

TASK 1: PLANNING COMMENTARY

Respond to the prompts below (**no more than 9 single-spaced pages, including prompts**) by typing your responses within the brackets. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored.

1. Central Focus

- a. Describe the central focus and purpose for the content you will teach in the learning segment.

[Climate is influenced by many factors. These factors contribute to student's daily lives and how they live and interact with their environment affects the conditions of the climate and earth. Climate also influences ecosystems and how the environment is shaped given the climate region it is located within. Students will learn during this learning segment that not only do they affect climate, climate affects them as well in a multitude of ways. Throughout the learning segment students will begin with learning about the factors that affect climate in lesson one, move onto the way the position of the earth in relation to the sun is relevant to our different climate regions in lesson two, and then finally learn about the types of ecosystems that exist due to the relation between the position of the sun and other factors that affect climate.]

- b. Given the central focus, describe how the standards and learning objectives within your learning segment address

- facts and concepts
- interpretation or analysis skills
- building and supporting arguments

[The standards I have chosen for this learning segment include students being able to identify the world's ecosystems as well as collecting and analyzing information to examine the effects that environmental changes have on the world. The specific standards are as followed:

- A.12.6 Collect and analyze geographic information to examine the effects that a geographic or environmental change in one part of the world, such as volcanic activity, river diversion, ozone depletion, air pollution, deforestation, or desertification may have on other parts of the world.
- A.12.8 Identify the world's major ecosystems and analyze how different economic, social, political, religious, and cultural systems have adapted to them.

To address these standards I have created a set of essential questions to help me as a teacher focus in on the key ideas I want students to learn. For example to meet the needs of the above standards I have split the learning segments into "How does the climate affect us?" and "How do we affect the climate?" For the purpose of this task I am only focusing on the first essential question. Within the central focus I am to teach students the ways in which the climate affects them as citizens. The objectives for each lesson plan include students having to identify factors that affect climate as well as having to usually write a declarative sentence to explain why or how something happens. To comprehend the basic facts and concepts of each lesson the objectives aim to get students to be able to identify factors or identify key concepts of factors that affect climate and then vise versa of climate affecting us. After the students comprehend the facts and concepts, which usually are done via organizational chart, students should then be able to interpret and analyze those key facts. Within my objectives I focus on having students

answer short answer questions based off the organizational charts they complete of their facts and concepts. These short answers consist of normally 2-3 declarative sentences and usually ask a question of why or how something relates to another concept. At the end of the lesson segments the students will be able to build and support an argument to answer the essential question “How the climate affects us.” This is not noted in my lesson segment as how this will be assessed due to the fact my cooperating teacher has this as a final assessment. The final assessment will include students having a choice of categories within the question “How the climate affects us” and they must demonstrate their understanding via poster, essay, or slideshow.]

- c. Explain how your plans build on each other to help students **make connections** between facts, concepts, and interpretations or analyses, to build and support arguments about historical events, a topic/theme or a social studies phenomenon.

[The lessons within my segment are built on the basis of Bloom’s Taxonomy. I created my lessons to get students to go from knowledge and recall to analyzing and evaluating new information by the end of the lesson segment. Within the first lesson the students objectives are primarily focused on learning facts and concepts. Students will read the first section in the chapter to gain the knowledge they need in order to complete a word web. This section focuses them to learn what the 5 factors that affect climate which they will be able to organize into their word web.]

2. Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching

For each of the prompts below (2a–b), describe what you know about **your** students **with respect to the central focus** of the learning segment.

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

- a. Prior academic learning and prerequisite skills related to the central focus—**Cite evidence of what students know, what they can do, and what they are still learning to do.**

[Academic learning within this class is exceptional. While this is not an accelerated course by any means, many of the students within this class have shown to my cooperating teacher and myself that they are an above average group. With this being said there are a couple individuals I have found to be “underperforming” students, which I have no been able to distinguish thus far if the course material is too easy for their learning abilities or if there is an underlying academic learning disability. While not diagnosed with a specific learning disability I have put him into the category of “underperforming” due to his exceptional participation in class discussion and test grades, but when it comes to homework, he only completes the bare minimum required as well is extremely vague when asked to discuss a concept.

