

Landscape Observation: How Portland has Changed
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Overview:

In this lesson, students will identify and compare the changes that have occurred in the City of Portland. Students will compare their observations with photographs from an earlier period.

Connection with curriculum:

Social Studies-Geography and History
English-Writing

Teaching Level: Grades 3-6

Time Frame: Five days with one all day
Field study.

Connections to National Geographic Standards:

Environment and society:

#14-How human actions modify the physical environment.

Connections to State Content Standards:

Social Sciences: Geography

Standard: Physical and cultural characteristics of places and regions.

Benchmark: Describe characteristics of places.

Standard: Interaction between physical environments and humans.

Benchmark: Identify how people depend on and modify the physical environment.

Materials:

The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss

Pencils

Paper

Chart paper

Clip boards

Pictures of old Portland

Compass

Direction arrows

View finders

Introduction-Geographic Questions:

1. How has Portland changed over time?
2. What are the most important physical landforms (hills, rivers, etc.) in the city?
3. What physical and human landmarks make the city unique?
4. What do you think Portland will look like 100 years from now?

Procedure:

1. Read The Lorax and discuss what the story is about.
2. Explain to the students that the story is about a person who wanted to cut down trees to produce a product. Discuss how human populations can modify the land and environment.
3. On one side of chart paper, make a list of things that were affected by human activities in the story. On the other side of the chart paper, make a list of things that remained the same.
4. Make a list of key landscape/environment words.
5. Field work:
Review coordinates with students. Remind them of where North is now, and how they will find it at Council Crest Park.
6. Go to Council Crest Park on Tri-Met.
7. Once at the park, have students gather in the big circle at the top of the hill facing NE.
8. Have the student's guess where they think that North is?
9. Using a compass, find North. Hand out arrows of N, S, E, W to students located at those coordinates. Or you could have groups of 8: N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW.
10. Have students work in teams. Each team is to sketch and label what they see in the frame. The sketch should include physical and human landmarks.
(They should also make notes of their observation on their field log sheets.)
11. Back in the classroom, students present what their frames show and discuss key features.
12. Students are then given photos of Portland from the past to today. Discuss the differences.
13. Compare and contrast findings using a Venn diagram.
14. Have students write a comparison paper on their findings, and make predictions of what changes will occur in the next 100 years.

Assessment:

1. Students will be responsible for locating at least two physical and human characteristics.
2. Sketches must include correct directional coordinates, name, date, and title.
3. Keeping a field log on what they saw.
4. Writing a comparison on their observations and photographs they saw of actual changes to Portland landscape. Papers will be scored using state standards.

Extensions:

1. Compare your community to downtown. What comparisons and contrasts do you see?
2. Find out what Portland was like when your parents and grandparents first came to the city.
3. Re-create a town meeting with the early settlers and town people on the building and development of Portland. Should Portland be named Portland or another name?
4. Play three truths and one lie. A game about finding out facts about Portland's landscape.
5. Students may design their own version of what Portland would look like if they were the architects.