

Understanding Modern Vietnam Through the Five Themes of Geography

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Subject: Social Studies/Language Arts

Grade Levels: 6th-8th

Time Required: 10 to 12 forty-five minute periods (about two weeks)

Instructional Objectives

Students will learn about Vietnam and prepare a children's book about Vietnam using the five themes of Geography. These books will be used to teach a younger classroom about Vietnam, as part of a service-learning project in our school. We have "reading buddies," a first grade classroom that we share with once a week. My 6th graders act as reading tutors for the first graders. The final project for this unit will be a children's book about Vietnam that the 6th graders will read to the 1st graders to teach the 1st graders about Vietnam.

Background Information and Introduction

Have a display of Vietnamese artifacts and books set up in the room. Tell the students that they are going to be learning about the country of Vietnam, and that their project for the unit will be a children's book about Vietnam, written using the five themes of geography. Give them the directions for the project (**Attachment 1**) and discuss the expectations. Share a little about the books and articles you have on display to get students motivated. (See **Attachment 2** for resources).

I teach a self-contained classroom, so during my read aloud time, I will share some of the following books with my students to help build background knowledge. The ones I don't read aloud, I will have available for the students to read during silent reading time.

<i>Goodbye, Vietnam</i>	by Gloria Whelan
<i>Two Lands, One Heart</i>	by Jeremy Schmidt and Ted Wood
<i>Hoang Anh A Vietnamese-American Boy</i>	by Diane Hoyt-Goldsmith
<i>Toad is the Uncle of Heaven</i>	by Jeanne M. Lee
<i>Angel Child, Dragon Child</i>	by Michele Maria Surat
<i>Journey Home</i>	by Lawrence McKay, Jr.
<i>The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village</i>	by Tran Khanh Tuyet
<i>The Story of Betel (Leaf) and the Areca Nut</i>	Vietnamese Folktales
<i>Children of the Dragon</i>	by Sherry Garland
<i>The Brocaded Slipper and Other Vietnamese Tales</i>	by Lynette Dyer Vuong

Procedures

Lesson One: Location (one 45-60 minute period)

(Location: answers the question “Where is it?” You can give the exact location of a place using latitude and longitude, or the relative location, telling where a place is by referring to another place.) Begin by showing where Vietnam is located on the map. Discuss different factors of its location, such as closeness to the equator, the surrounding countries, etc. Point out important geographic features such as the Mekong River, the Red River, the Hoang Lien Mountains, the Truong Son Mountains, and the South China Sea. Then ask students to draw a map of Vietnam, labeling major cities and landforms. They need to color the map. This will be page one of their children’s book. They may look at their project guidelines for further directions.

Lesson Two: Region (one period)

(Region: a group of places that share common features. Examples are political regions, climate region, cultural regions, agricultural regions, etc.)

Ask students what “region” means, as one of the themes of geography. (This lesson assumes that students are already familiar with the five themes of geography. If not, spend some time discussing them.) Ask what regions Vietnam is a part of (Southeast Asia, a fishing region, a Buddhist region, etc.). With a map of Vietnam, talk about the different regions within Vietnam, such as North, Central, and South Vietnam. You can also talk about the following:

1. Vegetable growing region – Dalat is the major region for this
2. Fruit growing region - Mekong Delta
3. Rice growing region – Mekong Delta, Red River Delta
4. Fishing region – along the coast (Phan Thiet, Phu Quoc, Vung Tau)
5. Tea and Coffee region – Central Highlands
6. Rubber plantation region – Southwest
7. Coal Mining Region – Hon Gai (Northern VN)
8. Salt Mining – Phan Rang (Central Coastal Region)

Students will write a page for their book telling about some of the different regions in Vietnam, following the directions given them in **Attachment 1**.

Lesson Three: Movement (2-3 periods)

(Movement: People, goods, and ideas move from place to place. What happens in one place can affect what happens in another place.)

Review the definition of movement. Have students make three columns on a piece of paper. Tell them to label the first one “People”, the second one “Goods”, and the third one “Ideas”. Give them 5 – 10 minutes to work with a partner to fill in the columns with people, goods, and ideas that have moved to the United States from Vietnam. Share responses with the whole class by writing their answers on an overhead chart.

