Slide 1

Text: Standard 4: Physical and human characteristics of places

Audio: Standard four is physical and human characteristics of place. Where are you from? Where are your parents from, your grandparents? Where is home to you? For most of us, place and your identity go hand in hand. When we fondly recall our childhood, we recall not only the memories and experiences that helped shape us; we also recollect the place in which these experiences occurred. Not only our house, but our neighborhood, the nearby parks, woods or lakes, the town or city center, the seasons and the traditions of that place are etched in our minds even if we have been long away. We find comfort, a knowing, a deep emotional attachment to the place we grew up. We've developed a sense of place.

Slide 2

Text: American Writer Barry Lopez

[Images of book covers by Barry Lopez: Desert Notes, Home Ground, and Arctic Dreams]

Audio: Geography means writing about the Earth. American writer Barry Lopez discusses the importance about writing about place. He says, "In the United States in recent years, a kind of writing variously called nature writing or landscape writing has begun to receive critical attention leading some to assume that this is a relatively new kind of work. In fact, writing that takes into account the impact nature and place have on culture is one of the oldest and perhaps most singular trends in American writing." Lopez calls to mind authors like Melville in "Moby Dick," Thoreau, Willa Cather, John Steinbeck and William Faulkner. And more recently, Peter Mathewson, Wendell Berry, Wallace Stegner, and the poets W.S. Merwin, Amy Clampitt and Gary Snyder. Lopez continues, "I want to concentrate on a single aspect of this phenomenon, geography, but in so doing, I hope to hue to a larger line of truth. I want to talk about geography as a shaping force, not a subject. Another way critics have of describing nature writing is to call it a literature of place. A specific and particular setting for human experience and endeavor is indeed central to the work of many nature writers. I would say further, that it is also critical to the development of a sense of morality and human identity." Some of Lopez' books about America are "Desert Notes," "Reflections in the Eye of a Raven," "Home Ground," "Language For an American Landscape" and "Arctic Dreams."

Slide 3

Text: Barry Lopez: Thoughts on Place

[Photo of Barry Lopez]
Audio: Barry Lopez continues his thoughts on place. He's written, "Over time, I have come to think of these three qualities: Paying intimate attention, a storied relationship to a place rather than a solely sensory awareness of it and living in some sort of ethical unity with a place as a fundamental human defense against loneliness. If you're intimate with a place, a place with whose history you're familiar and you establish an ethical conversation with it, the implication that follows is this, the place knows you're there, it feels, you will not be forgotten, cut off abandoned." "As a writer," Lopez says, "I want to ask on behalf of the reader, how can a person obtain this? How can you occupy a place and also have occupy you? How can you find such reciprocity? The key, I think, is to become vulnerable to a place. If you open yourself up, you can build intimacy. Out of such intimacy, become a sense of belonging, a sense of not being isolated in the universe." Barry Lopez, 1997.

Slide 4

Text: Standard 4: Physical and human characteristics of places

Audio: People are simultaneously shaped by the places they grew up as well as helped shaped the place in which they dwell. We create and are created by our hometowns, our states, our countries. We attach emotion to our understanding of place. Geographers study place by examining not only the natural and built environments of a place, but also by learning the history of a place, its evolution and what it means to those who inhabit a place. Space, to geographers is the physical layout and structure of a given part of Earth. The study of place goes deeper and incorporates meaning and feeling. Places are large and small, urban and rural, parks and trails, woodlands, rivers, edges, ballparks, shopping malls and coffeehouses. We name our places and our place haves boundaries.

Slide 5

Text: Characteristics of Place

[Photo of a strip mall sign]

Audio: In this slide, we see a picture of signage at a strip mall. This strip mall can be in practically town or city in urban and suburban America. This slide focuses on the uniqueness of place. One of the great things about places is that each one is different from all others. Every place has a set of characteristics both tangible, like the built environment, like structures, like mountains, like valleys, and intangible, feelings, emotion, community that distinguishes it from every other place. So, in spite of urban America's strip mall effect or its tendency toward McDonaldization, nearly every town boasts something that sets it apart from everywhere else.

Slide 6
Text: Characteristics of Place

[Image of Golden Gate Bridge]

Audio: A place might possess a unique physical geographic setting, like this slide you see of San Francisco, the climate, the landforms, vegetation and animal life contribute to the overall meaning or significance of a place. Perhaps the place has ancient or historic importance; perhaps it's the economic center of the region or has an architectural flavor that sets it apart from other places. Who wouldn't recognize the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco?

Slide 7

Text: Characteristics of Place

Festivals, pageants, parades & music performances in the city park are some of the human characteristics that inform us about a place; about the vibrancy and community cohesion of a town.

