

SCoPE Site Lesson Plan**Title:** Lesson 1–Where Am I? (SS020201)**Abstract:** This lesson introduces the study of geography through a Japanese folk tale called *The Traveling Frogs*. Discussion following the story encourages the children to apply prior knowledge about maps, relative location, resources for locating information, and natural and human features that contribute to the geography of a community.**Subject Area:** Social Studies**Grade Level
and Course Title:** Second Grade/The Local Community**Unit of Study:** The Geography of Our Community**Benchmarks:**

- Describe the relative and absolute locations of their local community (II.3.EE.1).
- Describe natural features of their local community (II.1.EE.2).
- Describe human features of their local community (II.1.EE.1).

Key Concepts: human features, natural features, relative and absolute location**Instructional
Resources:**

- Equipment/Manipulative:
- Chalk/White Board
 - Chart Paper/Markers
 - Frog puppets (optional)
 - Overhead Projector/Transparency
 - Thinking/Writing Journals
 - Wall map of Japan
 - World map
 - Writing paper

Teacher Resource:

- Northrup, Claire. *The Traveling Frogs: Around the World in Eighteen Plays: Folk Tale Scripts for the Classroom*. Winnipeg: Peguis Publications, 1994. 60-62.

Sequence of Activities:

1. Present the following Japanese folk tale to the children:

The Traveling Frogs

Two frogs, one living in Kyoto and the other in Osaka, decide to visit each other's city, to see what it is like. On their way, they meet on the top of a mountain. Both are tired and decide to try to see the cities from the mountain. They stand on their back legs facing each other, and stretch up their necks. (Because frogs' eyes are on the sides of their heads, they are looking backwards.) The frogs see their own city and think it is the other's city. They decided the two cities look exactly alike.

Here are some presentation options as suggested by Claire Northrup as she retells the story in her book, *Around the World in Eighteen Plays*:

- The teacher reads or tells the story.
 - The teacher and/or children use frog puppets to tell the story.
 - Ask two children to role-play the frogs as the story is read or told.
 - Costumes and/or props may be used.
2. Using a world map or a map of Japan, locate Kyoto and Osaka.

3. To access prior knowledge about geographical topics such as maps, natural features of the earth, climate, products, and people, ask the children the following question: "How could the frogs inform each other about their own communities?" Ask each child to independently write at least one idea on a piece of writing paper that will be collected at the end of the lesson. Ask the children to think about the ways they could gather information about their community and what helpful tools they might use.
4. Create a class list of ideas by asking each child to share at least one method or tool the frogs could use to tell each other about their own community. Listen for responses such as maps, photographs, descriptions of natural features (rivers, lakes, mountains, etc.), human features (water tower, bridge, shopping mall, etc.), products (cars, corn, sugar beets, etc.), climate (hot, cold, seasons, etc.), and people (farmers, autoworkers, etc.).
5. Complete the lesson by telling the children they are going to learn about the geography of their community, which means the natural and human features, products, climate, and people. The children learn that communities can be alike in many ways, but also very different and unique.
6. Add the word geography to the "Community" word wall or create a separate area on a bulletin board for geography vocabulary. As the words accumulate throughout the entire year it may be necessary to explore other options and means to accommodate the growing number of terms. Several ways to do this are:
 - Design a bulletin board for only the current unit's words.
 - Reproduce the previous word lists for children to keep in an envelope or pocket in their Thinking/Writing Journals.
 - Have the children write the words on a special word bank form to be kept in their journals.

7. Send a letter home to parents/guardians explaining that the focus of Unit 2 is “The Geography of Our Community” and include the focus questions:
 - Where is our community?
 - How can our local community be described?
 - What is the interaction between people and the natural environment?

Inform the adults at home that there are homework assignments and family projects designed to enhance and extend the unit.

8. Post the focus questions in a visible place in the classroom so the children always “Know the Target”. The questions may be hung from the ceiling with string, tacked to a bulletin board, and/or stapled to a cover or page in the Thinking/Writing Journals.

Assessment:

Assess prior knowledge about geography by examining the idea papers that each child completes during and after the story, and by observing the responses to the class list of ways to know about and recognize their local community.

Application**Beyond School:**

Have each child make a list of the natural and human features generated by all the members of their family. Ask children to bring maps to school that show their community in different ways. For example, telephone books have community maps; special sections of the newspaper often have maps of the community and where things are happening; realtor publications often have maps to locate real estate for sale, and city and county road commissions have special maps, as do water, sewer, and electrical companies. All of these may be available for students to collect or observe at home.

Connections:

English Language Arts:

- The Japanese folk tale, *The Traveling Frogs* offers another literary genre as well as listening and speaking possibilities.