

Lesson 2: Geographical Features

Focus Question:

What are the geographical features of a place?

Activity #1 Physical Features

Materials needed: For each student, a copy of *Lesson Structure: Previewing the Organization of a Lesson* (Handout #1.3) or *Scavenger Hunt* (Handout # 1.4).

Harcourt's *Reflections: Our Communities* Lesson 2 *Physical Features* pages 16-21

(Note: Although reference is made to specific page numbers in Harcourt's *Reflection*, the same activities and strategies may be completed using any of the state-adopted social studies textbooks.)

Procedure:

Step 1: Explain to students that a place may be described by telling about its physical features – its land, water, climate and plants. Physical features are sometimes called *geographical features*. To describe the geographical features of a place, you might talk about its landforms. Before humans ever settled here, landforms were shaped by nature. The land is still changing today, but most change is too slow for us to see (except for landslides, floods, earthquakes, fires or other such events seen on the T.V. news).

Step 2: Preview Lesson 2 *Physical Features* (Harcourt's *Reflections: Our Communities* pages 16-21). To preview the lesson, use the same procedure described in Lesson 1. Help students complete *Lesson Structure: Previewing the Organization of a Lesson* (Handout #1.3) or *Scavenger Hunt* (Handout # 1.4). Note: The focus of Lesson 2 is on the physical features of California. Our major focus will be on the features of San Diego. Discuss which features in the lesson are found in the San Diego area.

Step 3: Refer to *Geography Terms* on textbook page I-14. Focus on pertinent local landforms including island, lake, mountain, ocean, river, and valley. Have students check the Glossary (page R35) for a definition of *bay*. Discuss the meaning of the words *beach*, *canyon*, *ravine* and other pertinent landforms in your area.

Activity #2 Geographical Terms and Definitions Match-Up

Materials needed for each student: For each student, a copy of *Geographical Feature Terms* (Handout 2.1) and *Definitions of Geographical Features* (Handout 2.2); a sheet of 12"x18" construction paper, scissors and glue.

Procedure:

Step 1 Cut and Sort: Distribute copies of *Geographical Feature Terms* (Handout #2.1) and *Definitions of Geographical Features* (Handout #2.2). Have students cut out each geographical feature term and the definitions of geographical features. Students work individually or in pairs to match each geographical feature term with its definition.

Step 2 Match the Term: The teacher reads each definition from *Definitions of Geographical Features* (Handout #2.2) as each student holds up the card with the matching geographic term. The teacher checks for accuracy. **(Optional)** As you read each definition, display photographs of local landforms for each geographical term.

Step 3 Tic-Tac-Toe: Have each student randomly arrange the 9 geography word cards in a 3 by 3 grid on his/her desk. As you read a definition, the student turns over his/her matching vocabulary card. When a student turns over 3 in a row vertically, horizontally, or diagonally, he/she calls out “Tic-Tac-Toe). Verify by having the student read his/her terms aloud. Continue to play for blackout (all 9 cards are turned over). Repeat as many times as desired. Students may rearrange cards for each round.

Step 4 Geography Guessing Game: Tape or clip a geographical term word card *Geographical Feature Terms* (Handout #2.1) on the backs of different students. Students walk around the room and try to guess what term is on their back by asking their classmates questions that require a “yes” or “no” answer. When the term is guessed, the student may place the card on the front of his/her shirt and assist the remaining students by answering their questions. Have *Definitions of Geographical*



Features (Handout #2.2) available for student reference.

Step 5 Geographic Terms and Definitions Match-Up: On a sheet of 12”x18” construction paper, students paste each geographic term together with its matching definition.

Save the Geography Match-Ups to include in the *Atlas of San Diego* assembled at the end of the unit.

Activity #3 Using Maps to Find Geographical Features of San Diego

Using different maps of the local region (i.e. AAA map of San Diego), have students work in pairs or small groups to look for specific names of geographical features found in the San Diego area. Students neatly record the full name of each feature on their chart, *Right Here in San Diego* (Handout #2.3). See the chart listed below for a sample of responses. Have students share their results.

Right Here in San Diego

Geographical Features	Examples from the San Diego Map
mountain	Cowles Mountain, Otay Mountain
river	Tijuana River, Sweetwater River
valley	Mission Valley
island	Harbor Island
ocean	Pacific Ocean
bay	San Diego Bay, Mission Bay

Assessment:

Assessment of this lesson is integrated with the instruction and occurs throughout the lesson. The focus question provides a framework for the evaluation of the lesson. Student work to be assessed includes:

- *Previewing the Organization of a Lesson* (Handout #1.3) or *Scavenger Hunt* (Handout # 1.4).
- Geographic Terms and Definitions Match-Up (Activity 2) It is recommended you save the *Match-Up* for inclusion in the unit project, *Atlas of San Diego*.
- Students work in pairs or small groups to complete *Right Here in San Diego* (Activity 3).

