

Facilitation Guide



5 Themes Comic Strip

Social Studies, Grade 6

EXPERIENCE OVERVIEW

Students will create a 5-window comic illustration displaying the 5 themes of geography and how they are shown in Baltimore (or their city/town). Students will conduct peer evaluations using the provided rubric. *Note: This lesson can be broken up into multiple class periods.*

Standards

MSDE/BCPSS CONTENT STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

- 6.1.1.a. Explain the five themes of geography (location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, and region).
 - Standard 6.0 Skills and Processes: Students shall inquire about civics, geography, economics, history, and people and nations of the world using disciplinary literacy skills and processes to critically evaluate content through a variety of source materials across disciplines and use reading, writing, and other forms of communication to develop, defend, and critique arguments in order to take informed action.

C3 STANDARDS – SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- D2.Geo.5.6–8. Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- D2.Geo.6.6–8. Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- D2.Geo.7.6–8. Explain how changes in transportation and communication technology influence the spatial connections among human settlements and affect the diffusion of ideas and cultural practices.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

- Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
 - VA-Cr1.2.6a: Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.
 - VA-Cr2.1.6a: Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design.
- Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work
 - VA-Re.7.1.6a Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value.

Getting Ready

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

- What is Geography?

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS:

- Why is it important to study the five themes?
- How will the themes teach you about the world around us?
- What can you learn from and about your peers from their perspectives on the 5 Themes?

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Getting Ready (continued)

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will create a comic strip that represents the five themes of geography in their neighborhood. They will analyze and discuss comics as a medium for geographical storytelling.
- Students will use content vocabulary and images to describe each theme using comic/graphic art.
- Students will present their comics in small groups and evaluate peers' work for evidence of the Five Themes of Geography using key vocabulary, illustrations, and speech bubbles.

ASSESSMENT:

- Students will have drawn a comic based on the themes as they are represented in their neighborhood.

MATERIALS & SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM SETUP:

- Five-window comic strip template
- Comic slides
- Rubric
- Student-taken neighborhood images
- Art supplies (pencils, markers, erasers, etc.)
- How-to video on comic creation (included in slides)
- Peer evaluation handouts

KEY SOCIAL STUDIES VOCABULARY:

- 5 Themes of Geography:
 - Location (Absolute Location, Relative Location)
 - Place (Physical Characteristics, Human Characteristics)
 - Human Environment Interaction (Depend, Modify, Adapt)
 - Movement (Transportation and Communication Systems, People, Physical Systems)
 - Regions (Similarities and Differences)

KEY ARTS INTEGRATION VOCABULARY:

- Comic strip - A sequence of drawings in boxes that tell an amusing story, typically printed in a newspaper or comic book.
- Illustration - A visualization made by an artist to explain information.
- Art criticism - The discussion or evaluation of visual art.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

- Review the slideshow and extension materials to become familiar with the content and prepare to ask both culminating and supporting questions.
- Showing students an exemplar comic strip is highly recommended.
- Teachers are encouraged to watch the video "Facilitating Comic Strip Peer Evaluation" included in these resources before facilitating.
- Lay the groundwork for constructive criticism and how to give encouraging but thoughtful feedback with your students.

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Getting Ready (continued)

STUDENT PREREQUISITES

- Students will have taken photos of their neighborhood/school neighborhood and saved them to their Google Drive or e-mailed to the teacher for reference.

ACCESSIBILITY NOTES

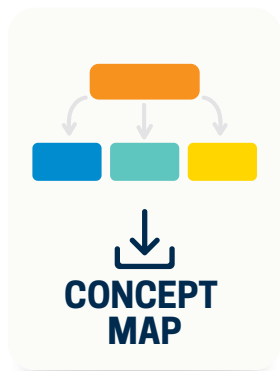
- Sentence Starters:
 - Offer structured sentence starters to support during written responses, discussions, and peer evaluations.
- Glossary & Definitions:
 - Include a simple glossary with student-friendly definitions of key terms.
- Modified Graphic Organizer:
 - Allow students to complete a limited number of boxes instead of the full set.
- Option to use online resources, including images from the web or Google Earth.
- Alternate Artform:
 - Video Presentation: Students may work individually or in small groups to show one or more themes (e.g., food, festivals, green spaces, murals) through a video or slides presentation.

