



# California Geographic Alliance

## Lesson Plan

### Location: Where I Live

<b>Author:</b>	Roni Jones
<b>Grade:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<b>Subject:</b>	California Geography
<b>California Academic Content Standards:</b>	<p><i>Sub-Strand 4.1:</i> Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.</p> <p><i>Standard 3:</i> Identify the state capital and describe the various regions of California, including how their characteristics and physical environments (e.g., water, landforms, vegetation, climate) affect human activity.</p> <p><i>Standard 4:</i> Identify the locations of the Pacific Ocean, rivers, valleys, and mountain passes and explain their effects on the growth of towns.</p> <p><i>Standard 5:</i> Use maps, charts, and pictures to describe how communities in California vary in land use, vegetation, wildlife, climate, population density, architecture, services, and transportation.</p>
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>Following this lesson, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Locate their own county and the general location of their community</li> <li>2. Identify the local physiographic region, physical geography, nearby highways and rivers, or other landmarks using the appropriate maps</li> <li>3. Describe their county or community in relative terms (such as "My county is located near the Sierra Nevada.")</li> </ol>
<b>Instructional Strategy:</b>	Collaborative groups and Share and Compare
<b>Teacher Background:</b>	<p>Understanding location is a vital concept in the study of geography. According to Dr. Phil Gersmehl, a leading researcher in geography education, "you have to know where something is before you can study it geographically." Location is also one of the 5 Themes of Geography and is an important concept in the National Geographic Standards. But, location is more than the simple memorization of latitude and longitude or the specific address of someone's home. Understanding location helps students to understand more complex concepts such as the availability and use of natural resources or to draw conclusions about the implications of climate and rainfall on farming.</p>



# California Geographic Alliance

## Lesson Plan

<b>Student Background:</b>	Students may or may not have any experience with geographic concepts, spatial concepts or map skills. This lesson is intended to build basic skills with students. Prior to this lesson, you will want to allow students to explore the atlas in an informal way.
<b>Learning Context:</b>	This lesson can be presented at the beginning of the school year or at the beginning of any 4 <sup>th</sup> grade social studies unit.
<b>Guiding Questions:</b>	Where do I live in California and how can I describe my location?
<b>Instructional Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Half class set of atlases</li> <li>▪ Sticky notes (cut into strips)</li> <li>▪ LCD projector, a document camera, or an overhead projector</li> <li>▪ County map copies with "windows"</li> <li>▪ Blank county outline map of California</li> <li>▪ Variety of images of your local county and community</li> <li>▪ Index cards</li> </ul>
<b>Grouping:</b>	During this lesson the students will be working in pairs examining one atlas between two students and in small groups of four students examining two atlases. These groups provide an environment in which students work to collaboratively to orally discuss answers and form questions.
<b>Duration:</b>	45-60 minutes
<b>Procedure</b>	
<b>Introduction/ Anticipatory Set:</b> (5 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Select 3-4 images of your local area.</li> <li>2. Using the LCD projector, document camera or overhead projector, the teacher shows one image and provides students with time to silently examine the image.</li> <li>3. The students describe the picture to his/her partner with each partner taking 30 seconds to share.</li> </ol>
<b>Instruction:</b> (10 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The students open the atlas to the County map (p. 29).</li> <li>5. One student in the pair to puts his/her index finger on the local county. The teacher identifies the county and asks students to repeat the name chorally to check for understanding. For larger counties, ask students to move their finger to a location in the county closer to the community in which they live (for example, Auburn is located in the narrowest section in the eastern portion of Placer County). The teacher demonstrates labeling the location on the screen.</li> </ol>



