

Where Would You Place a City?

Rebecca Biel

MN Standard: C. Spatial Organization

Standard 1: The student will analyze the patterns of location, functions, structure, and characteristics of local to global settlement patterns and the processes that affect the location of cities.

Benchmark 1. Students will describe the contemporary patterns of large cities.

Topic: City Sites

Grade Level: 9-12

Overview: This lesson has students apply site reasons to actual cities.

Time: 1 - 84 minute period

Subjects: Geography

Required Materials:

Copy of fictional site, Metropola, for each student or small group

Teacher overhead of Metropola

Copy of City Sites: Reasons Why Cities Begin Where They Do worksheet for each student

Copy of Megalopolis worksheet for each student or small group

Copy of megalopolis city site maps for each student or small group or access to internet

Optional Technologies:

Objectives: The goal of this lesson is for students to recognize why cities develop where they do.

Suggested Procedure:

Opening Activity:

To get students thinking about why cities develop where they do, start by giving each student or small group a copy of Blankland with the following directions:

Below is a map of Blankland, a make-believe country that occupies a small continent that has a mild climate. A majority of the 10 million Blanklandians (as the citizens are called) live in five large cities scattered about the country. Your task is to place five different symbols on the map at places where you believe Blankland's five large cities might be located. Create a key below where you justify for each symbol why you placed the city there.

Once each student or small group has placed and justified their symbols, compare students answers as a class on an overhead. By now students should be able to generalize that water is very important for a city's development

A copy of Blankland is found at the end of this lesson.

Activity 1: City Sites: Reasons Why Cities Begin Where They Do

This worksheet takes students through the reasons cities develop where they do. Give students time to go through the worksheet and then compare answers as a class. The copy included at the end of this lesson is a teacher copy with the answers.

Activity 2: Northeast Megalopolis

A. Map the following cities on the map below: Boston, MA, Providence, RI, New Haven, CT, Trenton, NJ, New York City, NY, Philadelphia, PA, Baltimore, MD, Washington, D.C. by putting a large dot where the city is located.

B. Define Megalopolis:

C. Lightly sketch an outline where you think the Northeast megalopolis is located.

Suggested Assessment:

The Megaopolis map evaluation can be used as the assessment to make sure each student can apply the definitions for sites to cities in the megalopolis.

Resources:

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/map_sites/cities_sites.html This website is operated by the University of Texas and has an extensive collection of maps.

<http://www.mapquest.com/atlas/> This website is linked to aaronpeters.com, which is a website run by artists. The state maps are very clear and suit the purpose of this lesson.

<http://www.naf.org/> This is the website for the National Academy Foundation which has curriculum for member schools.

Definitions:

Megalopolis - a thickly populated region centering in a metropolis or embracing several metropolises

National Geography Standards:

STANDARD 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information.

Supplemental Web Links for Teachers and Students:

Extension Activities:

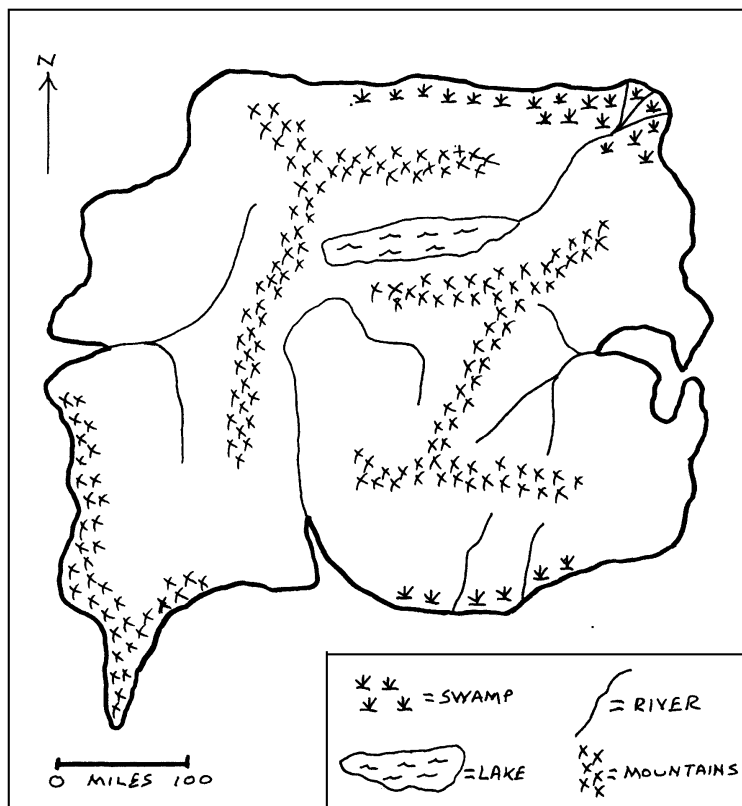
Credits

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Blankland



City Sites: Reasons Why Cities Begin Where They Do

There are many reasons why cities develop at a particular place. Ten of them are described below. Look at the cities' placement which contains a sketch showing the original sites of ten large cities. Each city on that worksheet corresponds to an item on this worksheet. Fill in the blank spaces below with the name of the correct city.

