

Building from the Ground Up

Utah Social Studies

Materials

- ◆ Research materials
- ◆ Maps and globes

Background

The way a community is built depends upon the resources available in that area. Communities are also interdependent. If one farmer's crops go under, another may need to increase yields to make up for the shortage. This activity will allow the students to get a first hand look at how communities are developed and how they function together.

Activity Procedures

1. Divide your class into two to four groups or address the class as one group. Assign each group (or allow each group to select) a country in South America. Have the groups locate their country on a map.
2. Invite the students to pretend that they must begin a new community in their assigned country. Brainstorm as a class the things they might want to know about their countries before they can successfully build a community. (Climate, average rainfall, soil type, etc.) Create a research sheet to guide students in their research. Allow the groups 1-2 class periods to research their countries.
3. Allow the students one class period to establish their new communities and to share them with the class. Each group should share their community's name, what livestock and crops will be raised, what occupation each group member has, and any interesting facts found while researching. Allow the students to question one another about their communities or countries. Is anyone able to develop a community without including agriculture?
4. Through the course of about a week, daily provide the groups with scenarios effecting their communities. For example, a storm may wipe out someone's crop, a drought may change someone's farming style, a factory may burn, a crop may overproduce, consumers or government may affect sales, etc. Ask the groups to decide how they will personally be affected by the scenario, and how the group as a community will be affected. Allow the group to use problem-solving skills to decide how to deal with the different scenarios. Encourage the members of the groups to work together and even suggest the groups may "seek aid" from the other communities in different countries.
5. At the end of the project, discuss how the communities evolved from the beginning to the end. Discuss the interdependence experienced throughout the project.



Time: 45 minutes

Grade Level: 3

Social Studies, Standard 1

Students will understand how geography influences community location and development.

Objective 1

Determine the relationships between human settlement and geography.

- a. Identify the geographic features common to areas where human settlements exist.
- b. Use map features to make logical inferences and describe relationships between human settlement and physical geography (e.g. population density in relation to latitude, cities' proximity to water, utilization of natural resources).

Objective 2

Describe how various communities have adapted to existing environments and how other communities have modified the environment.

- d. Investigate ways different communities have adapted into an ecosystem.

Social Studies, Standard 2

Students will understand cultural factors that shape a community.

Objective 1

Evaluate key factors that determine how a community develops.

- a. Identify the elements of culture (e.g. language, religion, customs, artistic expression, systems of exchange).
- c. Compare elements of the local community with communities from different parts of the world (e.g. industry, economic specialization).
- d. Identify and explain the interrelationship of the environment (e.g. location, natural resources, climate) and community development (e.g. food, shelter, clothing, industries, markets, recreation, artistic creations).

Additional Activities, What's Next?

1. Have students keep a journal of their experiences. Encourage them to take on new names and personalities and write from the perspective of their characters.
2. Allow the students to make clay representations or maps of their communities. Be sure to make adaptations according to the different scenarios.

Questions for Investigation or Assessment:

1. How do the types of crops grown or natural resources available affect the lifestyles of the people?
2. If Utahns had to depend solely upon the resources available in our states, how would our lives be different? (We would eat less produce during the winter, most of our fresh produce is shipped to us from California. We are also dependent upon other states for most of our lumber and wood products.)
3. Which countries are most likely to send aid to those in need? Why?



South America