



GEOBLOCKS

Geoblocks is a practice activity in city planning that will prepare students for designing their Box City. It introduces basic zoning concepts as well as the relationship between geography and city development.

Materials (available on loan from Monona Terrace):

- A set of blocks representing a wide variety of building types. Each block has a label indicating what kind of building it is, and has a correlating zone color
- Land form map

Provide instructions

1. Tell the students that they will be planning their own small-scale city today.
2. Ask them to name a couple of spokespeople who will talk about their design.
3. Give them about 20 minutes to complete this task.

That's it- the students will understand what to do!

Discussion

After time is up, ask the students to tell you a little about their city.

Prompts you may want to use:

- What are the most desirable places to live?
- What are some of the jobs people will do in this city?
- Where did you put industrial sites?
- What is most important to the citizens?
- Will there be a downtown?
- Is there green space for recreation?

Probe further:

- How did the primary feature of the map (lake, interstate clover) impact your decisions?
- Is there equal access for all citizens to green space, natural landscapes, food sources, etc?
- Are there mixed use areas that allow for walkability?
- Were there blocks you decided not to put into your city? What is the impact of that omission?

Introduce zoning- the practice of a city dividing land into zones reserved for different purposes.

- Compliment good placement of buildings.
- Are there neighboring buildings that shouldn't sit together?
 - green= agricultural, parks
 - yellow=residential
 - red=commercial
 - purple=industry
 - blue= civic, government

Check for understanding

Ask students to give other examples of buildings for each zoning category.

Ask students to give examples of buildings that can be placed together, and buildings that should not be placed together.