

Grade 2
Social Studies
Unit 3: Our Community and Its Physical Environment

Time Frame: Approximately 3 weeks



Unit Description

The focus of this unit is on how the use of geographic tools, technology and map skills are essential to an understanding of the relationship between people and their physical environment.

Student Understandings

Students understand the function and use of geographic tools (e.g., maps, globes, etc.) to locate and describe places. Students explain how location, weather, and physical features affect where people live and work. Students describe the impact that natural disasters and humans can have on the environment in terms of modifications and consequences.

Guiding Questions

1. Can students describe how local physical features and weather patterns affect how people live and work?
2. Can students describe how land use and economic activities vary among communities?
3. Can students describe how local communities use, preserve, and protect their natural resources?
4. Can students explain how knowledge of world and national maps is important to local communities?
5. Can students describe the impact of natural disasters on communities?

Unit 3 Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) and ELA Common-Core-State-Standards (CCSS)

Grade-Level Expectations	
GLE #	GLE Text and Benchmarks
Maps, Globes and Environment	
2.2.1	Locate and identify the poles, equator, continents, oceans, the United States, Louisiana, and the local community
2.2.2	Interpret physical maps using title, key, symbols, compass rose (cardinal and intermediate directions), and alpha numeric grids

2.2.3	Construct maps of familiar places that include a title, key/legend, symbols, and compass rose
2.2.4	Identify major geographical features in the local region, state, and country
2.2.5	Describe how location, weather, and physical features affect where people live and work
2.2.6	Describe changes in the characteristics of the local community over time
2.2.7	Compare and contrast basic land use and economic activities in urban, suburban, and rural environments
2.2.8	Describe the vegetation, the animal life, and the cultural characteristics of the people specific to local regions and how they are interdependent
2.2.9	Identify natural resources and cite ways people conserve, protect, and replenish them
2.2.10	Identify natural disasters, predict where they may occur, and explain their effects on people and the environment
ELA CCSS	
GLE #	GLE Text and Benchmarks
Reading Standards for Informational Text	
RI.2.1	Ask and answer such questions as <i>who</i> , <i>what</i> , <i>where</i> , <i>when</i> , <i>why</i> , and <i>how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
RI.2.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a <i>grade 2 topic or subject area</i> .
RI.2.7	Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.
RI.2.9	Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic.
Writing Standards	
W.2.2	Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section
W.2.7	Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).
W.2.8	Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
Language Standards	
L.2.4a,e	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grade 2 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. e. Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.

Speaking and Listening Standards	
SL.2.1a, b, c	<p>Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>grade 2 topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion). b. Build on others’ talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others. c. Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
SL.2.4	Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

Sample Activities

Activity 1: Comparing Maps and Globes (GLEs: 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.4, 2.2.5; CCSS: RI.2.1, RI.2.9)

Materials List: wall map of the world, globe, Venn Diagram BLM

Show students a map of the world and a globe. Discuss the purpose of maps and globes. Put students into small groups, and have them compare a map to a globe using a Venn diagram *graphic organizer*, ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). Give each group a copy of the Venn Diagram BLM and have them compare a map to a globe. (See BLM.) Give students time to share their comparisons with the class.

Help students understand that maps and globes help them find places. Review with students cardinal directions and how they are used to help locate places on maps and globes. Introduce the term *equator*. Have students locate the equator and both the north and south poles on the world map and the globe. Discuss what the weather is like at the equator and the poles. Ask students how this affects people living there.

Use cardinal directions to locate continents and oceans north and south of the equator. Help students to understand that a continent is a mass of land found on Earth and that most of Earth is covered with water. A variety of songs can be found on the Internet to reinforce this concept. (See <http://teachers.net/gazette/DEC02/continents.html>.) The following is one example:

<p>EARTH (Tune: My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean) Earth is the name of our planet. It's shaped like a ball or a sphere. It's covered with land and water. A globe makes this picture quite clear. Chorus</p>	<p>Seven continents, four oceans, on our planet, Earth... Seven continents, four oceans, on our planet, Earth! On Earth there are seven continents, They're the largest masses of land. Four large bodies of water are oceans.</p>
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Next, focus on North America. Have students locate North America, the United States, Louisiana, and their local community on a variety of maps. Discuss with students different regions of the United States and how the weather is different across those regions. Then focus on Louisiana and their local community. Discuss reasons why people choose to live in Louisiana. Have students share their ideas.

