

Missouri Geography and Ecology

Grades 5-7

Missouri Knowledge Standards:

Social Studies Standard 5- the major elements of geographical study and analysis (such as location, place, movement, regions) and their relationships to changes in society and environment

Fine Arts Standard 5 - visual and performing arts in historical and cultural contexts

Learning Goals: Students will learn to identify key elements of Missouri Geography and to examine paintings for clues to the geographical area they depict

Materials List: Worksheets and discussion material are provided in this lesson plan. Optional but very helpful information is found in the video “Missouri’s Resources” viewable online at <http://www.emints.org/resources/moheritage/>. This 13 minute video provides a brief but informative overview of the state’s natural resources and a history of their use, misuse and recovery. The scenery shown in the video provides good comparison materials for the artwork exercise in this lesson.

Time Required: One or two class periods

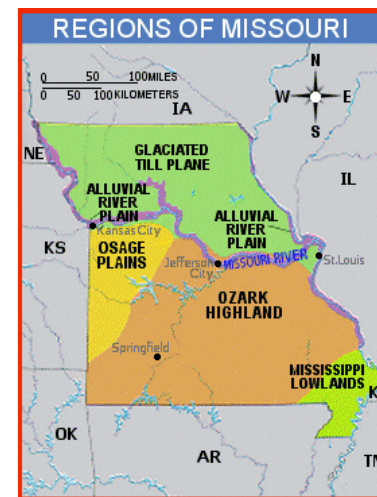
Implementation:

Discuss some of the unique characteristics of Missouri’s geography and the state’s varied geographic regions. If classroom equipment allows, show the video “Missouri’s Resources” and point out aspects of the state’s natural landscape. Using the artwork from the exhibition provided here, have the students discuss whether the landscape shown in the painting could be in Missouri. Guide the students as they examine the images. They should look carefully at the parts of the landscape, such as bodies of water, mountains or hills, and the kinds of trees included there. Have them compare each image with what they know about Missouri geography then answer the questions for each work of art. This may be done as a group or as an individual worksheet project.

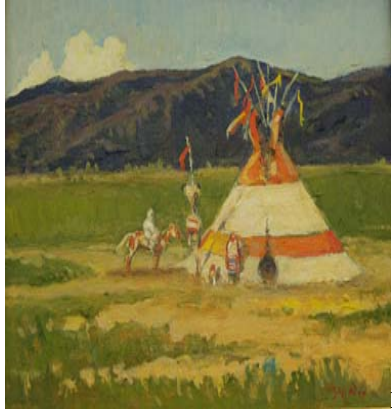
Further resources can be found at <http://emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00000176.shtml> including the sources for state images and information used in this lesson plan.

Missouri's Five Geographic Regions:

- North of the Missouri River, the state is composed of Dissected Till Plains. It is the only part of Missouri ever covered by glaciers. As the glaciers "bulldozed" this region, they left behind rich soil which today grows a variety of crops including soybeans and corn. This well-watered prairie is crossed by many slow-moving rivers and streams.
- The Alluvial River Plain is also called the flood plain and is located along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Like the Till Plain, the Alluvial Plain contains rich soil. The rich soil in the Alluvial Plain was left behind by periodic floods. Kansas City and St. Louis are Missouri's two largest cities and they are located in the Alluvial Plain.
- The Osage Plains cover western Missouri. This area is mostly flat but some hills are evident. The soil in this region is not as rich as in the Dissected Till Plains. Corn and other grain crops are grown in the Osage Plains region.
- The largest land area in Missouri, the Ozark Plateau, or Ozark Highland, is a place of beauty covered with forested hills and low mountains. Under foot are many caves. The area is also known for its large springs, lakes, and clear rivers. In the southwestern corner of Missouri, the high tableland makes for great gardens and great strawberries. The St. Francois Mountains are in the southeast. This area is the highest and most rugged section of the state. Taum Sauk Mountain, the highest point in Missouri, is located in the St. Francois Mountains.
- The southern part of Missouri is the Mississippi Lowlands. This land, once swampy, has been drained to form a rich farmland suitable for growing cotton, soybeans, and rice. The southern portion of Missouri that juts into Arkansas is called the Boot Heel because of its shape.



Solving the Landscape Mystery



Which of these depict Missouri? What do you see that makes you think so?
What do you think of when you think of Missouri landscape?
Which Missouri region might the pictures be from?
Why do you think the other paintings do not show Missouri landscapes?

Educator's Key for the Paintings:

1. R.H. Dick, *Taos Pow Wow Lodge*, 2000 (Dick is a native Missourian who has painted many regional landscapes. However this piece was painted on-site in Taos, New Mexico.)
2. Bryan Haynes, *Meramec Springtime*, n.d. (Haynes' work is influenced by the regionalist painters like Thomas Hart Benton.)
3. John Caspar Wild, *View of Carondelet; South St. Louis*, 1841 (Wild is known for his panoramic city scenes of St. Louis, Philadelphia and Cincinnati. He chronicled the growth and development of these cities through his lithographs and paintings.)
4. Joseph R. Meeker, *The Meramec River near Glenco*, ca. 1872 (This view of a bend in the Meramec River is still recognizable today.)
5. Frederick Oakes Sylvester, *Lake Como, Italy*, ca. 1906 (Sylvester was living in St. Louis at this time, but this work was painted during a trip to Italy.)
6. Gary Lucy, *The Yellowstone: Evening Sky on the Missouri River, 1833*, 1992 (This scene depicts the Steamer "Yellowstone" at the mouth of the Missouri River, near St. Louis. Lucy depicts moments from regional and national history and does extensive research to document the weather and geographic conditions of the time.)