Ask for responses for the “People” column first. After listing their responses and discussing them, add others that they may not have thought of. Most students will list friends, doctors, restaurant owners and workers, nail salon owners and workers. Discuss why people leave their countries and immigrate to another country. Talk about “boat people” who came here after 1975. This may require a short explanation of the Vietnam war.

Under the “Goods” column, be sure that items such as clothing and food are listed. Check clothing tags to see who has clothing made in Vietnam. (Have students check clothing at home to see which items are made in Vietnam. They may be surprised to see how much of their clothing is made in VN.) Talk about different foods that we eat that come from Vietnam, such as rice, nuoc mam (fish sauce), cha gio (spring rolls), ramen noodles. Give them samples of some Vietnamese food items such as coconut candy, shrimp chips, sticky rice, dried bananas, etc. to eat. (These are available in most Asian markets.) Discuss imports and exports of Vietnam.

The “Ideas” column is the most difficult for students to think of anything to list there. Talk about how the Buddhist religion has moved around the world, including to the United States. (My students are already familiar with the Buddhist religion before we study Vietnam because we have been studying other Asian countries. My students take a field trip to a Buddhist monastery sometime during their study of Asia.) This is also a time when Communism can be discussed as a form of government that has moved.

Ask students to select either goods, people or ideas and write a page for their book explaining the theme of “movement”. Illustrate the page.

Lesson Four: Human Environmental Interaction (1 - 2 periods)

(Human Environmental Interaction: the relationship between people and the environment; as people live in an area, they often begin to make changes to it. Also, the environment can affect how people live, work, dress, travel, and communicate.)

Students will watch parts of a Vietnam video* and look for examples of human environmental interactions. (I will use the video I made during my Fulbright trip to Vietnam.) Ask them to make a list as they watch the video. After watching the video, use the following questions for discussion:

1. How have the people adapted to the climate?
2. How do the people of Vietnam use their natural resources?
3. How do the people and industries treat their environment?
4. What examples of pollution do you see?
5. How do the people of Vietnam make their living?

Students will make a page for their book explaining human environmental interactions. They will choose one example to write about and to illustrate, following the directions in **Attachment 1**.

*Teachers may use their choice of video here. Suggestions are *Raising the Bamboo Curtain Vietnam* or a Lonely Planet or National Geographic video on Vietnam.

Lesson Five: Place (4 - 5 periods)

(Place: Identifies the natural and human features that make one place different from every other place. You can identify a specific place by its landforms, climate, plants, animals, people, or cultures.)

To learn more about place, students will view portions of the video Hitchhiking Vietnam. After watching the video, write a list of holidays and celebrations on the overhead. Put students into groups of 3 to 5 students. Each group will select a holiday or celebration to research and report on. Suggested holidays and celebrations are Tet (Vietnamese New Year), Mid Autumn Festival, National Day, Labor (May Day), weddings, death anniversaries, one month birthday (day thang), or one year birthday (thoi noi). Allow 3 or 4 days to research and write about the holiday/ celebration, working in their groups. Give them directions (**Attachment 3**) for their class presentations and a due date. In addition to the group presentations, each student will separately write a page for their book explaining the holiday/celebration that they chose and illustrating it.

On the day set, have groups share their presentations with the whole class. If the books are done as a service-learning project, as they will be in my class, set a time to present them to the chosen classroom, after you have graded them. Use the children's book and the group presentations as the assessment for this unit.

Reflection

After sharing the books with the selected classroom, reflect on the project orally or in journals. Some questions to discuss are:

What did I learn about life in modern Vietnam?

How did you feel about your group's presentation on a holiday/celebration?



What went well when sharing your book with the younger students?

What didn't go well?

What would you do differently next time?

What was the most interesting thing you learned during this project?

Assessment

- Assess students' picture books according to the rubric for Story Writing, [Worksheet 2 \(PDF\)*](#).
- Assess students' presentations on celebration/holidays according to the rubric for Oral Presentations, [Worksheet 1 \(PDF\)*](#).