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ARTS INTEGRATION MATERIALS



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TEACH

Procedure

1. Engage: Activate prior knowledge of the 5 Themes

- Ask students: “Think about a place you have always wanted to visit. What do you see? Smell? Hear? Taste? Feel?”
 - As students give examples, relate them back (or ask another student to relate them) to one of the 5 Themes of Geography.

2. Review: 5 Themes Song

- Have students take out their 5 Themes of Geography note-taking handout from the “Intro to the 5 Themes” lesson.
- Play the “5 Themes of Geography” song video to review concepts learned.

Brain Connections: This is an example of “repeated rehearsal” to help deepen students’ understanding and memory.

3. Learn: 5 Themes Comic Overview

- Present the Comic Slides.
 - Begin with an overview of the project rubric, outlining expectations for creativity, accuracy, and depth of understanding.
 - Explain the purpose of the project: Using comics to visually represent the five themes of geography in their own neighborhoods.
 - Guide students through initial brainstorming questions on slide 4 to help them reflect on how they see the five themes of geography (Location, Place, Human-Environment Interaction, Movement, and Region) in their community.
 - Familiarize students with comic-style art, including elements like how the artist uses color, how the individual “windows” shows sequential scenes of a story, and dialogue boxes.
 - Show examples of comics that illustrate the five themes of geography. Discuss how geography is represented through images, dialogue, and storytelling in these comics.
 - *Note: Cross-curricular connection: Students can use the ELA Wit & Wisdom thinking routine “Notice & Wonder” to analyze the images. Facilitation prompts can include:*
 - What do you notice? (Colors, shapes, text, movement, setting, characters, etc.)
 - What do you wonder? (Artist choices, etc.)
 - Relate student observations to the 5 Themes.



VIDEO TUTORIAL



HANDOUT
NOTES



VIDEO



SLIDES

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Apply: Create comic strips

- Provide students with the [five-window comic strip template](#). Have students plan out their comic using the images they have taken of their neighborhood, notes from prior class discussion, or internet images they have explored.
 - Encourage students to think about composition, storytelling, and how each panel will represent a different theme.
- If students need help with drawing techniques:
 - Use the [“How To Create Your Comic” instructional support video](#).
 - You can also use the additional instructional video on slide 12.
- Allow time for students to draft and refine their comics.



Assess: Peer evaluations

- Organize students into small groups of about 4 - 6.
- Slide 13: Explain that students will present their comic strips to their peers, and their classmates will provide encouraging but thoughtful feedback using the comic criteria.
- Explain that students will each have 5 minutes to present their comic to the group and field questions from their peers. [Model how to present naming where each of the 5 Themes is evident within the comic, and model how to complete the Peer Evaluation form.](#)
 - Depending on the group size, allow 20 - 30 minutes for small group sharing.
 - [Peer Evaluation Handout](#)
- Optional: Student volunteers can share their comics with the entire class so that everyone is able to see more examples of the 5 themes in different neighborhoods around the city.



Closing: Discuss & celebrate

- **Discussion questions:**
 - How did this lesson deepen your understanding of your city and its geography?
 - What did you learn about the 5 Themes of Geography from your peers' perspectives?
 - How did creating a comic help you connect with and apply the 5 Themes?
 - What challenges did you face in this project, and how did you overcome them?
 - How does geography shape the way we see and tell stories about our communities and the world?
- **Optimistic closure:**
 - Invite students to share praise of their peers' work (1:1, in small groups, or to the class).
 - Finally, close with a short dance party to the 5 Themes of Geography song.

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Extend (optional)

- Expanding Geographic Perspective:
 - Continue zooming out from your town to your state, to the United States, to North America, and beyond, discussing how the 5 themes present with each change in perspective.
- Comparative Analysis:
 - Refer back to student-created comics to compare and contrast the themes in their town when studying other regions.
- Empathy Building:
 - Identify similarities and differences across cultures to foster global awareness and connection.
- Create a Class Book:
 - Students can compile their comics into a collaborative book about where they live, showcasing the 5 Themes of Geography through the lens of different neighborhoods and perspectives.