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**Three Regions of North Carolina**

**Writer:** Jill Taylor, NCMA Educator

**Grade Level:** 4

**Related Big Picture Concepts:** Place

**Subject Areas:** Visual Arts, Social Studies

**Essential Question:** What makes a place unique?

**Abstract:** Students will examine artists’ use of color and landscape features in the depiction of North Carolina's regions (Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountains) through three sample works of art. Students will then conduct independent research on an assigned region and work collaboratively in small groups to create a game that incorporates Artist Trading Cards to help learn and review key vocabulary, famous places, and other tidbits of information about that region.

**Duration:** 5–7 class periods

**Focus Works of Art:**

[](http://68.169.57.134/sites/default/files/Beerman,%20Three%20Trees,%20Two%20Clouds,%2091_3.jpg)

John Beerman (American, born 1958)

***Three Trees, Two Clouds*, 1990**

Oil on linen

77 x 77 in. (195.6 x 195.6 cm)  
[www.artnc.org/node/338](http://www.artnc.org/node/338)

[](http://68.169.57.134/sites/default/files/Howell,%20Ocracoke%20Harbor,%2098_4_11.jpg)

Claude Flynn Howell (American, 1915-1997)

***Ocracoke Harbor*, 1964**

Oil on canvas

25 x 40 in. (63.5 x 101.6 cm)  
[www.artnc.org/node/355](http://www.artnc.org/node/355)

[](http://68.169.57.134/sites/default/files/Matheson,%20North%20Wilkesboro,%20North%20Carolina,%201982,%202004_1_9.jpg)

Elizabeth Matheson (American, born 1942)

***North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, 1982,* 1982**

Gelatin-silver print

9 1/4 x 12 1/8 in. (23.5 x 30.8 cm)  
[www.artnc.org/node/373](http://www.artnc.org/node/373)

**North Carolina Standards Correlations:**

Visual Arts: 4.V.1.4, 4.V.2.2, 4.V.3.3, 4.CX.1.1, 4.CX.1.4, 4.CX.1.5, 4.CR.1.1

Social Studies: 4.H.1.3, 4.H.2.1, 4.G.1.3, 4.C.1.1, 4.C.1.2,

**Student Learning Objectives:**

* Students will investigate the concept of place via the three regions of North Carolina using works of art.
* Students will demonstrate knowledge and research about a selected region of North Carolina through an interactive group project.
* Students will create art that communicates a sense of place using ideas and imagery from North Carolina and a variety of art-making processes.

**Activities:**

1. Introduce the three regions of North Carolina (Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountains). Ask students to talk about the region they call home. *What defines where you live?* *What characteristics give your home region a sense of “place”?* *How would you choose to represent your region in a work of art? What colors would you choose? What landmarks would you show?* Then, display the works of art on the overhead or interactive whiteboard. Have the students guess what part of the state each represents, and then ask them to explain the rationale behind their responses. Consider questions that explore subject matter and how artists’ choices can create a sense of place for the regions represented. For each work ask: *How is the artist’s representation of the place or region similar to or different from what you would have done? What would you have shown that the artist did not?*  
   Coastal Plain: Identify buildings and objects in this scene. *Why does North Carolina have so many lighthouses?* (North Carolina is called the Graveyard of the Atlantic because of the many shipwrecks that have occurred here.) *What colors has the artist used?* (blue, green) *Why did he pick these colors?* (water tones, calming) What *are some activities you can enjoy at the beach? What does the Coastal Plain look like in the areas farther away from the ocean?* (flat, sandy land)   
     
   Piedmont: *Could you visit the artist's mother's farm and take a picture identical to this painting? Why or why not?* (No, the artist was inspired by the views at his mother’s farm, but he did not copy them directly.) *What time of day is shown here?* (The orange colors suggest a sunrise or sunset.) Locate Alamance County on a map. *What metropolitan areas are near?* (Alamance County is located between the Triad and the Triangle regions.)  
     
   [Mountains](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22344%22)): *What is depicted in this scene?* (a drive-in movie theater) *Have you ever been to a drive-in? Is there one in your area? When do you think this picture was taken?* (early 1980s) *Why is the black-and-white photograph appropriate for a portrayal of the Mountains?* (Both have a relationship to the past—the mountains through traditions, and black-and-white photography through changes in technology.)  
     
   Share additional photos or paintings from the region to explore key concepts such as climate and geography.
2. Break the class into groups of three students. Assign each trio a region of North Carolina (it is OK if more than one group works on the same region).
3. Instruct the students to research their assigned region thoroughly. Provide books, Internet Web sites, and additional printed materials that may be helpful (see Lesson Resources for starters).
4. Review these instructions for the group project assignment:  
     
   a) Create a game to learn and review key vocabulary, famous places, and other tidbits of information about your region. Use your imagination! You may either craft an entirely new activity or add a twist to an old favorite (such as Monopoly or Chutes and Ladders).  
   b) Draw your game board in the shape of your respective region.  
   c) Using Artist Trading Cards as inspiration, design game cards based on your collected research information. Make the images on the cards correlate to the information or trivia used on the reverse side. Recall the class discussion about what you would choose to represent the region, and pay special attention to the colors selected. For example, one card might show the skyline of Charlotte on one side and read "Name the county where Charlotte is located (Mecklenburg) and move two spaces forward" on the other. Questions must address climate, major landforms, bodies of water, natural resources, major cities, recreation areas, industry, farming, and cultural interests.  
   d) Type up a list of directions to include with your game board.
5. Provide students with ample time during the school day to work with their partners to locate relevant research and complete the outlined project.
6. When the due date arrives, ask the groups to share their games with the class, and have the groups play their peers’ games.

**Assessments:**

* Class discussion will be used to evaluate the students' understanding of their own region and the artists' interpretation of North Carolina's three regions through their works of art.
* Observation will be used during small-group sessions to assess whether students are actively engaged in the research process, using their time wisely, and working cooperatively with their partners.
* The Artist Trading Cards will show each student’s success in applying creative and critical thinking skills to artistic expression.
* The completed project will demonstrate what the groups have learned while conducting, organizing, and displaying their research. Ask each group to assess their project with the class rubric, and then compare their responses to your own.

**Resources:**

Vocabulary:

coastal plain

piedmont

mountains

Links:

Geography of North Carolina Link 1  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_North_Carolina>

Geography of North Carolina Link 2  
<http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Geography-of-North-Carolina>

North Carolina Climate and Geography  
<http://www.secretary.state.nc.us/kidspg/geog.htm>

Physiographic Provinces of North Carolina <http://www.geology.enr.state.nc.us/proj_earth/pdf/bw_physiography_600dpi.pdf>

Artist Trading Cards Wikipedia entry <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artist_trading_cards>