Objectives

- Students will create a community using the computer game Minecraft.
- Students will explore how a community develops including industry and economic development.
- Students will learn how a community connects to the environment (e.g., natural resources and climate)

Background (for teachers)

Minecraft is a virtual phenomenon that is taking the gaming world by storm. Many children begin playing at a very young age. On this game, users create virtual worlds, using geometric building blocks, resources discovered onsite, and their own creativity. The game can be played on a computer, smartphone, or tablet. Most of your students have probably been exposed to this game at some point, but if you are not familiar with Minecraft, spend some time visiting the website and familiarizing yourself with this game.

Note: This lesson plan can be taught using the actual game on computers or iPads in your classroom, however, if your classroom or school does not have these resources, you can also teach this lesson using the paper resources provided to you.

Minecraft must be purchased and downloaded onto your computer or device, however, you can also play a free demo for a month before you purchase it. In addition, MinecraftEdu is designed specifically for classroom use. We encourage you to look into and experiment with Minecraft before you teach this lesson in your classroom.

Introduction

Begin by asking students about their communities.
In efforts to get the students thinking about elements of their communities’ culture, ask some of the following questions:

- Where do you live?
- What language do speak in your community?
- What religions are common in your community?
- What traditions are common where you live?
- What is the climate like?
- What natural resources do you have in your community?
- What kind of government would you find in your community?
- What laws are important in your community?

Materials

- Images from the Museum (See Images from the Museum)
- Minecraft worksheet
- 11”x 17”Paper
- Drawing Supplies
- Pencils
- Ipads or Computers if possible
- Minecraft.com

Images from the Museum

- Gary Smith, Youthful Games
- Calvin Fletcher, Washday in Brigham City
- James Taylor Harwood, Richards’ Camp, Holiday Park--Weber Canyon

(Utah Core Standards)

Social Studies

Standard 1
Students will understand how geography influences community location and development.

Social Studies Standard 1 Objective 1
Determine the relationships between human settlement and geography.

Social Studies Standard 3 Objective 2c
Research community needs and the role government serves in meeting those needs.

Visual Arts

Standard 3 Objective 2
Discuss, evaluate and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings, and purposes for their own artworks.
Next, show various images of communities from the Springville Museum of Art’s permanent collection. Ask students the following questions about each image:

- Where do you think this community is located?
- What is the climate like?
- What natural resources might you find here?

Discuss with students the essential elements of a community. What does a community need in order to thrive? What role do laws and government play in a community? Why are they important?

**Learning Activity**

Break the students into small groups. Each group will be given the assignment to create a community based on a virtual Minecraft region. Ideally, these students will have access to Minecraft on a computer and will be able to create an actual community using the Minecraft game. If you are not able to access Minecraft digitally, you will find screenshots of different Minecraft regions or Biomes and descriptions of each Biome attached to this lesson plan.

Each group will be given a different Biome (or region) and will be asked to fill out the provided worksheet.

After the different groups have finished their worksheet, Pass out a large sheet on paper (11”x17”) and give them time to draw and color a larger version of their community’s flag. As indicated on the worksheet, students should incorporate two or more of their Biome’s natural resources into the design of their flag.

**Variations**

If your students have access to Minecraft on computers or devices in their classroom, you may give students time to start constructing important buildings in their communities. As students build their virtual communities, have them screen shot their lands and share them with the class.

**Extensions**

After students have completed their “Living in Biomes” worksheet and design their flag, you could have them create a constitution for their community. They can brainstorm community needs and how their community’s government can help meet those needs.

**Assessment**

After students have created their flag, give them time to present their Minecraft Communities to the class. Make sure they answer all of the worksheet questions.

Their community flags should include at least 2 natural resources from their assigned Biome.

**SOURCES**

Minecraft.com
Minecraftedu.com
http://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Biome
Living in Biomes

Creating Communities in Minecraft

What type of Biome did your group receive?

What natural resources are found in this environment?

What are some challenges that you might encounter if you were living here?

Together with your group, come up with a name of your community:

_____________________________________________

Using at least one of the Natural Resources found in your biome as inspiration, design a flag for your community:
What symbols and colors did you use in your flag? Why did you choose these colors?

What food would your community members eat?

What will your community members use for shelter and clothing?

What jobs might the people in your community have?

What will your community members do for fun?

