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Geography of Canada

### **Physical Location; How a Border Town Might Develop**

**Overview:** Students, in groups, select a location along the Canadian/U.S. border to design a community that straddles the border and whose community is based on natural resources of the area, i.e. mining, recreation, lumber, milling. Each group will be comprised of U.S. and Canadian citizens who will work at finding consensus on land use decisions.

#### **Geographic Questions:**

1. How do the natural resources of an area influence the development of that area?
2. How does an international border affect economic development of a border community?

#### **National Geographic Standards:**

11. The patterns and networks of economic interdependences on Earth's surface
15. How physical systems affect human activities

#### **State of Oregon, Benchmark II Standards:**

- Identify how human activities are affected by physical environment (Geography)
- Identify cause and effect relationships in a series of events (History)

#### **Materials:**

Large table or floor area  
Clean empty milk cartons  
Popsicle sticks and small bits of clay (road signs)  
Cardboard or scraps for building paper structures  
Glue  
Overhead physical map North America  
Overhead maps of natural resources of U.S. and Canada

**Grades 4-5** \*This activity may be done as a whole class or in groups of 5-6 students

#### **Objectives: Students will...**

1. Understand how a particular geographic location can influence the types of businesses that develop.
2. Select a location along the U.S./Canadian border to design a local community based on the natural resources of that location.
3. Identify the types of businesses and support services needed in such a community.
4. Develop joint-governmental agreements to facilitate community development
5. Build a model community and present it to the class
6. Participate in a community Monopoly game in order to understand how economic problems lead to the demise of a community.

### **Presentation Steps: Community Building**

1. Show the students the map of North America and talk about the physical geography of the two countries, i.e. mountains, rivers, lakes, etc. Then generate ideas from the class about what kind of natural resources each area might have i.e. good soil for farming, mountains snow for skiing, etc.
2. Show the students maps of the natural resources of the areas along the border of U.S. and Canada. Ask the students to generate ideas of what kind of businesses could be based on those natural resources, i.e. farm, ski resort, fishing resort, etc.
3. The class or students groups then choose an area they like and select a core business based on the area's natural resources, i.e. mining, farming.
4. Students then build from paper, cardboard, etc., a model of the core business they have selected for the community.
5. The class or each group may be divided in to two groups to be  $\frac{1}{2}$  U.S. citizens and  $\frac{1}{2}$  Canadian citizens. Since the core business will be placed on the U.S./Canadian border, the two citizen groups may different perspectives on laws, policies, and ideas.
6. Once the core business is in place, ask students who would work there and what jobs they might do. Ask some of the students to choose a job at that business and then, using a milk carton base, build a house in which to live.
  - Students must then decide if houses will be placed within country borders or if citizenship will matter within the community.
  - Students must reach agreements on how travel around the city will be handled: Are passports necessary? Do the citizens have special passes? Are borders ignored within the city? If there are borders, will incoming visitors be welcomed?
  - One student or more may choose to develop roads to/from the business to the houses (see extension #1). Students will enjoy naming the town, businesses and streets along the way.
  - Discuss with students how the geography of the area affects the placement of housing, public buildings, businesses. Who decides how best to use the land?
7. Ask students to generate what other ideas for businesses and services the core business employees might need to live comfortably. Ask unemployed (not working for the core business) students to choose a business to own or work in and build it and a house and place them in the community. Remind them that part of the community is in Canada and part in the U. S. Ideas for discussion are;
  - Are the businesses clustered or spread out around town?
  - Are there residential areas or scattered houses?
  - Does each family have their own house should there be apartments, duplexes, etc.? Can families live over their businesses?
8. Add schools, hospitals, etc., for community needs as the town grows
9. Ask the students to create agreements of how the dual citizenship of this community might work out its legal and land use problems.
  - Who will run city services, U.S. or Canada?
  - Which country decides how the land is used?
  - Whose laws will land use and services fall under? Who will fund them?
10. Continue along these lines until the community is built and agreement on international administration are complete.

### **Presentation Steps: Community Demise**

After the development of a community and its use of the natural resources is completed, the students then can play a game to see how a city might lose population through natural disaster or economic problems and how a ghost town might develop. One way to accomplish this is to play the game City Monopoly as shown below:

### **City Monopoly Game**

1. Create scenarios of problems a community might experience and list them on an overhead sheet and numbered 1-6.  
Samples:
  1. If your town is a ski resort, no snow comes for 2 years
  2. A freeway is built bypassing the town and luring many businesses a way to better their income elsewhere.
  3. A large fire decimates many businesses of the community
  4. A natural disaster, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, etc. comes through the area.
  5. The community's water supply is contaminated
  6. The U. S. and Canada are no longer friends! Yikes!!!!
2. Show the disaster list on the overhead. Roll a die. For whatever number is rolled, discuss the disaster and its possible impact on the community. Remove any businesses affected by the problem and also remove the corresponding employees' housing from the model city. Some of these problems will not affect everyone.
3. Look at what is left of the town and discuss what additional businesses would be affected by the loss of so many people. Remove those affected businesses and their corresponding houses.
4. Keep rolling the die and removing structures until the community becomes a ghost town.
5. Discuss what the citizens could have done, in real life, to prevent the town from disappearing.

**Assessments:** (see attached scoring guide)

**Political Geography:** Shows understanding of political geography and its effects on population growth, community development and land use.

**Intergovernmental Agreements:** Works to develop quality agreements/treaties on community and land use issues through consensus with others

**Physical Geography:** Choose businesses that are necessary, realistic and practical to develop the natural resources of the physical area with supporting community services.

### **Adaptations and Extensions:**

1. Student committees may investigate the where and how many roads are built, increased population, and/or waste disposal and their effects on the environment.
2. Students might create a list of natural resources, estimate how much there is of that resource available and track how quickly they are used i.e. timber for building, water for community use, etc.
3. Elections may be held for city officials, agreements, or to decide what country's laws and procedures do officials and elections follow?