Why Are Cities Located On or Near Rivers?

Overview:
By understanding the geography of a region, students are able to understand the factors that have influenced population growth around fresh water systems. In this lesson students will discuss and analyze why population centers and major cities are often located on or near rivers. Students will have an opportunity to explore and practice how to read maps and come to an understanding of the importance rivers play in shaping societies around the globe. Specifically, this lesson will focus on Oregon and Iberia's rivers and population settlements.

Standards:

National Geography Standards:

*The World in Spatial Terms #1-
How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information.*

*Places and Regions #4-
The physical and human characteristics of places.*

*Human Systems #12-
The process, patterns, and functions of human settlement.*

*Environment and Society #15-
How physical systems affect human systems.*

Oregon Geography Content Standards:

3.8. Identify links of land, regions, river systems, interstate highways between Oregon and other states.

3.12. Identify and analyze Oregon’s natural resources and describe how people in Oregon and other parts of the world use them.

Connections to Common Core:

3.W.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
Objectives:
In completing this exercise, students should be able to describe at least 3 reasons a city or population center is influenced by its geography, more specifically rivers.

Grade Level: 3rd
Time: 1 hour 30 min
Materials:
Map of Iberian Peninsula (Appendix A)
Oregon Handout (Appendix B)
Oregon Map Sheet (Appendix C)
Opinion Writing Rubric

Background:
There has been a long history of settlement near rivers. For hundreds of years’ people have been living along freshwater systems, and due to this the populations around them have flourished. There are many reasons as to why people would choose to settle based on the physical geography of the land, more specifically rivers. Some of these reasons include the fertile land along the rivers which in turn result into available land for crop production. Another reason may include the waterways as a means for transportation as well as a means of communication and transport for trade. Many people have found the benefits of living near rivers for food, trade, and connection to the world around them. In this lesson, we will see a comparison of the populations along the rivers of Oregon, and the rivers in the Iberian Peninsula.

Procedures:

Introduction:
Begin with a class discussion based on the essential question:
"What do we use water for?"

Come up with responses as a class, the students will likely come up with answers such as swimming, drinking, going on boats etc. After the class has brainstormed some ideas continue with the discussion posing the questions:
"What do we use rivers for?"
"What activities do we do on rivers?"

During the class discussion, the teacher will record answers on the board or a poster paper at the front of the class. From this discussion the teacher will lead into the first lecture.

Lecture:
For this section of the class the teacher will need a large blank map of the Iberian Peninsula. There is a blank map and complete map provided in this lesson (See appendix A). Hang the large blank map at the front of the class or project using a doc cam. If the teacher is unable to provide this
accommodation they may trace the outline of Iberia on the board or make individual copies of the map for each student.

Define Vocabulary:
“What is...?”
- Population
- Chart
- Map
- River

“Now that we know the meaning of these terms we can use them to conduct our own research. Today we will be looking at the Iberian Peninsula. (show on a map where Iberia is located) Here is a map of Iberia, together we are going to chart where some of the major rivers and cities are.”

Provide each student with the handout titled “The Iberian Peninsula” with the class’s help the teacher will roughly outline/draw on the blank map for the class:

Rivers:
“Where is the...?”
- Tajo
- Guadalquivir
- Duero

Cities & Populations of each city:
“Who can locate...?” “What is the population of...?”
- Lisbon
- Porto (Oporto)
- Seville
- Cordoba

Once the map is complete have a discussion with the students about where the cities are located and the reasons of why people may have settled along the rivers in the past.

Some examples to make sure to discuss include:
- Travel
- Fertile agriculture
- Food and water
- Trade etc.

After the classroom discussion give each student a copy of the “Oregon” handout (See Appendix B).

Activity:
At this point in the lesson the students will use the knowledge they have learned from the Iberia map to create a similar map of Oregon’s rivers and cities.

Organize students into small groups as the class permits (2-4 students). You are to assign the “Oregon” handout to the class. Provide each table group with the map and data sheet of Oregon (See Appendix C)

You may recommend students splitting up responsibilities, for examples say, “Some of you may want to draw and label Portland, while another group member draws the Columbia River.”

After students have completed the handouts the class will come together as a whole. The teacher will lead a discussion on the similarities between the Iberia map and Oregon map that they created.
Some leading questions may include:

- What are the similarities in location of the cities on the Iberia and Oregon map?
- Why would there be so many people living where they are?
- What were the benefits of living by rivers in the past? In the present?
- Do people need to live by rivers in the present?
- Why are there cities in present that are not along rivers? What technology allows this?

Summative Assessment:

To finish the lesson, the students will complete the last page of the “Oregon” handout. The students are to write a paragraph (4-6 sentences) on where they would live in Oregon and why. The teacher should read directions and also give some direction as to what they will be writing. For example, the teacher may say “You are to include at least three reasons as to why you would live near a river or why not. If you choose to live near a river give support as to why, if you choose to live away from a river give reason on why and how modern technology makes it easier to live away from the river.” Etc. When students are finished the teacher may collect the packet.

Assessment:

Formative: The teacher will monitor students during the group activity of filling in the map of Iberia, as well as walk around the classroom checking student’s participation and progress in completing the Oregon handout.

Summative: Students will write a paragraph about where they would live in Oregon and back up their decision with three reasons that they learned in the lesson. (See grading rubric)

Extensions and/or Adaptations:

This lesson can be extended to other states or places around the world, teachers can plan accordingly to relate the lesson to their students. For an older class the teacher may choose to work in a computer lab to do research on the state instead of handing out appendix C, the map and data sheet.

Sources:


Appendix A: Map of the Iberian Peninsula - Part 1
Population:

Oporto: 230,298
Guarda: 42,541
Lisbon: 530,847
Lagos: 31,049
Salamanca: 228,881
Seville: 703,000
Ronda: 35,000
Cordoba: 328,773
Madrid: 3.165 million
**Directions:** Using your *Oregon Maps and Data* sheet please label the following items on the map.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities:</th>
<th>Rivers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>Columbia River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>Willamette River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dalles</td>
<td>Deschutes River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bend</td>
<td>John Day River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klamath Falls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**
Oregon Maps and Data

**POPULATED PLACES**
- Portland
- Eugene
- Springfield
- Grants Pass
- Salem

**TRANSPORTATION**
- Interstate: limited access highway
- Other principal highway
- Railroad

**PHYSICAL FEATURES**
- Streams: perennial, intermittent
- Lakes: permanent, intermittent
- Highest elevation in state (ft): +11,239
- Other elevations (ft): +10,007

The lowest elevation in Oregon is sea level (Pacific Ocean).

Appendix C - Oregon Maps and Data Sheet
Formative Assessment Grading Rubric:
This may be provided to students prior to assigning the opinion paragraph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student opens with clear topic, stating opinion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student stays on topic.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student gives reason for opinion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student includes a closing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student uses accurate punctuation and capital letters where appropriate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments/Goals

Total: