

Name/Date:

Geography 12

1B: Geographic Thinking

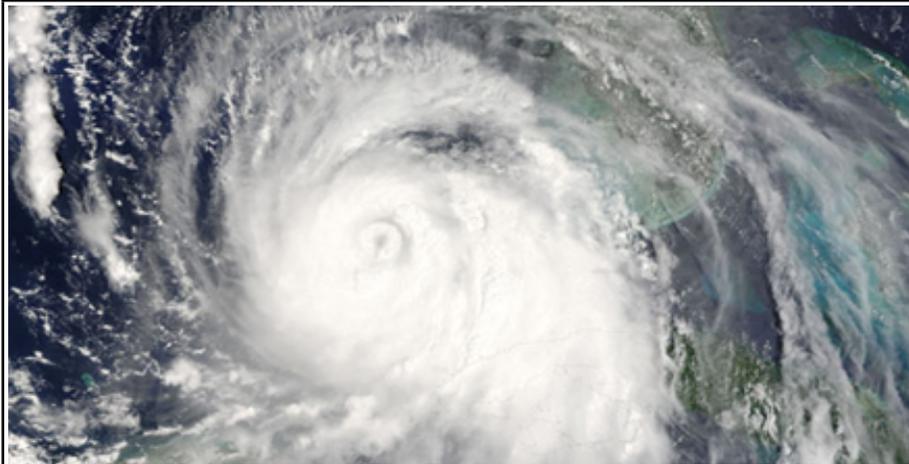


Photo: Hurricane Katrina. Source: Nasa article on 2005 hurricane season
http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/lookingatearth/h2005_katrina.html

Summary

The topic of "critical thinking" in Geography is similar to the thinking and research skills common in Social Studies, History, and other subjects in Sciences and the Humanities. It is about inquiry, about asking good questions, and exploring the "why" behind geographic phenomenon.

Main reference

Vanzant et al, *This Earth: Physical Geography and the Environment*. Use the index for page references.

Additional references

TBA

Geographic Thinking can be seen from a few different ways. When faced with geographic phenomenon (data, evidence, problems), students can:

- A. Practice effective research or inquiry techniques, and "habits of mind"
- B. Work through how it fits within the Five Themes of Geography (lesson 1A)
- C. Apply the Curricular Competencies (see course outline)
- D. Use the Six Concepts of Geographic Thinking:

Geographic Importance
Patterns and Trends
Sense of Place

Evidence and Interpretation
Interactions and Associations
Geographic Value Judgements

Students will quickly come to realize that methods C & D are quite similar. For our course, we will use a modified version of the Curricular Competencies:

Establish Significance
Identify Patterns and Change,
Understand Interactions and Associations
Consider Ethical Dimensions

Use Primary Evidence
Analyze Cause and Consequence
Take Geographic Perspectives

Details/Examples of **Geographical/Critical Thinking -- the "Seven Stars" to guide inquiry**

★ establish **geographic significance**

Why we care, today, about certain events, trends, and issues in geography (and history).

Ex: *Why was the eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980 considered an important event?*

Ex: *Outline the various human and physical outcomes of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.*

★ use a variety of **data** including primary source **evidence**

How to find, select, put in context, compare, challenge, and interpret sources for an argument or an event involving geography.

Ex: *What do historical maps and air photos of Prince George suggest about the city's "livelihood" at the times they were made?*

Ex: *To what extent has legislation and local policies made schools safer for LGBTQ students?*

★ identify **patterns, continuity and change**

What has changed and what has remained the same over time.

Ex: *To what extent has legislation and local policies made schools safer for LGBTQ students?*

Ex: *Compare earthquake characteristics and damage: Alaska 1964, Japan 2012.*

★ analyze **cause and consequence**

How and why certain conditions, forces, and actions lead towards to others.

Ex: *Why was the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans so dramatic and controversial?*

Ex: *What caused the Hope Slide, and what resulted?*

★ understand **interactions and associations**

Interconnectedness between ideas, events, and things; in particular, the ways in which humans and the environment influence each other. Our own sense of place is an output of this concept.