What They Know: “Area Studies” is an introduction to geography class that is required to be taken during the course of their freshman year. Students, while being introduced to geography in the course, have also been exposed to key elements that are taught throughout the course in previous grades. In eighth grade the students have a basic understanding of the science that is involved in geography. They have previously learned about topics such as studying environmental changes of the earth and different types of weather and how they effect the environment. I know that the students have prior knowledge of these concepts by researching

the standards that were to be met by the time students completed eighth grade. The standard I base this knowledge off of is as followed:

- A.8.6 Describe and distinguish between the environmental effects on the earth of short-term physical changes, such as those caused by floods, droughts, and snowstorms, and long-term physical changes, such as those caused by plate tectonics, erosion, and glaciation

This standard helps me as an educator know that students have prior knowledge in this topic area and have been exposed to the idea of weather, climate, as well as ecosystems.

What they can do: Most students within this class have demonstrated that they are capable of completing homework assignments that include writing or short answer questions. Even without giving a guideline of sentence requirement, the students are demonstrating that they can answer questions in more than just a couple words or even a single sentence. The students have also demonstrated that they are capable of productive group work assignments. I have used multiple activities that they can work within groups and I have had great success with this.

What they are still learning to do: The students in this class are still learning how to listen to verbal instructions. Students within this classroom seem to not always pay attention when directions are given and rely on myself to repeat directions at their convenience. I am working with students on listening activities to ensure they become better listeners. This is something we will work on daily as a class.]

- b. Personal/cultural/community assets related to the central focus—**What do you know about your students' everyday experiences, cultural backgrounds and practices, and interests?**

[Our students here at this high school have a wide range of interests and cultural backgrounds. Many of our students are raised on farms or come from families that work primarily in the surrounding factors. I would say half of the students in this school do not have a parent who has attended college. Due to this many students are interested in the trade industry which our high school has accommodations for by providing shop class, graphics, and welding. With this being said, many students lack motivation to do well in their general study courses. Besides not all the students having interests or motivation to do well in these core classes, students also have a lack of motivation to complete daily work due to the lack of reinforcements at the middle school level. At the middle school level there was no punishments for not completing homework assignments and passed their courses regardless of having missing work or a failing grade. With this model at the middle school, this has contributed greatly to the lack of motivation I have seen within our own classroom.]

3. Supporting Students' History/Social Studies Learning

Respond to prompts below (3a–c). To support your justifications, refer to the instructional materials and lesson plans you have included as part of Task 1. In addition, **use principles from research and/or theory to support your explanations.**

- a. Justify how your understanding of your students' prior academic learning and personal/cultural/community assets (from prompts 2a–b above) guided your choice or adaptation of learning tasks and materials. Be explicit about the connections between the learning tasks and students' prior academic learning, assets, and research/theory.

[My understanding of the students' prior academic learning and personal assets has lead me to create learning tasks and materials to be guided learning and also group works. While many

may argue that students need to work individually to learn I find it beneficial for students to collaborate with one another while learning. If one student understands a concept better than another, why not have that student help guide their partner. This way students guide their own learning and move at a pace that is appropriate for them. I found that by incorporating guided worksheets into the class is helpful due to their experiences down at the middle school level. I am trying to get them to the stage where they can start independently taking notes, but they first need to learn what is appropriate to include in notes and so forth. With having such leniency in prior classes at the middle school it is also important to develop a learning structure within my lessons. By building my lessons from basic knowledge and recall to higher levels of learning I can prepare the students for an easier beginning to moving them onto more critical thinking activities. I base this on Bloom's Taxonomy and will create all my learning segments in this manner.]

