

3rd Grade
Unit 1: Interrelationships: Communities and their
Environments



Essential Question #3: How do changes/adaptations in the environment impact living things and their communities?

Lesson Title: North and South American Communities

SS Standard I, Objective 2

Implementation Time: 45 minutes

Media Resources Needed: Nystrom *Map Champ Atlas* (class set, or use a document camera)

Materials Needed: blank paper; pencils, crayons/colored pencils

Procedure:

1. Direct students' attention to the map of North America and information on the titled "What is it like to live in North America?" in the *Map Champ Atlas*. Familiarize them with the text structure by pointing out the different countries of North America and showing them how they key is used to understand different features. Talk about what pictures tell us and why it is important to read the captions. Point out the relationship between *water* and *human settlement* and *climate* and *distance* from the equator. Use a globe/wall map to illustrate North America's location in relationship to the equator and the rest of the world. Talk about the ecosystems, landforms, **land use** and **natural resources** of North America. Point out the pages titled "How do people use natural resources?" and "How do people use the land?" in *Map Champ Atlas*.

2. Have students fold a clean sheet of paper in half vertically, creating two columns. Instruct them to label the column on the left "North America" and the column on the right "South America." **As a whole class and with the teacher modeling**, have students record information about communities in North America on the "North America" side of the T-charts. *Information may include:* many different countries, islands, mountains, cities, oceans, longitude and latitude, size (using scale), direction in relationship to oceans, equator, and other continents, ecosystems, natural resources, land use.



3. In small cooperative groups, have students use the information on the pages titled “What is it like to live in South America?” and any additional atlas pages to complete the “South America” side of their T-chart. Ask students to look for the same information as North America and allow them to look at a classroom globe/world map. Teacher should monitor cooperative groups, helping students as needed.

Assessment:

Assign students to write down three ways that life in North and South America is the same and three ways that it is different. Have students use their ideas to write and illustrate a short “day in the life” story comparing/contrasting the lives of two children – one from North America and one from South America. Stories may address subjects such as: countries the children live in; climate/clothing the children might wear (depending on climate of country); different foods the children might eat; different activities in which the children may participate. Have students “publish” their stories on a classroom bulletin board or by reading them out loud to classmates.