Activity 2: Finding My Way? (GLEs: 2.2.2, 2.2.3; CCSS: RI.2.1, RI.2.7)

Materials List: variety of maps (street, city, state, etc.), drawing paper, atlas, Finding My Way BLM

Ask students what they would need to help them find their way around a place they have never been to before. Introduce the term *maps*. Explain to students that maps can show different places. Tell students that a map can represent a small area like the classroom or a larger area like the community. Show students a variety of maps. (e.g., street maps, city maps, state maps, etc.) Have students look at the maps to find things that are alike on each of the maps.

Ask students: When using a map, how can one tell which way to go? Locate the compass rose on a map. Tell students the compass rose shows where the directions north (N), south (S), east (E), or west (W) are located on the map. It also shows intermediate directions northeast (NE), northwest (NW), southeast (SE), and southwest (SW). The compass rose helps people know which direction to go when looking at maps. Have students locate the compass rose on different maps.

Have students find the map key on different maps. Tell students that the map key contains symbols that represent places and things on the map. Discuss with students reasons why symbols are used on a map.

Have students sketch a simple map of the classroom, then create a map key which contains symbols that represent different things in the classroom (e.g., the teacher's desk, the book shelf, students' desks, etc.). Using cardinal directions, have students place the symbols from the map key on their map to represent where the different items (e.g., the teacher's desk, the bookshelf, the students' desks, etc.) are located in the classroom.

Put students with a partner to sketch a simple map of the school or community. Have students label things that would be found on their map and create a map key. Have students create five questions for other students to answer about their map (e.g., What direction is the school from the library? What does the symbol ? stand for?) Allow students time to exchange maps and answer the questions provided.

When students have an understanding of maps, introduce a grid map. Give students Finding My Way BLM. Help students understand how grids are helpful when trying to find information on maps. Use wall maps or an atlas to show students how maps are divided into grids. Explain that each grid represents an area of the map and that it makes it easier to find information on the map if you know what grid it is in.

Have students answer the following questions in their *learning log* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). Why do we need maps? What is a compass rose? What is a grid map?

Activity 3: Landforms and Bodies of Water Around the World (GLE: 2.2.4; CCSS: RI.2.7, L.2.4e, W.2.8)

Materials List: pictures of landforms, Landforms and Bodies of Water Around the World BLM

Display the term *landform*. Discuss with the students the meaning of the word. Explain to students that there are several types of landforms and bodies of water located around the world. Each landform has unique characteristics. Have students complete a self-assessment of their knowledge of landforms around the world by completing a *vocabulary self-awareness chart*. ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) (See Landforms and Bodies of Water Around the World BLM) Do not give students definitions or examples at this stage. Ask students to rate their understanding of each word with either a “+” (understands well), “√” (limited understanding or unsure), or a “-” (don’t know). Throughout the activity, students should be told to return often to the chart and add new information to it. The goal is to replace all the check marks and minus signs with plus signs. Because students continually revisit their vocabulary charts to revise their entries, they have multiple opportunities to practice and extend their growing understanding of key terms related to the topic of landforms and bodies of water. Once the unit has concluded, be sure to check that students have accurate definitions and appropriate illustrations and examples for each of the landforms in the vocabulary self-awareness charts.

A picture glossary of landforms and bodies of water can be found on the Internet at <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/landforms/glossary.shtml>.

Show students a variety of pictures of landforms and bodies of water found on Earth. Provide students with books about each landform and body of water discussed. Help students to identify those found in their local community, state, and different regions of the United States. Then have students list all landforms and bodies of water that they have had experience with. Have students choose one landform from their list and create a model of it.

Student models can be done at school or home. Give students an opportunity to share their models with the class when completed.

Internet Resources:

Information on the physical geography of the United States -

<http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/us/A0861706.html>

Geographical Dictionary

<http://www.firstschoolyears.com/geography/dictionary.htm>

Landforms

<http://www.edu.pe.ca/southernkings/landforms.htm>

Activity 4: Mapping Fiction and Real Life (GLEs: 2.2.2, 2.2.3; CCSS: RI.2.1)

Materials List: Louisiana literature (e.g., *Cajun Gingerbread Boy* by Berthe Amoss, *Clovis Crawfish*, by Mary Alice Fontenot), Louisiana Landforms Map BLM

Give each student the Louisiana Landforms Map BLM that includes a title, directional indicators, a scale, and a map key. Have students draw symbols on the map key to represent the different landforms and bodies of water. Then read books with settings that take place in Louisiana (e.g., *Clovis Crawfish*, *Cajun Gingerbread Boy*, etc.). Have students recall the setting from the story and create symbols representing different geographical features mentioned in the story. Have students place their symbols on the outline map in the appropriate locations to show various geographical features of Louisiana. As the symbols are placed on the map, remind students that the

- title tells what the map is about
- directional indicator, or compass rose, indicates North, South, East, and West
- legend contains the map key and scale.