- b. Describe and justify why your instructional strategies and planned supports are appropriate for the whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs.

Consider students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students.

[My instructional strategies are appropriate for the whole class for many reasons. First being I have no students with IEPs or 504 plans. This doesn't mean I don't have students that struggle with learning but it means that it opens up the door to many opportunities that the class as a whole can participate in. I have found that group readings with worksheets have worked well with this class. The straight lecture and take notes method does not seem to be as useful to this group. Students have shown success in previous units by completing readings within the class period along with a worksheet. This helps students to understand this is a safe place to work and they have time to complete assignments to hopefully ease stress to the idea of homework. I have some students that are underperforming so I have incorporated more short answer writing to make it a bit more complex for them. While some of the under performing students still seem to not be as motivated to do the work, they have shown success when they do complete assignments. Having interactive activities such as the Scribble Maps in Lesson 3 also opens up a window of opportunity for students that need a visual aid to learn better. Students benefited greatly by being able to place on a globe where the ecosystems we read about were located.]

- c. Describe key misconceptions within your central focus and how you will address them.

[Students right away are most likely going to question, "What does weather and climate have to do with geography? This isn't science class." To no surprise, I have heard this numerous times since I started my learning segment. This is going to be a challenging concept to get across to the students but I'm hoping I can keep them engaged. The most important thing for the students to understand is that everything we do relates back to the 5 themes of geography, which they learned about in the first learning segment I taught this semester. The students are to recognize that the 5 themes relate to every aspect of the earth and even if it seems like it belongs in a science class it is important for them to understand these topics in terms of geography. I will have students that don't perhaps make this connection right away, but it will be my duty to remind students daily.]

4. Supporting History/Social Studies Development Through Language

- a. **Language Function.** Identify **one** language function essential for students to learn the history/social studies content within your central focus. Listed below are some sample

language functions. You may choose one of these or another more appropriate for your learning segment.

Analyze	Compare/contrast	Construct	Describe	Evaluate
Examine	Identify	Interpret	Justify	Locate

[Within this learning segment I believe it is essential for students to be able to identify. By being able to identify different factors within these learning segments it opens up the opportunity for students to climb the Bloom’s Taxonomy ladder to being able to analyze and create and build arguments build around this topic. Throughout the learning segments students will be asked to identify key concepts that will build their knowledge to move from lesson to lesson. If the students are unable to identify the key concepts in one lesson, they will not be able to move on to the next that easily as each lesson build on one another.]

- b. Identify a key learning task from your plans that provides students with opportunities to practice using the language function identified above. Identify the lesson in which the learning task occurs. (Give lesson day/number.)

[A key learning task within this segment is in Lesson 1. The key learning task is that the students will be able to identify how climate is influenced by many factors. A more specific objective using this language function is “Using a short phrase of 1-2 words students will be able to identify the 5 factors that affect climate in a word web with 100% accuracy.” This is essential for students to understand in order to be successful in the following learning segments. Once students have mastered identifying these factors they can then move on to identify how these factors affect climate as well.]

- c. **Additional Language Demands.** Given the language function and learning task identified above, describe the following associated language demands (written or oral) students need to understand and/or use:
- Vocabulary and key phrases
 - **Plus** at least one of the following:
 - Syntax
 - Discourse

Consider the range of students’ understandings of the language function and other language demands—what do students already know, what are they struggling with, and/or what is new to them?

[In connection to vocabulary and key phrases, my language function of “identify” is completed by identifying the key phases of the 5 factors that affect climate. Students complete a word web with 1-2 words that summarize the factor as a whole. Its more important for the students to recognize these key phrases then to have them identify vocabulary. Many of the vocabulary terms within the textbook we use in class the students are familiar with based on what they learned in their last years classes at the middle school, so I turned my focus from basic vocabulary to key phrases instead. With the development of identifying key phrases, students were then able to move on to the second part of the assignment and create short sentences in relation to those key phrases. Students were responsible for taking those key phrases and converting them into a declarative sentence that related that phrase or factor to an element of

climate. This moves students up Bloom's Taxonomy by moving them from basic knowledge and understanding to being able to synthesis and make analyzes.]

