### Geographic Features and Human Settlements
#### 3rd Grade Social Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Taught:</th>
<th>Standard: Students will understand how geography influences community location and development.</th>
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<td>Objective:</td>
<td>Determine the relationships between human settlement and geography.</td>
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<td>Indicators:</td>
<td>The students will identify the geographic features common to areas where human settlements exist (Social Studies Obj. 1.1, a.). The students will use map features to make logical inferences and describe relationships between human settlement and physical geography (e.g. population density in relation to latitude, cities’ proximity to water, utilization of natural resources (Social Studies obj. 1.1, b.)</td>
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| Vocabulary: | valley, forest, hill, lake, desert, river, ocean, island, plain, mountain, natural resources, physical geography, recreation, transportation |

### How Taught:

**Introduction:** Introduce geographic feature vocabulary by playing a game of your choice (Rivet, hangman, matching, etc.). Introduce and post the following vocabulary words: desert, forest, hill, island, lake, mountain, ocean, plain, river, valley.

**Lesson Development:**

**DAY 1:** Show a [powerpoint](#) showing pictures of different places...add population of the place to the bottom of the slide. Have students identify the geographic features they can see in the pictures. Discuss how geography is an important part of how people live in communities. It affects transportation, types of homes, and even clothing! As the pictures come up with the population of the state below it, ask “Why do you think so many people live in California and not so many in Wyoming? What do geographic features have to do with that?”

Help students complete the [graphic organizer](#). List their ideas why certain geographic features would be important to communities.

**DAY 2:** Discuss our state more specifically after the powerpoint and graphic organizer. Ask the students if they were to make a model of our state, what geographic features would it have? (mountains, valleys, lakes, etc.)

Have the students make some type of map showing water, mountain ranges, major cities, etc. Ideas for maps:
1. Have the students use crayons to color a map of Utah and the different features. Have them add the major cities to the map.
2. Give the students an outline of a Utah map. Give them brown, green, blue and red playdough. Have them create mountains out of the brown, valleys out of the green, bodies of water out of the blue, and mark major cities with the red.
3. Make an edible map. Give the students an outline map of Utah and edible dough to make the base for their map. Then have the students use blue icing for water, chocolate chips for mountains, and M & Ms to mark major cities.

**DAY 3-5:** Have the students create a fictitious map. Have them show what geographic features are there and where the major cities would be located. Also have them decide what natural resources they would need in order to start a successful community. Students could work in groups and make their maps on a transparency and then present their map to the class. Their classmates could make inferences based on what they see on the fictitious map.

If time allows, have students go further than just creating their own map...have them create their own community like Wesley does in the book, “Westlandia.” Have them think about food, shelter, celebrations, sports, clothing, etc. in their community. Have them complete a book describing their community—have them draw or create pictures or diagrams to go with each explanation. Allow time for students to share what
they have created with their classmates.

**How Demonstrated:** Students will use the maps they have been given and the maps they have created to make inferences and describe relationships about human settlements and physical geography. Student will be able to tell WHY major cities are in certain locations. Students will discuss what they have learned in small and whole class groups.

**Integration:**

**Math**- Compare and order the populations from the major cities on the PowerPoint. List and rank the cities from 1 to 8. Have the students determine the state with the least population and the state with the most. Discuss possible reasons why.

**Math**- Create a bar graph based on the responses to the homework assignment.

**Literature**- *Aurora Means Dawn* by Scott Russell Sanders and Jill Kastner  (From a notation in a historical source, Sanders constructs this story about the Sheldons, a family of settlers who spend the night on a muddy road when trees block their path only a few miles from their final destination—the bustling town of Aurora. But Aurora is no more than a surveyor’s post, and so, once they are rescued by other settlers living nearby, the Sheldons become Aurora’s first residents. “The next settlers did not come for three years,” is the book’s last line. Eloquently spun is this story of momentary hardship in the face of overwhelming beginnings.)

**Westlandia** by Paul Fleischman (Wesley’s garden produces a crop of huge, strange plants which provide him with clothing, shelter, food, and drink, thus helping him create his own civilization and changing his life.)

**Music**- Listen to and sing the song, “This Land is Your Land.” Have the students listen for the geographic features that are mentioned.

**Homework:** Give each student a questionnaire to be completed by his or her family with questions pertaining to reasons for settling in their present hometown. Upon completing and returning the questionnaire, students could create a class bar graph showing reasons for settlement.

**Lesson Extensions:** Tell the students that there are all kinds of maps that we can look at that give us clues as to why people make communities where they do. Pass out a copy of the “Nighttime Lights” population map. Have the students label Utah. Discuss where the most amount of people are and where the least amount are. Then have students look at a physical map of the United States. Discuss and compare how physical features correlate with areas of densely packed lights. Discuss features such as: mountains, rivers, coastlines, deserts, lakes. Help students conclude that people tend to make communities in river and lake areas, along coastlines, and in areas of good farmland. Not as many people settle in the mountains or deserts.

Go to [www.cc.gatech.edu/~pesti/night](http://www.cc.gatech.edu/~pesti/night) to see the “Nighttime Lights” map of the world. Project the map and then zoom in and out so that students can see where the lights are. Discuss latitude and why there are no lights as you get closer to the top and bottom of the map. Then look at a world population map and discuss population according to latitude on that map.

**Web Resources:**

- [www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com) (click on “maps” at the top)
- [www.nationalatlas.gov](http://www.nationalatlas.gov) (click on map maker or click on printable maps)
- [www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com) (has a lot of different maps)
- [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) (click on special topics: for teachers and students)
- [http://factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov)

**Materials:**

- Vocabulary wordstrips
- PowerPoint depicting various areas of the United States with the population of each place listed. (2003 Version)
- Copies of Graphic Organizer to use after PowerPoint
- Teacher copy of Graphic Organizer
Copies of basic Utah map showing some of the major geographical features
Copies of questionnaire for homework

Optional Materials:
Edible map ingredients (if making edible map)
Books for literature connections you might be making
Music for “This Land is Your Land.”