The Mountain Community: Why Flagstaff?

Students learn about the geographical features of Flagstaff that promoted or hindered settlement while reinforcing reading and writing skills.

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Grade Level
4-5

Duration
2 class periods

**National Geography Standards**

**ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS**
1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

**ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS**
4. The physical and human characteristics of places.
Overview

Flagstaff has sheltered Native Americans, mountain men, and early settlers. It has become home to ranchers, herders and loggers, as well as scientists and educators. A steady tourist industry has developed in the past twenty years. What is it about the physical environment that has provided such continual interest and migration?

Purpose

This lesson provides information concerning the reasons why people choose to live in Flagstaff.

Materials

- Topographic features of AZ
- Relief map of AZ
- Arizona highway map
- Reading selection on Flagstaff

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- locate Flagstaff on the different types of maps: relief, topographic, and highway maps.
- identify geographical features that could be a detriment to the settlement of Flagstaff.
- identify the geographical features that promote the settlement of Flagstaff.
- match the natural resources of Northern Arizona and Flagstaff to the economic and physical needs of the groups that settled there.
- read the selection about settlement in Flagstaff and write a summary which includes important details from the selection and from the map work.

Procedures

SESSION ONE
1. Ask students to share personal experiences they may have had in the Flagstaff area.
2. Distribute copies of Topographic Features of AZ and Relief map of AZ to each student or group of students.
3. Identify the various geographical features on the two maps that would hinder/enhance movement and settlement through the area in which Flagstaff is located. Use the following geographic terms: erosion, human characteristics,
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land use, landform, natural hazard, resources, and latitude/longitude. Use the Arizona highway map for greater analysis of elevation, water systems, names of physical features, and locations of present roads. Students should take notes.

4. Name the plants and animals that are indigenous to the Flagstaff area. What other plants and animals live in this climate? Students should take notes.

SESSION TWO
1. Read aloud the selection on the settlement of the area. Students should follow along as the teacher reads. Have students find and underline the geography words which support knowledge of the physical characteristics of the land.

2. Have students highlight the important details and write a summary in their own words that presents the thoughts of the author.

You are a reporter for the Arizona Daily Sun newspaper. You are told to describe the history of settlement in Flagstaff; however, the editor only has room in the newspaper for several paragraphs. Write a summary of all of the reasons that people have come to the area.

3. Make sure the students edit their work before submitting for a grade.

Assessment

Geography/Reading
Check that students underlined all words that relate to geography in the reading selection.

Writing
Use the Six-Trait Writing Rubric. Student work will be assessed on Ideas and Content, Word Choice, and Conventions. A paragraph of five or six sentences with a conclusion is a minimal standard for a passing grade.

Extensions

After writing a summary, students could develop small scenarios, with dialog, based on the reading selection. Dependent on time and interest, these could be performed as a small play.

Students could be reporters discouraging people from moving to Flagstaff or encouraging people to move to Flagstaff.

Sources

http://www.campus.northpark.edu/history/WebChron/NorthAmerica_Coronado.html
http://www.desertusa.com/Cities/az/flagstaff.html#anchor826270
http://www.nps.gov/waca/home.html