[Image of Payson Park Music Festival poster] [Photo of The Vincent Middle School choir performing at Westover’s Music in the Park Oct. 13, Shelby County, Alabama]

Audio: How do we give our places meaning? How do we make them unique? How do we enliven them? And how do we make them our own? In this slide, we see two pictures. The picture on the left shows us the poster for the Payson Park Music Festival, a great way for families to gather in the evenings and celebrate their hometown. In the picture on the right, we see young men and women from Westover, Alabama singing their choir performance in the park. Festivals, pageants, parades and music performances are some of the human characteristics that inform us about a place, about the vibrancy and community cohesion of a town and our own human identity.

Slide 8

Text: Characteristics of Place

[Photo of the Islamic Cultural Center and Mosque in Tempe, Arizona] [Chart showing the composition of US public high school graduates by race and ethnicity between 2004 and projected until 2022]

Audio: Settlement patterns and ethnic and religious diversity also give meaning to a place and add to its richness, it's depth and it's potential. In this picture, we have two images. In the lower left-hand corner, we see the Islamic Cultural Center and Mosque in Tempe, Arizona near Arizona State University. One thing this tells us is that there must be a significant number of
Muslims in the community as students or families to support a mosque. The picture at the top right shows us the composition of US public high school graduates by race and ethnicity between 2004 and projected until 2022. What we can see in this graph are five different ethnic backgrounds: American Indians, Alaskan Natives in the red; Asian Pacific Islanders in the light green; black non-Hispanics in the yellow area; Hispanic students in the peach area of the graph; and white non-Hispanic students in the darker green area. And what this is showing us is that from 2004 and projected until 2022, we're going to see declining numbers, or percentages, of white non-Hispanic students graduating from high school, we'll see increasing numbers of Hispanic students graduating from high school, about the same numbers of black non-Hispanic students graduating from high school, a bit higher numbers of Asian Pacific Islander students graduating and a fairly consistent of American Indian or Alaskan Native students graduating. This information can give us an idea or a projection of the future in, and it can show us the trend, what will our populations look like in various places in the country? One question might be, how will a library plan to stock its shelves in the next 5, 10 or 20 years to accommodate the changing needs of its population?

Slide 9

Text: Sonoran Desert

[Photo of Arizona landscape] [Photo of creosote bush][Photo of a sheep]

Audio: Arizona's Sonoran Desert is one of this country's most unique places. The climate, the cacti and other succulent plants, the monsoon season, the mountains, the indigenous tribes, the shepherders and the ranchers and the high population growth rate. This is our history and our geography. In these pictures on this slide, we can see both the physical attributes of this beautiful state. The top picture in the right shows us a natural butte and shows us the cactus and the wildflowers in the spring. The picture in the lower right-hand corner shows us the creosote bush, the plant that gives the desert its scent when it rains. And the picture at the bottom center shows an imported friend, the sheep, something that came from Europe after the conquest and became very important in the Navajo weaving tradition. All of this is Arizona.

Slide 10

Text: Louisiana

[Image of state flower and bird: pelican and magnolia] [Photo of a building in the French Quarter]

Audio: Another place that has its own claim to fame is Louisiana. Louisiana, like Arizona, is one of the most unique states in this country. The Mississippi River, the hurricanes, the bayous, the
alligators, the crawfish, Cajun cuisine, the French Quarter, Cafe Dumont, the of course, Mardi Gras are all place identifiers of Louisiana. You can't confuse New Orleans with any other place in the country.

**Slide 11**

**Text:** Wisconsin

[Photo of Rice Lake population sign]

**Audio:** Characteristics of place. This slide is Wisconsin. The Scandinavian settlers, the lumber barons, the Great Lakes, icy winters and the mosquitos in the summer. Deer hunting season, the packers, cheese heads, brats, and breweries and we can go on and on. Maybe you can guess, this is my state. How would you describe the place you call home? How did you get -- how did your hometown get its name? What is your state's football or baseball team named? The population on the sign above has changed little over the decades. People moved to the quiet town of Rice Lake to raise families. College age students move out and move on. Historically, this town was settled by Scandinavians and Czechs. This is my town.

**Slide 12**

[Photo of a welcome to Rice Lake, Wisconsin sign] [Photo of sign for Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church]

**Audio:** How do we honor our town and our history? What is the sense of place that we feel when we think about our town? The sign above has a loon and pine trees, two common sites in Northern Wisconsin. The logo for the town of Rice Lake. The sign in the lower right-hand portion of this slide reads, "The congregation for this church traces its roots back to 1870 when people first held services in their homes in what was originally called Stanfold. This community later became Dobie. Their first Catholic church was built in 1876 but was destroyed by fire in 1895. Services were then held in a temporary structure until the present church was completed in 1904. The name of the church reflects the French ancestry of many early parishioners. Dobie is a small town outside of Rice Lake. In the picture in the bottom center shows us the Dobie Church.