Then put students with a partner to draw a map of their local community showing geographical features. Make sure students include a title, key, symbols and the compass rose. Allow students time to share their maps when they have completed them.

A list of books about Louisiana for children and adults can be found at the State Library of Louisiana. (Ask-a-Librarian http://www.state.lib.la.us/la_dyn_templ.cfm?doc_id=115)

Activity 5: Climate and Vegetation (GLEs: 2.2.5, 2.2.8; CCSS: RI.2.1, RI.2.4)

Materials List: Regions of the United States BLM, Internet access

Introduce the term *climate*. Help students understand that climate deals with weather conditions in different areas over time. Give students a copy of the Regions of the United States BLM. Explain to students that the climate in each region of the United States is different. Use the library or Internet resources to find the climate for each different region.

Help students understand that climate has an effect on the vegetation that grows in different regions. Discuss with students different agricultural products that grow in Louisiana. As an extension, invite an agricultural expert to the class to share information about Louisiana vegetation.

Have students identify and list vegetation found in the local community. Ask them to brainstorm what happens to the vegetation as the climate changes. This provides an opportunity to discuss the change of seasons and the differences between the definitions of weather, climate, and seasons. Have students construct a chart and list the vegetation that changes with climate and that which does not.

Discuss with students the role of weather in the production of food and how people in the community depend on the physical environment to satisfy their basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter.

Library Resources:

Climate Maps by Ian F. Mahaney, *Encyclopedia of Climate and Weather* by Stephen H. Schneider, *Vegetation* by David Lambert, *Louisiana, its land and people* by Fred B. Kniffen, *Changing Climate* by Sally Morgan, *Climates* by Theresa Jarosz Albert, or *The Climates of the Continents* by Wilfrid George Kendrew

Internet Resources:

Climate across the United States

<http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/us/A0861707.html>

<http://www.southtravels.com/america/usa/weather.html>

Agriculture

http://www.classbrain.com/artstate/publish/cat_index_25.shtml

<http://www.agclassroom.org/kids/stats/louisiana.pdf>

http://www.aitcla.org/files/commodity_handout_sheets.pdf

Activity 6: Basic Land Use (GLEs: 2.2.5, 2.2.7, 2.2.8; CCSS: RI.2.9, L.2.4a, L.2.4e, SL2.1a)

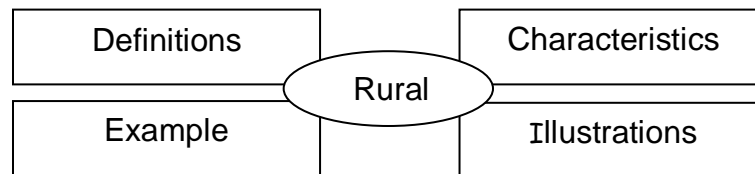
Materials List: Basic Land Use BLM, pictures of rural, urban, and suburban communities, Vocabulary Cards BLM, Compare and Contrast Rubric BLM

Tell students communities can be divided into three categories: urban, suburban, and rural. Each of these communities has its own features. Display pictures of rural, suburban, and urban communities or show students the Types of Communities interactive map found at http://www.eduplace.com/kids/socsci/books/applications/imaps/maps/g3_u1/index.html#top

Then have students use textbooks and Internet resources to find information about rural, suburban, and urban communities. Have students use a *graphic organizer* chart ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) to organize the information they discover about basic land use in these communities. (See Basic Land Use BLM) Have students share their charts with a partner when complete. Charts can serve as useful study aids in preparation for other class

activities and quizzes over this content.

Next, to help develop student understanding of the differences between rural, urban, and suburban communities, have them create *vocabulary cards* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). Provide students with the Vocabulary Card BLM run on card stock or construction paper (see example below) and ask them to follow the directions in creating the cards. Have students provide a definition of the term in their own words in the definition box. List the characteristics or write a description of the term, and give an example of it in the correct boxes. Finally, create a simple illustration of the vocabulary word in the last box of the card.



