

Where Should We Land?

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OVERVIEW: This activity is one in which students evaluate different locations and landforms based on their desirability from the point of view of people who are choosing a place to build a community in the Pre-Colonial Period.

CONNECTION WITH THE CURRICULUM: This lesson has connections to the following standards and benchmarks...

National Geography Standards addressed:

- Standard #9: The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.
- Standard #12: The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.
- Standard #17: How to apply geography to interpret the past.

Oregon State Content Standards and Benchmarks addressed:

Common Curriculum Goal: Analyze the causes of human migration (e.g., density, food and water supply, transportation and communication systems) and its effects (e.g., impact on human and physical systems).

Content Standard: Understand the distribution and movement of people, ideas and products.

Grade 8 Benchmark: Identify patterns of population distribution, migration, and cultural interaction in the U.S.

GRADE LEVELS: This lesson could be utilized in several grade levels, but was designed specifically for grades five through eight. There may be some modifications necessary depending upon student skill and ability level.

OBJECTIVES:

The students will:

- a) identify important differences between various landforms.
- b) evaluate those landforms based on the needs of the community that wishes to settle.

MATERIALS:

- enlarged map that loosely resembles the pre-colonized eastern coast of the United States with 6 geographically different areas labeled
- smaller copies of the same map for each group
- sheet of butcher paper for students to write on

PROCEDURES:

1. Begin with a review of some of the reasons that colonists decided to leave England (push and pull factors). Have the students come up with the main reasons for the pilgrimage... What were the pilgrims looking for in this new world?
2. In groups or partners, have the students brainstorm a list of the types of things that colonists would need to be able to make a living, provide food, etc. in their new homeland. A great book to provide students with this type of information is If You Lived in Colonial Times by Ann McGovern.
3. Once students have generated a list, divide them into groups of six. Then, have each student in the group choose a number, 1-6. Have each number sit at a different area of the room. Once the groups are formed, show the class the large map with the numbered areas. Group one will be evaluating area #1, group 2 will evaluate area #2, etc...
4. Instruct students to use a T-chart or some other graphic organizer to evaluate the pros and cons of settling on their assigned plot of land. Students should predict what could possibly occur at each location. IE: on the coast, you run the risk of flooding...
5. Once students have come up with their list of pros and cons, each group will be writing a persuasive paragraph to try and convince their fellow travelers to colonize on their plot of land.
 - The lesson could be adapted here depending upon the amount of time you are able to spend on the lesson. Groups could create travel brochures, film commercials, or design posters to try to persuade "colonists" to choose their location.
6. Once all groups have finished creating their paragraphs, the original groups will reconvene. Groups should be composed of one person representing each area on the map. Students will take turns reading their persuasive paragraphs to the group.

7. After each student has read, groups will rate the desirability of each spot. As a group, they will decide which spot would provide the best home for their colony.

8. As a class, discuss each spot. Have each group bring their butcher paper up and talk about what their group came up with. Allow other students to add to the list. Once this has been done, have each student in the class re-rate the areas from least to most desirable.

ASSESSMENT:

There are several assessment possibilities that could be incorporated into this project. The persuasive paragraph could be turned into a portfolio piece. Incorporating the travel brochure provides a fun, creative way for students to show what they came up with. If technology is available, students could create a slide show or power point presentation to display their information. Students could story board and video-tape a commercial using video recording equipment.

If time is limited to one or two class periods, the persuasive paragraph along with instructor observation and class discussion could serve as an assessment piece for the lesson.