**Slide 13**

**Text:** Evolution of Place

[Image of book cover for *Wild Rice and the Ojibway People*] [Image of book cover for *The Footprints of a Wisconsin Lumber Executive*]
Audio: Evolution of place. Evolution and change of a place are inevitable. A place will ultimately change either by inside forces or outside forces, and probably, by a combination of both. In Wisconsin, for example, the huge logging operations are long gone. By the built environment still reflect that part of our past. Street names bear the surnames of the lumber barons. Old-timers remember when the land the community college was built on was a cultivated field. On the other end of town, new developments are built and former agricultural land that was likely formerly forestland. Change can be good, yet change is not always good. Can you think of ways in which your place of origin or another place has evolved for the good or for bad? What brought these changes? In the images on this slide, we see two parts of Wisconsin culture that are very important. The top picture shows the Chippewa Indians and how they harvested wild rice along the shores of the lake before Europeans arrived. My town gets its name, Rice Lake, from the wild rice that the Indians grew and gathered. The bottom picture is a book cover for The Footprints of a Wisconsin lumber executive. Again, Wisconsin's forests were a huge economic reason for settlement in that state.

Slide 14

Text: Evolution of Place

[Image of the seal of Arizona]

Audio: Arizona's towns and cities have seen many transformations throughout the decades. In 2012, Arizona will celebrate its centennial as a state. What will the highlights be? What are the characteristics about Arizona that will be most noted? Notice in this slide the image of the state shield. The five C's on Arizona's shield: Cotton, citrus, copper, cattle and climate, along with the word Ditat Deus, god and riches shows pride in the state and its natural and agricultural resources.

Slide 15

Text: The Best Cities in the United States

[Map of the United States showing characteristics that make it the best place to live]

Audio: The image on this slide shows "The Best Cities in the United States," and of course, the best cities are identified by the residence of those places. You can see that Wisconsin boasts the best city to find a job in 2009. Atlanta declares itself the best city for single living. The best fine dining is found in Louisiana, probably New Orleans. You find the cheapest gas in our central states. And in the Eastern Seaboard, you can see the highest woman-to-man ratio. While this is a fun map and probably not statistical, it tells us what each of these places can lay claim to being the best place in the United States.
Slide 16

Text: Evolution and Change of Place

[Image of book cover for *A Way in the World* by V.S. Naipaul]

Audio: In this book, "A Way in the World," Nobel Prize for literature recipient, West Indian writer V.S. Naipaul wrote, "The landscape I had grown up in and felt myself part of had been wiped clean of this other past. Different people living for centuries where we now trod. Different people with their on calendar and reverences and ideas of human association. Different houses or huts. Different roads or paths. Different crops and fields and vegetation, different views, speeds, reasons for journeys. Different ideas of the ages of man. Different ideas of the enemy and fellowship and sanctity and what mean owed themselves. Places continually grow and change. Landscapes are altered. One group of people may move out as another replaces it. Boundaries expand, are reorganized and may even disappear."

Slide 17

Text: Standard 4: Characteristics of Place

[Map of land-use change in Phoenix and its metropolitan area]

Audio: Knowing how and why places change enables us to understand the need for knowledgeable and collaborative decision making about where to locate schools, factories and other things, and how to make wise use of features of the physical environment such a soil, air, water and vegetation. Knowing the physical and human characteristics of our own places influences how we think about who we are because our identity is inextricably bound up with our place in life and then the world. The map on this slide shows us land-use change in Phoenix and its metropolitan area. You can note the deepest red is the core, the early settlement of Phoenix. And then you can look as population has moved further and further and further out and has grown and evolved and made us the fourth or the fifth largest metropolitan area in the United States.

Slide 18

Text: Standard 4: Characteristics of Place

Audio: In conclusion, personal identity, community identity and national identity are routed in place and attachment to place. Knowing about other places influences how people understand other people's cultures and regions of the world. Knowledge of places at all scales, local to global, is incorporated into people's mental maps of the world. Students and geographers need an understanding of why places are the way they are because it can enrich our own sense of identity
with a particular place and enable us to comprehend and appreciate both the similarities and the differences in places around our own communities, states, countries and the planet.

**Slide 19**

[Photo of Elizabeth Larson]

**Audio:** This lecture is by Elizabeth Larson, School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University 2010.