Considering the needs of your community, write 3 Laws for your community:

1. ________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________
**Description:**
A barren and relatively inhospitable biome consisting mostly of sand, large dunes, dead bushes, and cacti. Sandstone is commonly found underneath the sand. It almost never rains in this biome. No passive mobs spawn naturally in deserts. Sugar cane can be found if the desert is next to an ocean or river biome. The lack of visual obstruction makes mobs highly visible at night. Desert villages, desert wells and desert temples are found exclusively in this biome.

**Resources:** Sand, Cacti, Dead Bushes, Sandstone, Sugar Cane, Desert wells
Description:
A relatively flat and dry biome with a dry grass color and scattered acacia trees. Villages can generate in this biome, and it is one of only two biomes (the other being plains) where horses spawn naturally. Rain almost never falls in this biome, similar to the desert.

Resources: Acacia Trees, Tall Grass, Horses, Cows, Sheep
**MESA BIOME**

**Description:**
Mesa is a rare biome made of hardened clay, stained clay, and dead bushes – similar to a desert. Red sand will also generate here instead of regular sand, with occasional cacti. Its composition is useful when other sources of clay are scarce. However, finding mesa biomes can be difficult due to their rarity. Mesas can contain above ground mineshafts. They also allow gold ore to generate.

**Resources:**
Dead Bush, Hardened Clay, 6 colors of Stained Clay, Red Sand, Cacti, Red Sandstone, Above ground mineshafts, Gold Ore
**Description:**
A very dense, but rather uncommon tropical biome. It features large jungle trees that can reach up to 31 blocks tall with 2×2 thick trunks. Oak trees are also common. The landscape is lush green and quite hilly, with many small lakes of water often nestled into deep valleys, sometimes above sea level. Leaves cover much of the forest floor—these “bush trees” have single-blocks of jungle wood for trunks, surrounded by oak leaves. When inside a jungle, the sky will become noticeably lighter. This is the only biome containing jungle trees. Vines are found alongside most blocks and may be found close to the surface in caves. Ocelots, jungle temples, and cocoa plants spawn exclusively in this biome. Melons can spawn here, making jungle biomes the only place where melons naturally spawn. Melons spawn in small patches, similar to pumpkins.

**Resources:** Jungle Trees, Jungle Temples, Ferns, Flowers, Vines, Ocelots, Cocoa Pods, Melons
Description:
A biome with a lot of trees, occasional hills, and a fair amount of tall grass. Oak and birch trees grow in this biome. Mushrooms, grass, poppies, and dandelions can occasionally be found. Forests can occasionally be generated in the center of plains biomes. This is one of the best biomes to start out in, due to the abundance of wood. The frequency of trees makes it dangerous to navigate at night, due to obscured vision. Forest biomes are also one of the smallest biomes.

Resources:  
Oak and Birch Trees, Flowers, Wolves, Mushrooms
**EXTREME HILLS BIOME**

**Description:**
A highly mountainous biome with dull green-blue grass and a few scattered oak and spruce trees. Cliffs, peaks, valleys, waterfalls, overhangs, floating islands, and many other structures exist, offering outstanding views. Snowfall may also occur at certain heights, thus creating “ice caps” on the top of the mountains. More underground cave systems are present here than in any other biome. Falling is a significant risk, as there are many ledges and sudden drops large enough to cause severe fall damage or even death. Extreme hills are the only biomes where emerald ores and silverfish can be found naturally.

**Resources:**
- Oak Trees, Spruce Trees, Gravel Flowers, Emerald Ore, Monster Egg
**Description:**
A relatively rare but expansive, flat biome with a huge amount of snow. It does not rain in this biome — it snows instead. Lakes and rivers are frozen over. Hills tend to be more mountainous. Sugar cane will spawn in this biome, but can become uprooted when chunks load as the water sources freeze to ice. There are very few natural oak trees in this biome. Spruce trees may also generate. Due to the biome’s size, snow cover, and scarcity of wood, initial survival becomes difficult in comparison to other biomes.

**Resources:**
Snow, Snowfall, Oak Trees, Ice, Spruce Trees, Igloos, Occasional Tall Grass
Gary Smith, *Youthful Games*, 1984
Calvin Fletcher, *Wash Day in Brigham City*, 1929
James Taylor Harwood, *Richards Camp, Holiday Park - Weber Canyon, 1888*