Lesson 2: Michigan and the Theme of Location

Big Ideas of the Lesson

- To study a place geographers ask the question: Where is the place located?
- The absolute location of a place is the exact location of the place. Your address is the absolute location of your house.
- The relative location of a place means where the place is in relation to other places.
- Direction words like north, south, east, and west are used to describe the relative location of places.

Content Expectations

3 - G1.0.1: Use cardinal directions (north, south, east, west) to describe the relative location of significant places in the immediate environment.

Key Concept

location

Instructional Resources

Equipment/Manipulative
Crayons or markers for each student
Overhead projector or document camera/projector
Student journal or notebook

Teacher Resource

Outline Map of the United States. 10 July 2009

Lesson Sequence

Day 1

1. Referring back to Lesson 1, remind students that geographers study a place by asking questions and trying to find the answers to the questions. Remind them that one of the questions is: Where is the place located? Use Word Card #9 to explain the term “location.”

2. Explain that geographers sometimes want to know the exact location of a place. Write the term “absolute location” on an overhead transparency or board and give students Word Card #10. Explain that this is the term geographers use to define an exact location. Ask students how they could identify the exact location of their house. Discuss student responses and guide students
to the idea that their address is an example of absolute location because an address describes the exact location of a house.

3. Pose the following question and ask students to write an answer in their Michigan studies journal: What is the absolute location of your desk in our classroom? Discuss student answers and guide students in understanding that it would be hard to describe the exact, or absolute, location of their desk. However, they could describe the location of their desk in relation to other people and things in the room. For example, their desk might be near the door, next to Debbie’s desk, near the center of the room, etc. Explain that geographers refer to this type of location as relative location. Give students Word Card #11.

4. Pose the following question and ask students to write an answer in their Michigan studies journal: What is the relative location of your desk in the classroom? Discuss student answers. If time permits play a simple game where you describe the relative location of a student’s desk in the room with two or three phrases and have them guess which student’s desk you are describing.

Day 2

5. Explain that with large places like a community or state it is easier to describe their relative location than their absolute location. Using Word Card #12, explain that in order to do this geographers often use direction words such as north, south, east and west.


7. Next, point out the black square in the middle of the grid at the bottom of the Direction Sheet. Explain that you will be giving them directions for coloring in certain squares on the sheet. Give the following directions orally. Note that a correctly completed “Directions Sheet” has been included in the Supplemental Materials (Unit 1, Lesson 2) for you to use for reference.
   - Find the square north of the black square and color it red.
   - Find the square east of the red square and color it yellow.
   - Find the square south of the yellow square and color it green.
   - Find the square south of the green square and color it blue.
   - Find the square west of the blue square and color it orange

8. Give students Word Card #13 and review the term ‘map’ explaining that maps are an important tool that geographers use for locating places. Using the “Michigan Map” located in the Supplemental Materials (Unit 1, Lesson 2) or a similar map, guide students in using cardinal directions as well as position words such as ‘near’, ‘between’, and ‘by’ to describe the relative location of their local community. Note that if your local community is not shown on the map you will need to add it. As alternative maps you could pages 31 and 419 of “Meet Michigan” or a similar map from another textbook on Michigan.
Day 3

9. Provide students with a map of the United States. This could be a desktop map, a wall map, a map in an atlas or the “U.S. Map” located in the Supplemental Materials (Unit 1, Lesson 2). Divide students in pairs and give each pair a copy of the worksheet “Describing the Relative Location of Michigan” located in the Supplemental Materials (Unit 1, Lesson 2). Explain that they should use the map and make a list of 5 different ways to describe the relative location of Michigan. Encourage students to use natural features such as rivers and other states in their descriptions. Give students time to complete the worksheet, then, share their lists with the whole group. Possible answers include the following:
   • Michigan is located near the middle of the U.S.
   • Michigan is located east of the Mississippi River.
   • Michigan is located north of Ohio and Indiana.
   • Michigan is located next to Ontario, Canada.
   • Michigan is located in the northern part of the U.S.

10. Explain that besides wanting to know the location of a state, a geographer would also want to explore how its location affected the development of the state. Lead a brief discussion on this concept using the following questions:
   • How did Michigan’s location near the Great Lakes affect its growth and development?
   • How did Michigan’s location in the northern part of the United States affect its growth and development?
   • How did Michigan’s location near Canada affect its growth and development?

Assessment
As an assessment students could independently list three different ways to describe the relative location of Michigan using a United States map.