Put students with a partner and have them fill in the *vocabulary cards*. Students should use their Basic Land Use chart, textbooks, and Internet resources to help them and provide a definition of each term in their own words in the first box. Students should list the characteristics or description of each term in the next box. Then put examples of the term in the third box. Finally, create a simple illustration in the last area of the card. *Vocabulary cards* should be used to review concepts throughout the unit. Students can study their cards alone and with a partner in preparation for quizzes and other class activities.

To conclude this activity, have students choose two different communities and write a paragraph explaining how they are alike and different. Assess with Compare and Contrast Rubric BLM.

Activity 7: Community Model (GLE: 2.2.7; CCSS: SL.2.1a, SL.2.1b, SL.2.1c)

Materials List: construction paper, blocks, small boxes, pictures of communities around Louisiana

Display pictures of rural, suburban, and urban communities. Ask students, “Does where you live affect how you live?” Then using the *discussion strategy Think-Pair-Square-Share* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)), have students discuss their answers to the question. Ask students to think alone for a short period of time, and then pair up with someone to share their thoughts. Then have pairs of students share with other pairs, forming small groups of four students. Monitor the discussion and elicit responses afterwards. Encourage student pairs not to automatically adopt the ideas and solutions of their partners. Discuss student responses as a class.

Discuss with students how land in a community may be used for different things. Land use can be commercial (stores, hotels, restaurants), industrial (factories, companies), or

residential (homes, apartments). Tell students that together they will be looking at patterns of land use in the community.

Put students into three groups and assign each group a different community- rural, suburban, and urban. Have students create a model of their community. Have them choose what to include in their model. Incorporate physical and human features (e.g., buildings, forests, parks, etc). Use paper, blocks, small boxes, and other suitable materials to represent types of settlements and patterns of land use. Include such items as a library, bank, grocery store, gas station, etc., within the model community. When the model is complete, discuss with students how most of the land in their community was used. Then have students compare and contrast the different communities.

Activity 8: Defining Characteristics (GLEs: 2.2.1, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 2.2.8; CCSS: W.2.2, W.2.7, W.2.8, SL2,1a)

Materials List: pictures of different communities, books, magazines and newspapers

Discuss with students the geographical features of the community in which they live. Show students how communities are alike and different by having them sort pictures of different communities. Have them brainstorm reasons why people choose to live in different places (e.g., location, climate, physical environment, work).

Have students identify and collect data on the geographical features of their local community. Have students use books, magazines, newspapers, and other resources to find pictures and information about landforms, bodies of water, vegetation, land use and the climate of the local community. Students should organize all information found on a poster, chart, or graphic organizer entitled Our Local Community.

Conclude this activity with a *RAFT* writing ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). *RAFT* gives students the opportunity to rework, apply, and extend their understandings of information and concepts learned. It is an acronym that stands for R-Role of the writer; A-Audience to whom or what the *RAFT* is being written; F-Form the writing will take, newspaper article, letter, etc; T-Topic or subject focus of the writing. Use the following *RAFT*

- R- Newspaper reporter
- A- People in other communities
- F- News paper article
- T- Why people choose to live in (name of local community)

Ask students to write a newspaper article entitled “*Why people choose to live in (local community)*”. It should focus on the geographical features, vegetation, climate, and how the land is used. Allow time for students to share their writing with a partner or the whole class. Students should be listening for accuracy and logic in their classmates’ *RAFT*s.

Activity 9: Living with the Land (GLEs: 2.2.1, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 2.2.8; CCSS: RI.2.1, W.2.7, W.2.8, SL.2.4)

Materials List: Map of Louisiana BLM, Internet access, learning logs, books, magazines, and poster board

Give students Map of Louisiana BLM and have them use cardinal directions to locate their local region. Guide students in conducting an investigation about the physical environment utilizing the Internet, books, magazines, or the school media center. Put students into groups and give them Our Local Region BLM. Help students find information about the weather, geographical features, vegetation, animal life, and resources found in their local region.

When they have completed their research, have students share the information they found. Describe how weather, vegetation, animal life, and the cultural characteristics of the people specific to the local region are interdependent.

Have students answer the following question in their *learning log* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)). How does the physical environment affect where and how people live and work?