Curriculum Connections

MI- Michigan Curriculum Frameworks

- **Subject:** Social Studies

- **Strand II: Geographic Perspective**

Students will use knowledge of spatial patterns on earth to understand processes that shape human environments and to make decisions about society. Knowledge of geography enables us to analyze both the physical features and the cultural aspects of our world. By helping us understand relationships within and between places, a geographic perspective brings an understanding of interdependence within local, national, and global communities. Over time and in varying contexts, students construct an increasingly sophisticated geographic perspective organized by the following themes:

- **Standard II.1: Diversity of People, Places and Cultures**

All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of places, cultures, and settlements. The mosaic of people, places, and cultures expresses the rich variety of the earth. Natural and human characteristics meld to form expressions of cultural uniqueness, as well as similarities among peoples. Culture is the way of life of a group of people including language, religion, traditions, family structure, institutions, and economic activities.

- **Grade MS - Middle School**

Performance Benchmark 1: Locate and describe the diverse places, cultures, and communities of major world regions.

Performance Benchmark 2: Describe and compare characteristics of major world cultures including language, religion, belief systems, gender roles, and traditions.

- **Standard II.4: Regions, Patterns, and Processes**

All students will describe and compare characteristics of ecosystems, states, regions, countries, major world regions, and patterns and explain the processes that created them. The world can be viewed systematically or regionally. Climatic, economic, political, and cultural patterns are created by processes such as climatic systems, communication networks, international trade, political systems, and population changes. A region is an area with unifying characteristics. By defining regions, we are able to divide the world into parts in order to study their uniqueness and relationships.

- **Grade MS- Middle School**

Performance Benchmark 2: Locate and describe major cultural, economic, political and environmental features of Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and North and South America and the processes that created them.

Performance Benchmark 3: Describe major patterns of world population, physical features, ecosystems, cultures and explain some of the factors causing the patterns.

Performance Benchmark 4: Compare major world regions with respect to cultures, economy, governmental systems, environment, and communications.

- **Standard II.5: Global Issues and Events**

All students will describe and explain the causes, consequences, and geographic context of major global issues and events. Places are interconnected by global processes. Throughout the world, people are

increasingly linked by physical and human systems. Interdependence can be understood through the study of events that have significance beyond regional or national boundaries

- **Grade MS - Middle School**

Performance Benchmark 1: Describe how social and scientific changes in regions may have global consequences.

Performance Benchmark 2: Describe the geographic aspects of events taking place in different world regions.

Performance Benchmark 3: Explain how elements of the physical geography, culture, and history of the region may be influencing current events.

- **Strand V: Inquiry**

Students will use methods of social science investigation to answer questions about society. Inquiry, an essential component of effective decision-making, is the process of investigating problems of significance to society. Some problems can be sufficiently examined through the lens of a single discipline. Other problems, by their very nature, encompass more than one discipline. If citizens are to make sound decisions in efforts to solve social problems, they must learn how to pursue data, think critically, and communicate their findings effectively. Over time and in varying contexts, students will improve their ability to use the following procedures:

- **Strand V.1: Information Processing**

All students will acquire information from books, maps, newspapers, data sets, and other sources, organize and present the information in maps, graphs, charts, and time lines, interpret the meaning and significance of information, and use a variety of electronic technologies to assist in accessing and managing information. The ability to acquire information from books, maps, newspapers, data sets, and other sources, skill in organizing and presenting information in maps, graphs, charts, time lines, and the ability to interpret the meaning and significance of data all continue to be vital skills. In addition, technology has become a critical part of the information age. Students must have experiences in using computers, media, and telecommunication technology to access and process information.

- **Grade MS - Middle School**

Performance Benchmark 1: Locate and interpret information about the natural environments and cultures of countries using a variety of primary and secondary sources and electronic technologies, including computers and telecommunications where appropriate.

Performance Benchmark 2: Use traditional and electronic means to organize social science information and to make maps, graphs, and tables.

Performance Benchmark 3: Interpret social science information about the natural environment and cultures of countries from a variety of primary and secondary sources.