# California Geographic Alliance

## Lesson Plan

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. The other student in the pair writes the name of the students' local community on a sticky note strip and places the sticky note strip on the map to indicate the location of the community within the county boundaries.</li> <li>7. The teacher asks the pair of students to share their sticky note placement with their tablemates to check for understanding. Ask students to give a "thumbs up" when both sticky note strip are in the correct location.</li> <li>8. With the County map projected and open on their desks, the students label both the approximate location of the community and the county on the blank county outline map. Use a star to indicate the community name.</li> <li>9. As the students keep the County map open in the atlases, the teacher projects the Physiographic Region map (p. 15). The teacher may need to define "physiographic" and provide examples (see the text on p. 51 for this information).</li> <li>10. The teacher explains to students how to read the map's colors and labels. There is no key/legend on this map because the regions are clearly labeled.</li> <li>11. The teacher points to different locations throughout California and ask the students to provide name of the physiographic region. The teacher should give both positive and corrective feedback. To keep students fully engaged, the teacher can ask students to share in pairs or with tablemates before calling on individual students.</li> <li>12. The last location that the teacher points to on the Physiographic map is the county or local community of the students. The students repeat the name of the physiographic region chorally.</li> <li>13. Using the blank outline map, the teacher demonstrates how to draw a line from the local community to the margin. In the margin, the teacher writes "Physiographic: ____ region."</li> </ol>
<p><b>Guided Practice:</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. The students open the atlas to the Water Resources map (pg. 36). The teacher also projects the Water Resources map and has the County map ready to show throughout the guided practice.</li> <li>15. The teacher asks the students to read the key/legend independently and then explain their understanding of the key/legend to their partner.</li> </ol>



## California Geographic Alliance Lesson Plan

	<p>16. The partners then share and compare their understanding of the key/legend with their group of 4 students.</p> <p>17. Finally, the teacher solicits responses from volunteers to explain the key/legend. The teacher provides positive and corrective feedback.</p> <p>18. Remember that the students did not read a key/legend on the previous map because it was clearly labeled. So the teacher may need to provide additional support in how to read the key/legend.</p> <p>19. The teacher checks for understanding by pointing to a variety of locations on the map and asking students to identify nearby rivers using the key/legend. Responses can be given to partners or chorally to ensure all students are engaged in the activity.</p> <p>20. The teacher hands out the "window" maps and demonstrates how to place the "window" over the Water Resources map to examine the location of the local community.</p> <p>21. The students work in pairs to correctly place the "window" map and determine the nearby water resources of the local community. Students share and compare their responses with their partners and tablemates.</p> <p>22. The teacher solicits responses from students and provides positive and corrective feedback.</p> <p>23. The teacher asks students to record the nearby rivers on the blank outline map (Water Resources: ____ River).</p>
<p><b>Independent Practice:</b> (15 minutes)</p>	<p>24. The teacher asks the students to turn to the Major Highway map (p. 33). The teacher can also project this map.</p> <p>25. The teacher writes the following directions on the board for students to refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with partner to read the key/legend</li> <li>▪ Check with the other partners at your table about how to read the key/legend</li> <li>▪ Lay the "window" map over the Major Highway map</li> <li>▪ Determine the nearby major highways</li> <li>▪ Share and compare your answers with your partner and tablemates</li> <li>▪ Revise your answers if you need to</li> <li>▪ Record the answers on your blank outline map</li> </ul> <p>26. Depending on the amount of time, the students can continue this same procedure for additional maps such as Physical Geography map (p. 12), Native American Groups map (p. 20), or Gold Rush maps (p. 26-27).</p>



## California Geographic Alliance Lesson Plan

<p><b>Closure:</b> (5 minutes)</p>	<p>27. The students share their recorded answers with the whole class as the teacher documents these on the projected blank county outline map.</p> <p>28. The teacher provides students with an index card and asks students to describe the location of their local community using at least two separate written sentences.</p> <p>29. It may be appropriate to use sentence frames to support struggling students. Examples of sentence frames include "My town is located near _____," "My town is part of the _____ region," or "the _____ river is near my town."</p> <p>30. Have students read the sentences to partners and tablemates. If time allows, the teacher can also solicit responses to share with the whole class.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Blank county outline map with list of location descriptors</li> <li>▪ Index card with at least two statements about the location of the county or local community (index cards can be used in a bulletin board display)</li> </ul>



# California Geographic Alliance Lesson Plan