Ask students to create a poster about the region they live in. Their poster should include an illustration of the physical environment and ways in which local residents use the environment to meet their basic needs.

Activity 10: Floods and Other Natural Disasters (GLEs: 2.2.9, 2.2.10; CCSS: RI.2.1, L.2.4e, W.2.7)

Materials List: Vocabulary Self-Awareness BLM, LPB Cyber Channel.Video Segment- *Hurricanes*, Internet access

Tell students that sometimes our environment is changed. Have them name things that can change the environment (e.g., people, floods, hurricanes, etc.).

Display the term *natural disaster*. Discuss with students the meaning of these words. Explain to students that natural disasters affect people and the environment. Provide students with a list of natural disasters. Have them complete a self-assessment of their knowledge of the words using a *vocabulary self-awareness* chart ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) like the one below. Do not give students definitions or examples at this stage. Ask students to rate their understanding of each word with either a “+” (understand well), a “√” (limited understanding or unsure), or a “—” (don’t know). (See the Vocabulary Self-Awareness Chart BLM and the sample below.)

Natural Disasters					
Word	+	√	-	Examples	Definition
hurricane					
tornado					

Introduce natural disaster by showing the video segment “*Hurricanes*” from the LPB Cyber Channel. (<http://beta.lpb.org/index.php/education/cyberchannel/>).

Put students in groups to research different natural disasters. Have students use library and Internet resources to find information about where these disasters occur and how they affect people and the environment. When students complete their research, have them create a poster to illustrate information found. Then revisit the Vocabulary Self-Awareness Chart and have students check and fill in any missing information. Monitor students to make sure the information in the charts are accurate and complete.

Discuss reasons why people sometimes modify their environment, such as clearing trees to build houses or farm the land. Then discuss other things that can be done to modify or change the environment (building of roads and levees, etc.) and harmful ways people change the environment (pollution).

Discuss ways people can protect their environment, conservation, recycling and how sometimes people have to adapt to changes in the environment.

Resources:

<http://www.esa.int/esaKIDSen/Naturaldisasters.html>

<http://www.ready.gov/kids/step3/index.html>

<http://www.kidsconnect.com/subject-index/15-science/92-natural-disasters.html>

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/natural-disasters/teacher-resources/48771.html>

Activity 11: Depending on the Environment (GLEs: 2.2.9, 2.2.10; CCSS: RI.2.1, SL.2.1a, SL.2.1b, SL.2.4)

Materials List: chart paper, learning log, Internet access

Display pictures of our local community and ask students “*What does it mean to depend on the environment?*” Then using the *discussion strategy Think-Pair-Square-Share* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)), have students discuss their answers to the question. Ask students to think alone for a short period of time, and then pair up with someone to share their thoughts. Have pairs of students share with other pairs, forming small groups of four. Monitor the discussion and elicit responses. Have students share ideas and write them on the board or on chart paper. Then have students list natural resources that people use to meet their basic needs.

Next lead the class through an investigation of how community residents depend on the physical environment to satisfy basic needs. Discussion should focus on how land and water resources in the community are used and the role of weather, land, and water resources in food production.

Create wall charts, using one of the following headings for each:

- Basic Needs of Community Residents

- Using the Environment to Meet Basic Needs
- Using Land and Water Resources

Provide information for the charts from material read aloud to the class, material read silently by the students, pictures shown to the class, and/or local community Web sites. When students have completed their charts, discuss how location, weather, and the physical environment affect where and how people live.

Discuss with students ways we can conserve, protect, and replenish our natural resources. Have students answer the following question in their *learning log* ([view literacy strategy descriptions](#)) *How can we conserve and protect natural resources?*

Sample Assessments

General Guidelines

Documentation of student understanding is recommended to be in the form of portfolio assessment. Teacher observations and records as well as student-generated products may be included in the portfolio. All items should be dated and clearly labeled to effectively show student growth over time.

Activity-Specific Assessments

- Activities 3 and 7: Final Product Assessment: The community and landform model can be evaluated using the Community and Landform Model Rubric BLM
- Activity 6: Write a compare and contrast paragraph (Compare and Contrast Rubric BLM)
- Activity 8: Have students write a story about their local community. Instruct them to describe changes that have been made in their community over time, and to explain why those changes were made. Have students include in their story information about changes in the physical and human characteristics and the demographics of the region.