- d. **Language Supports.** Refer to your lesson plans and instructional materials as needed in your response to the prompt.
 - Describe the instructional supports (during and/or prior to the learning task) that help students understand and successfully use the language function and additional language demands identified in prompts 4a–c.

[In lesson 1 the learning target for the students is “using a short phrase of 1-2 worlds students will identify the 5 factors that affect climate.” The students will be able to be successful with identifying by completing a word web to help them organize the 5 factors. Students will have their textbook to guide them through this process as well as myself to help them focus on the main factors within the textbook. By providing students with an organizational chart is should help keep students on track and make clear what they are looking for. On a daily basis I will reinforce these 5 factors to keep students reminded of what they are. Repetitions of these are key for their success throughout the learning segment.]

5. Monitoring Student Learning

In response to the prompts below, refer to the assessments you will submit as part of the materials for Task 1.

- a. Describe how the planned formal and informal assessments provide direct evidence of how students learn and use facts, concepts, and interpretations or analyses to build and support arguments about historical events, a topic/theme, or a social studies phenomenon **throughout** the learning segment.

[My informal assessment within Lesson 1 is the opening activity of having students make a list of weather words and climate words. This gives me an idea of what students have prior knowledge of in terms of vocabulary terms. This also gives me a chance to ask them at the end of class as well if they would like to change their answers or add based on what they learned in class today. My formal assessment in Lesson 1 is based on the word web followed by short answer questions. This will allow me to monitor their understanding of factors that affect climate. Students should have successfully filled out the word web with the correct 5 factors as well as completed the short answer questions which after students have identified the 5 factors, they moved onto describing how those 5 factors relate to one another.

My informal assessment within Lesson 2 will give me an idea of how wells students are comprehending the material they are reading about. By asking formative check questions I will be moving students from basic facts to making interpretations. Based on these questions I can get an idea of how well they understand the reading. My formal assessment in Lesson 2 is the students interpreting a diagram of the earth's position and different seasons. This will help me monitor students understanding of how to interpret a diagram and connect concepts like how does the position of the earth relate to the seasons we have.

My informal assessment within Lesson 3 is essentially the students being able to place a variety of ecosystems onto a map. This will help me to monitor is students are able to identify where various ecosystems are located. If they incorrectly are placing ecosystems on the map this is an indicator that I must go into more details about particular ecosystems. My formal assessment involves students filling out an organizational chart. This will help me to monitor their learning of the concept what an ecosystem is in general as well as their knowledge of other types of ecosystems. I included a category of plants and animals to their chart that is for them to make

interpretations of what types of plants and animals might live in each type of ecosystem. This will help me to monitor their ability to make an interpretation based off of key concepts and facts.]

- b. Explain how the design or adaptation of your planned assessments allows students with specific needs to demonstrate their learning.

Consider all students, including students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students.

[My planned assessments in this learning segment are designed to meet the needs of a variety of learners with the classroom. Although this class that I have chosen for the purpose of edTPA does not include any students with and IEP or 504 plan, I have recognized there are a few students that are underperforming. I believe these students to be underperforming due to the fact they are active participants in previous classroom discussions, but when it comes to homework, it appears to be too simple for them. The student I have noticed this issue with I try to incorporate different ways to keep him engaged and to keep him focused so he can perform at the level he should be performing at. I have incorporated more online interactive activities. For example in Lesson 3 I included the option for students to use an online mapping website to accurately place the types of ecosystems that day. This helped the student by making it more interactive with technology and gave him options instead of just one option for the assessment. By giving options I have allowed him to stay engaged in a way that works best for him and his learning.]