LESSON 1  

DISCOVERING YOUR SENSE OF PLACE

Overview
Using a variety of activities students will begin to explore their thoughts on what is visually pleasing to them in a community, how they feel about changes to their community, and how others feel about their own community. The activities are designed to encourage students to begin to consider their sense of place.

Objectives
Students will be able to
1. Identify what is pleasing about the visual environment.
2. Identify what is special about their community.
3. Make predictions about what others like and need from their community.
4. Explore how others feel about their community.

Procedure
Set up the following stations in a large classroom or library:

Station A. Across These United States
Using postcards (beach, desert, forest, etc.) from Viewfinders Activity 1-3, students identify those places that they find attractive and those places where they would not like to live.

• Students summarize their responses onto a data table ~ COPY FROM VIEWFINDERS.
• Students record their responses onto a bar chart.

Station B. Values Barometer
(Adapted from Values on the Line, in K-8 Project Learning Tree Activity Guide). Students place themselves on the line from 'Agree Strongly' to 'Disagree Strongly' for selected questions relating to changes in their community. Students observe that there are many different ways to feel about things. (See sample questions at end of lesson.)

Station C. What Is Special About Your Community?
Students identify what is special about their community, and write it on a large sheet of newsprint on the wall. Later, note the similarities and differences in students' responses.

Duration
Two 50 minute class periods.

Materials
Activity Packet prepared by teacher (some response forms are included with this lesson, others need to be designed by the teacher), Pencils, markers, photos, writing paper, newsprint paper and resource books.

Subjects
Language Arts  
Social Studies
Station D. **A Memorable Place**
Students write a paragraph describing a place that moved, inspired, or profoundly impacted them (positively or negatively).

Station E. **Quotable Quotes**
Students review a variety of books to identify a quote that reflects their sense of place, and explain why. Possible books: *Earth Prayers*, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard, *A Year in the Maine Woods* by Bernd Heinrich, *Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold, *The Wisdom of the Native Americans*, ed. Kent Nerburn. Your choice of books to use will guide your students’ in the direction of the visual environment and sense of place.

Station F. **Photo Comparison**
Students compare a variety of photos of the local area that characterize the community.

Station G. **Predictions**
Students make predictions about what makes the area a good place to live for each of the following four age groups: i) parents of 0-5 years, ii) 6-12 years, iii) 13-22 years; iv) 23-49 years; v) 50+ years. Students will compare their predictions to actual data collected later as part of another lesson (see p. ) (See survey lesson for chart)

Station H. **Brochures**
Critique brochures of tourist areas: ski resorts, hotels, lodges, Bed & Breakfasts, B&B’s, etc. to identify marketing strategies and to evaluate their effectiveness.

**Assessment**
Each group will complete all the stations in a given time frame and turn in their completed record/response sheets.

**Content Standards Addressed**
**Language Arts:**
Standard 1.1 Use reading for multiple purposes, such as enjoyment, new procedures, and increasing conceptual understanding.

**Social Studies:**
Standard 5.1 Inquiry
- Use traditional and electronic means to organize social science information and to make map, graphs and tables.
what do students value or think about different aspects of the community in which they live? (preteach vocabulary as needed)

as the teacher reads each statement below, the students position themselves along a continuum marked on the wall or floor, labeled strongly agree at one end, and strongly disagree at the other end. have students note the variety of perspectives within their class. would they expect the same responses from their parents? grandparents?

1. i live in my community because i like the way it looks.
2. my community has a sense of pride.
3. our area needs more malls and shopping centers.
4. our area has too much green space.
5. property owners should have the final say in what happens on their land.
6. historic buildings are of little or no value.
7. small, locally-owned businesses are important to our community.
8. we need more public land for recreation to attract homeowners and tourists.
9. businesses should not be allowed to put up big billboards advertising their businesses, only smaller ones should be allowed.
10. traffic congestion is a problem in our community.
11. we should have more big franchise restaurants and stores.
12. unique natural habitats, geologic formations, and historical places in our area should be protected.
13. all franchise stores and restaurants should look the same in every community.
14. It doesn't matter to me how our community changes in the next 20 years.
15. I should have a say in how my community grows.
16. Parking lots are just for cars. They don't need trees or landscaping.
17. New buildings in our community do not need to blend in with the buildings already there.
#1 Quote:

Source (Title and Author):

#2 Quote:

Source (Title and Author):

#3 Quote:

Source (Title and Author):
STATION F

Photo Comparison

Look at the variety of photographs displayed on the table. Select one photograph that you really like, and one that you don't find attractive. Then answer the following questions about the photographs.

Photograph that I really like  # __________

Photograph that I like least  # __________

1. I think # ____ photograph is attractive because:

2. Photograph # ____ reminds me of:

3. Photograph # ____ could become more attractive if the following was changed:

4. If I lived in # _____, I would:

5. I don't like photograph # ______, because:
STATION G STUDENT PREDICTIONS

For each of the categories listed below, make predictions about what makes our community a good place to live for each group.

Babies and Toddlers (under 5 years of age)

Elementary Students (ages 6-11 years)

Middle and High school Students (ages 12-18)

Adults (ages 19-59 years)

Senior Citizens (ages 60 and older)
STATION H  

**Brochure Critique**

Select two brochures to answer the following questions for.

Title of brochure #1 _______________________________

Title of brochure #2 _______________________________

1. Is the brochure in color or black and white?

2. Does it have photographs or sketches?

3. How many folds does it have? Is it too many or not enough?

4. What audience is the brochure written for? (families or just adults, etc)

5. What is the brochure trying to get you to do?

6. Is the brochure effective at reaching its audience? Why or why not?

7. List some of the adjectives (loaded words) used in the brochure.

8. How does choice of punctuation and capitalization affect the message being communicated?

9. Does your group like the brochure? Why or why not?