The maps show the original settlement site at a time when relatively few people lived there

compared to today. In most cases the modern city has grown well beyond the bounds of the site indicated on the sketch maps.

Boston is an example of a protected harbor site. The site has an inlet that provides protection from the open sea. As a result, waves are small or nonexistent. Ships can dock, load, and unload in calm water. Also, the site is relatively easy to defend because it is surrounded on three sides by water.

St. Louis is an example of a head of navigation site. Many rivers are wide and deep enough to permit shipping to travel upriver to a point where, because of rapids, shallow waters, or narrows, navigation is no longer possible. That place is called the head of navigation. Boats are off-loaded downriver from the impediment, giving rise to commercial activity and, perhaps, a permanent settlement.

Paris is an example of an island site. Long ago, this was a preferred site for settlement because the surrounding water provided a natural moat.

Pittsburgh is an example of a confluence site. A confluence is the point where two small rivers join together to form a larger river. Rivers served as highways in the era before automobiles and trains. Confluences were important because they were at the intersection of the highways. They were also easy to defend because they are bordered on two sides by water.

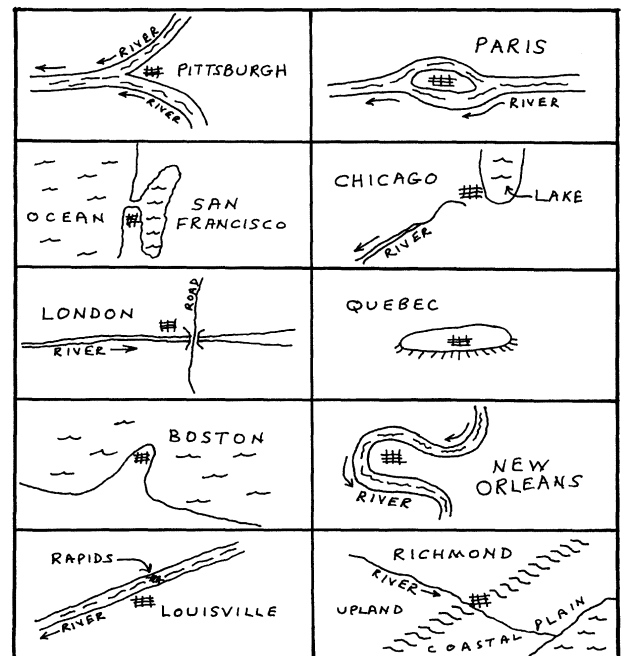
New Orleans is an example of a meander loop site. In some places rivers form crescent-like curves called meander loops. Settlement on the inside of the loop is advantageous because the river affords a defensive perimeter around much of the town.

Chicago is an example of a portage site. A portage site lies between two navigable waterways that are close together but not connected. Goods are off-loaded from vessels on one waterway and transported overland (portage) to the other.

London is an example of a bridge-point site. It is easier to construct a bridge across a river at some places than at others. Places where the river is narrow or shallow or contains small islands are most favorable. Prior to construction of the bridge, the site may have been a ford, meaning a place where people or animals could safely walk across (that is, ford the river). Bridges serve to funnel traffic through a point, which becomes a prime location for commerce and settlement.

San Francisco is an example of a peninsula site. Surrounded on three sides by water, a peninsula site has the important advantage of being easy to defend.

Richmond is an example of a fall line site. The term refers



to rapids or waterfalls that occur where coastal plains meet interior foothills. In the days when industry was powered by swiftly flowing water (mills and waterwheels), these sites were favored locations for settlement.

Quebec is an example of an acropolis site. Like the one in Athens, Greece, for which it is named, the site refers to high ground that can easily be fortified and defended.

For the next part of the activity, the students will need detailed maps of where a city is located. You will need to create a sheet with the maps on it or have internet access where the students could look on the website itself. The information is easier to pull out when it's in color, so I suggest using the internet or making color copies.

The website <http://www.mapquest.com/atlas/> a good collection of maps to choose from.

A copy a possible worksheet is at the end of this lesson.

For each of the cities in the Northeast megalopolis, analyze the maps to find out...

1. What body of water the city developed along and
2. Why the city developed at the site it did

Boston

1. Boston Harbor
2. protected harbor

New Haven

1. New Haven Harbor
2. protected harbor

New York City

1. Atlantic Ocean, Hudson River
2. protected harbor, island

Trenton

1. Delaware River
2. meander

Providence

1. Rhode Island Sound, Narragansett Bay
2. protected harbor

Philadelphia

1. Delaware River
2. confluence, meander loop

Baltimore

1. Susquehanna River, Chesapeake Bay
2. protected harbor

Washington, D.C.

1. Potomac River
2. meander loop



