What's Happening: A Geographic Method of Event Analysis

Lesson Overview

Students, individually or in groups, interpret past and present world events by applying the five themes of geography to analyze news stories. This activity should be done regularly so that students sharpen their skills to perform geographic analysis.

Grade Level

6-12

Duration

1 class period

Geography Themes

All five themes are highlighted in this lesson.

Geography Standards

The geographically informed person knows and understands...

(#17) how to apply geography to interpret the past.
(#18) how to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Materials Needed

For Teacher:

- Any news story in videotape, magazine or newspaper format
- Wall map

For Students:

- Standard classroom atlas
- "What's Happening in _____?" Worksheet

Main Objectives of the Lesson

Students are expected to:

1. apply a geographical analysis to events using the five themes of geography.
2. broaden their awareness of world events.

Suggested Teaching Procedure

Preparing for the Lesson

1. Before class, review the news story in light of the key questions provided on the worksheet at the end of the lesson to ensure that the five themes of geography apply.
2. Adapt the worksheet as necessary for the event(s) you select, and prepare an adequate number for the students.

Opening the Lesson

1. Present the news story (via videotape, reading or oral presentation).

Developing the Lesson

1. Have students (individually or in groups) answer the questions on the worksheet. Depending on the news event, you may need to adapt the worksheet.

Concluding the Lesson

1. Have groups present their findings and discuss them with classmates.

Extending the Lesson

1. Each class day ask one or more students to present a news article to the class that addresses one or more pertinent geographical themes. Students keep a wall map in the classroom to keep track of their news stories and watch for patterns to evolve. At the end of the year, students can then analyze why some regions are "hot spots" and others had no news to report or were not covered.