The following Extended Activities are optional extensions for this lesson.

(Optional) Begin the **Climate Weather Log** described *Climate of San Diego - a Daily Weather Log* (Handout #2.4).

(Optional) **English Language Learner Extension: Landforms of San Diego – A Booklet or Banner**

Student-generated visuals aid the learning and retention of specialized vocabulary terms. To provide a visual representation of the geography terms used in this lesson, it is recommended that the teacher or the students create a picture file of geographic features in the local region. For example, using geographical terms such as those listed in **Geographical Feature Terms** (Handout #2.1), have students create a booklet with a page or pages that includes pictures or photographs of landforms found in the San Diego region.

Students can collect illustrations of landforms from magazine pictures, travel posters, postcards, family vacation photos, art prints or calendar prints of landscapes. Or, students can take photographs of different geographical features of the San Diego region. A local map can be included with markers showing where the photos were taken.

Students select and label the pictures and assemble them into a booklet, “Landforms of the San Diego Region.” Or, display them on a *banner* as shown at the right.

Include the booklet or banner as a part of the student’s *Atlas of San Diego* to be compiled at the end of the unit.

As an alternative, include the illustrations and photographs on a classroom bulletin board labeled, “Landforms of San Diego.”



(Optional) **Geography Extension Activity: Map an Imaginary Place**

Each student selects at least ten geographical features to include in a physical map of an imaginary place. The geographical features selected need not be the same as the ones found in the San Diego region. For example, a student may include an island, a beach, a peninsula and a river as part of the geographical features to be found at their imaginary place. The map should be drawn on construction paper with crayons or colored pencils.

The Map of Imaginary Place should include:

- map title with the name of the imaginary place
- a compass rose
- at least 10 geographical features labeled with names
- a legend or key to identify symbols
- a written description of where the imaginary land is located and information about its natural environment including the land forms, bodies of water, soil and how people have changed or modified the physical environment over time.

Geographical Feature Terms

mountain	lake	island
ocean	river	valley
bay	canyon	beach

Definitions of Geographical Features

<p>a body of salt water that covers a large area; larger than a sea</p>	<p>the shore of a body of water, especially when sandy or pebbly; the sandy or rocky land at the edge of an ocean, sea, or lake.</p>	<p>a landform with water all around it; a piece of land that is smaller than a continent and completely surrounded by water</p>
<p>a body of water that is part of a sea, ocean or lake and is partly enclosed by dry land</p>	<p>low land between hills or mountains; a gently sloping depression between hills or mountains</p>	<p>a body of water with land on all sides; a large inland body of water</p>
<p>the highest kind of land; a rugged, upthrust mass of rock that looms high above the surrounding land</p>	<p>a deep, narrow valley with steep rocky sides; carved by running water</p>	<p>a long, large stream of water that flows across the land</p>

Right Here in San Diego

Using different maps of the San Diego region, look for specific names of landforms and physical features found in the region. Neatly record the full name of each geographic feature on the chart below. Capitalization and spelling count! Share your results.

Geographic Features	Examples from the San Diego Map
mountain	
ocean	
valley	
river	
island	
bay	
canyon	
lake	
beach	

Climate of San Diego - a Daily Weather Log

Definitions:

Climate is defined here as the meteorological conditions, including temperature, precipitation and wind, that characteristically prevail in a particular region.

Weather is the state of the atmosphere at a given time and place.

Region is a large, indefinite portion of the earth’s surface. In this unit, the *region* is defined as the city of San Diego and the surrounding area.

Discuss the weather and climate of San Diego. What are the temperature ranges? How much precipitation falls annually? What are the wind conditions?

Ask students to describe how the local environment changes as the seasons change. Explain that knowing the environment of an area throughout the year, such as climate, availability of water, types of plants and animals is important in understanding the lifestyles of the people.

Have students keep a **Daily Weather Log** of the temperature, relative humidity, precipitation, and the air quality index to explain some of the factors that affect weather in San Diego. Local newspapers report on local weather conditions and are a good source for the weather log. (Additional topics to include are wind velocity and direction and dew point.)

Daily Weather Log

Date/Time Location	Temperature	Relative Humidity	Precipitation	Air Quality Index

Include the Daily Weather Log in the *Atlas of San Diego* compiled at the end of this unit.

Use the Students’ Daily Weather Logs as a learning tool. Begin a chart, “How the Climate Affects Our Lives.”

Ask questions such as:

- What impact does the climate of San Diego have on our daily activities? (clothing, shelter, etc.)
Add observations to the chart.
- How do we change our daily life if we have a hot day? a cold day?
- What do we do differently when it is raining?
- What impact does a windy day have on us?
- How does living by the ocean affect our lives?
- How do these factors affect the physical features in the environment? (e.g., winds).