the way of life of the people living there, and what natural resources are found there and how they are used by humans.

Students will have to do extra research using the internet and library. One student can research the edukit, another can check out the internet, and the final student in the group could consult the library (just a suggestion). It might be helpful for you to have posters, maps, and other information regarding Alberta’s natural regions on hand in case students run into difficulty during the research phase of the project.

The presentation should include the answers to the brainstorming questions as they apply to the natural region being presented. Ask students to include any photographs, charts, graphs, and audio/visual material that will aid and support their presentation.

This would be the ideal time to create a rubric as a class, or use/modify the sample rubric included at the end of this assignment.
Activity #3 – Research (1-3 class periods)

Allow students a few class periods to complete their research, and rehearse their presentation. Once the research is complete, you should meet with each group to go over their findings. If what they have is sufficient, then let them begin working on their oral presentation.

Activity #4 – Oral Presentation

Have students present their information on the natural region they chose. Make sure that they cover all the answers to brainstorming questions in Activity #1 during their presentations. Let classmates ask questions at the end so that the groups interact with their audience.

Sample Rubric for Group Presentation

Content

(1) no required information included
(2) some required information included
(3) most of required information included
(4) includes all required information

Presentation

(1) lack of preparation, read from notes
(2) prepared but all group members did not participate, not engaging
(3) prepared, all members participate, engaging
(4) prepared, excellent participation, engaging and creative

Speaking

(1) poor, unable to hear or understand
(2) able to hear but monotone throughout
(3) strong voice, able to hear, makes a few attempts at variation in voice
(4) strong voice, able to hear, makes a many attempts at variation in voice