

PULLOUT

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Figure 1. **Geographic Themes in Children’s Literature**

Geographic Themes & Common Core Connections	Questions	Activities	Books
<p>Theme 1: Location</p> <p>Identify and describe the setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does this story take place? • What is the absolute location of the setting(s) on a map or globe? • What is the relative location of the setting(s)? • How are various places connected in the story? • What is the importance of this setting in historical, cultural, economic, physical, or human terms? Why is it located where it is? How did it get there? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate a character’s home or travel on a map or globe. • Create a story map to show the relationship of places in the book. • Research the significance of key locations in the book. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Madlenka</i> (Sis, 2000) • <i>Leaf Man</i> (Ehlert, 2005) • <i>The Blue and the Gray</i> (Bunting, 2001) • <i>Mapping Penny’s World</i> (Leedy, 2003) • <i>My Map Book</i> (Fanelli, 1995)
<p>Theme 2: Place</p> <p>Identify and describe the setting using key details from the text.</p> <p>Compare and contrast settings using key details from the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the setting of this book? What makes the specific place(s) unique? • What are the physical characteristics of this setting (e.g., landforms, climate, vegetation, animal life)? • What are the human characteristics of this setting (e.g., language, culture, economic activities, population distribution)? • How is the setting of this story similar or different to the place where you live? To places you’ve been? To the setting in other stories? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make side-by-side comparison drawings or complete a Venn diagram to show similarities and differences in places. • Use strong juicy adjectives to describe places narrative writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Apt. 3</i> (Keats, 1971) • <i>In the Tall, Tall Grass</i> (Fleming, 1991) • <i>Night at the Fair</i> (Crews, 1998) • <i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> (MacLachlan, 1985) • <i>Minik’s Story</i> (Dewey, 2003)
<p>Theme 3: Human-Environment Interaction</p> <p>Describe how characters respond to major events and challenges. Compare and contrast two versions of the same story. Analyze how the setting contributes to the mood or plot of the story.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would change about this story if it took place in a different setting? • How does the setting influence people’s everyday lives or choices in this story? • How does the setting influence the events in this story? • How do characters interact with their environment in this story, why, and with what results? (e.g., How do they adapt to or modify things? Using what technologies? How are the characters dependent on the environment?) • What attitudes do characters hold towards their environment? How do those attitudes affect their actions and decisions? • What, if any, ethical questions regarding the environment emerge in this book? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a comic strip version of the story using a different setting to show how the story might differ in another place. • Create a new ending for the story to show how the story would be different if characters had different attitudes towards their environment or interacted differently with their environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brave Irene</i> (Steig, 1986) • <i>Window</i> (Baker, 1991) • <i>This is My House</i> (Dorros, 1992) • <i>The Birthday Boys</i> (Bainbridge, 1995)

See previous article by Ellen Ballock and Ashley Lucas

Figure 1. (continued) **Geographic Themes in Children’s Literature**

Geographic Themes & Common Core Connections	Questions	Activities	Books
<p>Theme 4: Movement</p> <p>Describe the connection between two individuals, events, or ideas in a text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why do the characters move around in this story (e.g., everyday movement, travel, migration)? • How is this movement similar to and different from your own movements (e.g., modes of transportation, reasons for movement)? • How do the characters communicate with one another across distances? • What evidence do you see of the influences of other places in this story? (e.g., the movement or exchange of goods, services, and ideas)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create travel maps and diaries for the characters in the story. • Use maps or other visuals to show the movement of people, goods, services, and ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From Wheat to Pasta</i> (Egan, 1997) • <i>Jin Woo</i> (Bunting, 2001) • <i>Frog and Toad Together</i> (Lobel, 1972) • <i>When Jessie Came Across the Sea</i> (Hest, 1997) • <i>Eclipse: A Novel of Lewis & Clark</i> (Wheeler, 2003)
<p>Theme 5: Regions</p> <p>Identify and describe the setting using key details from the text. Compare and contrast settings using key details from the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the region in which the characters live (e.g., physical, political, cultural, economic)? • What unique factors unify this region? • How does it compare to the region in which you live? • How has this region changed over time? • What evidence of regional change do you see in this story? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a travel brochure that highlights the region described in the book. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Purple Mountain Majesties</i> (Younger, 1998) • <i>Mojave</i> (Siebert, 1988) • <i>Saba: Under the Hyena’s Foot</i> (Kurtz, 2003)

