

## **Identifying World Cities**

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

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

Topic: Functions and characteristics of world cities

Grade Level: 9-12

Overview: Students will begin by identifying the accessible functions and characteristics of their own community. Students will learn the definition of a city and be able to identify characteristics that make up world cities. Students will analyze cities and their locations to determine their rank of importance as a world city and their spatial distribution.

Time: Five to Seven class periods (50 minute periods)

Subject: Geography

Required materials: Internet access, supplies for students to create poster-boards of world cities (boards, scissors, glue, markers, etc.), a large world map and color-coded post it notes or paper squares.

Optional technologies:

Objectives: Students shall learn the definitions and criterion of cities and world cities. Students shall identify and analyze cities in the world cities hierarchy. Students will analyze the spatial distribution of cities in the world city hierarchy.

Suggested Procedure:

Day One – Introduction to Cities

Introductory Activity

Instruct students to, either individually or with a partner, create a list of reasons why people choose to or need to live in a city. Encourage students to think about their own family situations, as well as those from a variety of socio-economic positions.

Based on the above list, instruct students to brainstorm a list of characteristics of a city and functions or services that cities provide. From this series of characteristics ask each student or set of partners create their own definition of a city.

Whole-Class Discussion

Ask students to share their lists and definitions with the class. Discuss student responses identifying differences and similarities. From class input and feedback create a class definition of city.

### Short Lecture

Teacher shall lead a brief lecture/discussion introducing definitions of city, functions that they provide, and their spatial distribution. Multiple sources exist where these concepts and definitions may be found. You may want to initially review your geography textbook for this information and also review the web links provided in this lesson.

### Day Two - Defining a World City

#### Classroom activity

Introduce the concept of world/global cities including the traits and functions of a world city using the information in the articles and sources from the GaWC (see online resources). Introduce the hierarchies that have been created regarding the status of cities worldwide. Through this discussion students should learn the definition and criterion that characterize world cities.

Following this discussion, instruct students to read the article by Jennifer Curtis on World Cities. Using the Curtis article, as well as the list of traits of world cities from the GaWC, instruct students to create a web or graphic representation detailing the characteristics of a world city. Instruct students to place World City at the center of the graphic which is the topic. From the center students would create spokes of main ideas that make up a world city such as tourism and culture, international influence, global transportation networks, and financial center. To each of these spokes students could add details such as international airports, world rail and road links, etc. to the transportation network spoke.

### Days Three and Four - Small Group Research

From the previous activity students should learn the definition and criterion that characterize world cities. This will prepare them for the following research aspect of the unit. In this lesson students are given two days of class research time. Most likely students will need more time than this to successfully complete these tasks. You may add additional class time or assign the remaining research and preparation tasks as homework.

Assign students to small groups or sets of pairs to research world cities within the hierarchy. To each group assign an Alpha, Beta, and Gamma world city. In addition instruct students to choose one city of their own choice. You may want to encourage or require students to research a city in their region or where they live for the fourth city. Using the "Laborlawtalk" and the "MacCalaster" websites students may link to the cities that they are researching. For each city students should research and record the functions that it provides. To increase the level of analysis of this assignment assign students cities without telling them where it fits on the hierarchies provided. Instruct students to analyze each city by comparing them to their graphic representation from the previous activity, and identifying what characteristics each city has or does not have. Instruct students to estimate and provide a rationale for the placement on the hierarchy of each city. In order to accomplish this task, students will need access to the information on the cities without first seeing the city hierarchies listed.

### Days Five and Six -Presentation of Research

Presentation of the group findings could take place in multiple manners. Students could create a

poster board with information, photos, and maps of each city and the group analysis. Along with this, groups could present their posters, findings and rationale to the class. To shorten the class time dedicated to the lesson, each group could type and hand in their findings and rationale and hand in.

#### Whole-class Discussion

After student presentations of their findings instruct each group to place write the names of their cities on the color-coded post it notes or construction paper. Use a different color for each level in the hierarchy. Instruct students to place their post-its on your classroom world map. Instruct each group to identify pattern or trends that they are able to recognize from the world map and location of the cities. Discuss the groups' findings and then refer to the spatial distribution map of world cities from the Curtis article. Compare the findings of the class with the Curtis map.

#### Assessment:

The assessment for this series of lessons should be based on the research and rationale prepared and presented by each group on the status of their assigned cities within the World City Hierarchy.

#### Background information and definitions for the teacher:

There are numerous ideas related to the classification of cities and their spatial distribution. John Friedmann provided much of the foundational work of world city hierarchies and their spatial distribution in the 1980s. In addition there are many contemporary resources available online and are provided below.

#### Web Links for Teachers and Students

Two excellent online articles provide a strong background and source for the following activities:

[http://encyclopedia.laborlawtalk.com/world\\_city](http://encyclopedia.laborlawtalk.com/world_city)

provides a list of criterion that characterizes world cities? Some of these included in the article are "international familiarity, active influence and participation in international events and world affairs, and international financial institutions, corporations, and stock exchanges that have influence over the world economy." This article also reveals an Inventory of World Cities as defined by the Globalization and World Studies Network (URL). An excellent feature of this website is the links for each city listed in the inventory.

The second of these articles is "World Cities" written by Jennifer Curtis of Charles Sturt University available online at

[http://hsc.csu.edu.au/geography/urban/cities/worldcities/World\\_Cities.html](http://hsc.csu.edu.au/geography/urban/cities/worldcities/World_Cities.html)

This article provides a solid definition for a world city as well as a thorough discussion of the role, operation, nature, character and spatial distribution of world cities

An additional online resource that may be used in the research process is a website prepared by Macalaster College geography students. The site provides in depth economic and cultural information on cities throughout the world. The site may be found at

<http://www.macalester.edu/geography/courses/geog261/urban.htm>

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