Ex: *How has the popularity of Banff National Park created pressures on the local environments?*

Ex: *What kind of relationship exists between urban non-reserve Indigenous people and the traditional territory of the people with whom they share an affinity?*

★ take **geographic perspectives**

Understanding the "past as a foreign country" and the "geography of the other" -- imagining and empathizing with different social, cultural, intellectual, geographical and even emotional contexts that shaped people's lives and actions, including a sense of place.

Ex: *Why did some people choose to remain in the Chernobyl radioactive zone?*

Ex: *How is Canada's far North seen differently by its Inuit inhabitants compared to resource extraction entities largely based in Southern Canada?*

★ consider the **ethical dimensions** of geographic problems (or historical interpretations) and resulting **value judgements**

How we, in our particular time and place, judge actors in different circumstances in the past or different locations and cultures; when and how crimes, sacrifices, or issues of the past bear consequences today; what obligations we have today in relation to those consequences.

Ex: *How should Japan address future energy needs in the wake of the 2012 Fukushima nuclear disaster?*

Ex: *Does a community land-use decision address the stated concerns of stakeholders?*

Additionally, these General Skills will be important in our course:

➤ practice **research** and **inquiry** skills

Ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; communicate findings and decisions. Maps are important source of evidence in Geography, and the interpretation of maps is itself a valuable research skill.

➤ develop ability to build and tell powerful **stories**

Make authentic connections to learning, and employ timeless principles of storytelling in order to form different kinds of narratives related to subjects and ideas in Geography. Telling the "story of a place" can be as much a scientific narrative as it is creative.

Examples of Geographic Inquiry using the "Seven Stars"

When faced with a "problem" -- an idea, situation, phenomenon, event, thing, or case study...

- 1. SIG** What's the importance here, what's the story about? What parts should I pay attention to?

- 2. EVI** What kinds of data could I use to understand the problem? What kinds of primary sources can be found to explore the problem and what do I hope to learn from them?

- 3. PAT** What parts of this problem have a long history or have been repeated elsewhere? What parts are new or unique to this situation?

- 4. CAU** Where did this problem originate, or what are the foundations of this problem? What factors led to change or the development of this problem? What are the direct and indirect results of these causes?

- 5. INT** What is the human-environment relationship here? What is the human connection to physical problems, and what is the physical connection to human problems?

- 6. PER** What other ways are there to think about this problem? How does the significance of this problem shift when seen through the eyes of others?

- 7. ETH** What kinds of value judgements can be made about this problem? Is there anything that should be done about it (perhaps different than what is already happening)? What are the options?

TOPOPHILIA Exercise

see: <http://webriver.blogspot.ca/2016/09/topophilia.html>

summary: What is a place that you love? A special area in nature that brings back strong memories, a place you love to visit because of the things that have happened there. Maybe it's a built-up space, like the home of a grandparent or an amazing restaurant? Maybe it's a natural location like a beach, mountain vista, bike trail, or fishing spot. Or in between, like a cabin. Maybe you'd like to write about your earliest experience with a natural world, a powerful memory in nature. What is the *inventory* of this location -- the topography, components, objects, characteristics? What do your *senses* remember? Consider the visually elements, but also smells, textures, and sounds. What is the *story* of this place... what is your history with it? Think about this and write leave a comment below with your response. Start with a word document -- do your writing there (no more than one page) and then copy/paste into a blog comment. You can also submit a hard copy if there is some reason you do not want your writing piece online.

Case Study: The Babushkas of Chernobyl

http://www.ted.com/talks/holly_morris_why_stay_in_chernobyl_because_it_s_home

Use the template on the previous page to take some notes on this video

Think about how you would respond to the prompts below (thanks to Ft. St. James teacher Kelley Inden <<https://messyprofessional.wordpress.com>> for the ideas behind this lesson!). This will be a follow-up activity to the exercise on TOPOPHILIA.

- 1) What does home mean to you? What is the "personal geography" of your life -- to what and to where and to what time periods do you most connect? Use the writing you did for the TOPOPHILIA exercise for ideas. Be prepared to share whatever you are comfortable with about your personal geography.
- 2) Respond to the Chernobyl video, your thoughts about why the babushkas were so stubborn about staying and what this says about people's connection to place. Incorporate as much of the notes (from the template on the previous page) as you wish.