Recommended Books with Geographic Themes

Bainbridge, Beryl. *The Birthday Boys*. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1995.

Baker, Jeannie. *Window*. New York: Walker Childrens, 1991.

Bunting, Eve. *Jin Woo*. New York: Clarion, 2001.

_____. *The Blue and the Gray*. New York: Scholastic, 2001.

Crews, Donald. *Night at the Fair*. New York: Greenwillow, 1998.

Dewey, Jennifer Owens. *Minik’s Story*. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2003.

Dorros, Arthur. *This is My House*. New York: Scholastic 1992.

Egan, Robert. *From Wheat to Pasta*. New York: Children’s Press, 1997.

Ehlert, Lois. *Leaf Man*. New York: Harcourt, 2005.

Fanelli, Sara. *My Map Book*. New York: HarperFestival, 1995.

Fleming, Denise. *In the Tall, Tall Grass*. New York: Square Fish, 1991.

Hest, Amy. *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 1997.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *Apt. 3*. New York: Puffin 1971.

Kurtz, Jane. *Saba: Under the Hyena’s Foot*. New York: American Girl, 2003.

Leedy, Loreen. *Mapping Penny’s World*. New York: Square Fish, 2003.

Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Together*. New York: HarperFestival, 1972.

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. New York: Scholastic, 1985.

Siebert, Jane. *Mojave*. New York: HarperCollins, 1988.


Sis, Peter. *Madlenka*. New York: Square Fish, 2000.

Steig, William. *Brave Irene*. New York: Scholastic, 1986.

Wheeler, Richard S. *Eclipse: A Novel of Lewis & Clark*. New York: Forge Books, 2003.

Younger, Barbara. *Purple Mountain Majesties*. Natick, MA: Reading Railroad, 1998.

Geography-Literature *Bingo*

Location	Place	Regions	Movement	Human-Environment Interaction
Absolute Location	Physical Characteristics	Physical Region	Migration	Adaptation
Absolute Location	Human Characteristics		Movement of Goods & Services	Adaptation
Relative Location	A Place Similar to Where You Live	Political Region	Getting from Here to There (Navigation)	Modification
Map Connections	A Place Different from Where You Live	Cultural Region	Movement of Ideas	Dependence

Five Themes of Geography in your Story

Title of your story: _____

1. Location: Where does this story take place?		
Absolute Location: (latitude, longitude, address)	Relative Location: (near what?)	
2. Regions: How would you describe the region in which the characters live?		
Physical: (climate, landforms, living things)	Cultural: (religion, language, education)	Economic: (agriculture, industry, livelihoods)
3. Place: What are the details to describe the specific places in the story?		
Human Characteristics: (population distribution, customs, economic activity)	Physical Characteristics: (e.g., landforms, vegetation, bodies of water, soil, weather, human made features)	
4. Movement: How and why do the characters move around or move things around in this story? What ideas, goods, or services from other places influence the lives and choices of your characters?		
People: (travel/ transportation)	Goods and services: (transportation/imports & exports)	Influences from other places: (cultural exchanges, communication of information)
5. Human-Environment Interaction: How does the setting of this story influence character's choices or the events in the story? What are character's attitudes towards their environment?		
Adaption: (How and why does the environment in which people live and work affect their choices and activities?)	Modification: (How and why do people modify or change the environment in which they live and work?)	Dependence on the environment: (How do people rely on the environment? What are the positive and negative interactions?)