Ecoregions of Oregon: Many Pieces, One Puzzle

Overview:
The purpose of this lesson is to improve and refine knowledge of Oregon’s Ecoregions. Designed as an introductory lesson, students will be using atlases and informational materials to research and discover varying aspects of defined Oregon Ecoregions. Extensions are listed to amplify and support this information.

Geographic Question:
How are Oregon Ecoregions defined? Where are the regions located around the state?

Connection with Curriculum:
Learning level (4-6) Geography

Objectives:
Define Oregon Ecoregion characteristics by independently researching (or presenting with speaking and writing) an assigned Ecoregion, and collecting data from peer presenters.

National Geography Standards:
#1 - How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information.
#4 - The physical and human characteristics of places.

Oregon Geography Standards:
4.8. Use geographical tools (e.g. maps, GIS, Google Earth) to identify absolute and relative locations and physical characteristics of places in Oregon.
6.12. Collect and analyze data to describe regions of the Western Hemisphere (Oregon).
6.14. Identify physical features of the Western Hemisphere (Oregon) and explain their effects on people and events.

English Language Proficiency Standards for ELD:
Defining – Students learn to define concrete and abstract objects/concepts with correct nouns, pronouns, and adjectives.

Language Objectives:
Function: Defining
Form: Nouns, pronouns and adjectives

Beginning: A _____ is _____.

Intermediate: (possessive pronoun)__________(past tense irregular verb)____________.

Advanced: (possessive pronoun)________(past tense irregular/regular verb)__________, however/but/and____________(past tense irregular/regular verb) __________.
Targeted Language Skills:
Reading: Students will read content specific nonfiction materials to gather information about regions.
Writing: Students will dictate key vocabulary for each region presented in graphic organizer.
Listening: Students will follow along with student presenters guiding them through the region researched.
Speaking: Students will present information gathered, during research, to small group and/or whole group.

Vocabulary:
ecoregion       valley       topography
basin           plateau     mountain
range           plain        arid
humid           features    temperate
marine          gorge        characteristics
climate

Materials:
• Two laminated cut-outs of Oregon by Ecoregions (or individual 8 1/2x11” map+)
• Map of Oregon, Ecoregions depicted
• Individual “Region Charts” found at the end of the lesson
• Oregon Blue Book (optional), http://bluebook.state.or.us/
• Atlas of Oregon (see bibliography)
• Markers, highlighters, pens or pencils
• Alphabetical, photo vocabulary cards specific to ecoregion vocabulary listed in lesson
• Leveled readers

Presentation Steps:
1. Hand out the Student Atlas of Oregon, Atlas of Oregon, and Oregon Blue Book (if used), or make computers available for Student Atlas of Oregon and Oregon Blue Book access. Also, hand out leveled readers and photo vocabulary cards. Use this time to have students familiarize themselves with the research materials. Review previously introduced vocabulary and posters in the room. Highlight characteristics of an ecoregion: flora, fauna, climate and physical features.
2. Divide the class into nine groups, each focusing on one ecoregion. Also, provide groups with materials for researching their ecoregion. These groups will become the “Expert Groups”. Distribute graphic organizer and other materials.
3. Students will work in small groups gathering information using the materials provided.
4. Students will present information gathered.
   Example:
   The highest elevation in my region is_______________________.
   Animals that live in the Willamette Valley are_________________.
5. Simultaneously, students will fill out their “Region Chart”.
6. As a whole group, students will then discuss the similarities and differences between the Ecoregions of Oregon. This is teacher-facilitated, using the large ecoregion map (class).
7. Using photo vocabulary cards, students will then label the class map with characteristics of each region.

Assessment:
The “Regional Chart” the students fill out, while sharing regional information, will assess spatial knowledge and recall information by requiring students to place appropriate information in the correct spaces. Open-ended questions will assess the students’ ability to apply the content. Students’ answers will vary, dependent upon the level of analysis appropriate to their grade.

Extensions:
- Further projects can include the utilization of Counties opposed to geographic Ecoregions, as well as a “Mock Museum Display” or persuasive pamphlet to entice new visitors or habitants
- Language Arts: Persuasive letter to encourage tourism or migration
- History: History of the region. Family, native populations, events etc.
- AG/Science: How was that region created? Population and pollution levels, soil composition, water levels, etc.
- Life Skills: Cooking lessons- creating menu using Oregon specific crops
- Teachers from alternate states/countries: Preview the Student Atlas of Oregon before this lesson and choose the maps you would find the most pertinent to the purpose of your objective
- Short on Time and resources? Instead of making cut-outs of Ecoregions, print out the blank *Ecoregion* map of Oregon provided.
- Students can use photo vocab cards as a matching memory game
- Students can create a PowerPoint of photos with vocabulary words as titles

Bibliography:


Original Authors: Katie Willey and Pam Salmons
Lesson adapted by: Theresa Egan and Dezire Clarke
The final editing and adaptations for an ELL classroom were completed by the OGA Spanish Student Atlas of Oregon Task Force 2011.
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