

## What can a Postcard tell you about NC Geography?

### Overview

It is essential for students to understand the connection that humans have with their environment, and how humans both shape and are shaped by the geographical landscape around them. North Carolina's three distinct geographical regions serve as a perfect way for students to see how human-environment interaction creates unique cultures and traditions based on the differences in the physical landscape and resources available in each respective region. In this activity, students will examine postcards from UNC's Postcard Collection and select one example postcard that best represents each of the three regions of North Carolina. Students will work collaboratively to research postcards from various counties and time periods in order to select one representative postcard for each region. They will then create a rationale for each postcard which explains how the postcard illustrates the region's physical and cultural characteristics. If time permits, students can also select a region, county, or city and create their own postcard based on the current physical and cultural geographical landscape.

### Grade

8

### Essential Standards

- 8.G.1.1: Explain how location and place have presented opportunities and challenges for the movement of people, goods, and ideas in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.G.1.2: Understand the human and physical characteristics of regions in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. physical features, culture, political organization, and ethnic make-up).
- 8.G.1.3: Explain how human and environmental interaction affected quality of life and settlement patterns in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. environmental disasters, infrastructure development, coastal restoration, and alternative sources of energy).
- 8.H.1.3: Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives.
- 8.H.3.4: Compare historical and contemporary issues to understand continuity and change in the development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.C.1.2: Summarize the origin of beliefs, practices, and traditions that represent various groups within North Carolina and the United States.

### Essential Questions

- Why is "where" important?
- How does the geographical landscape shape the people who inhabit it and how do the people shape their geographical landscape?
- What are the major physical and cultural characteristics of the Coastal, Piedmont, and Mountain regions of North Carolina?

### Materials

- UNC Postcard Collection: [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc\\_post/](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc_post/)

- Laptops or Tablets with internet connections to view the postcard collection; otherwise, teachers will need to select a handful of postcards from each region and print them prior to this activity
- “What can a postcard tell you about NC geography?,” worksheet attached
- EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Markers, crayons, and colored pencils, paper cut into the size of a postcard (4x6), and other art supplies as needed/desired

**Duration**

60-90 minutes (more time may be needed for the Extension Activity)

**Student Preparation**

Students should have a thorough understanding of North Carolina’s three geographical regions in order to complete this activity.

**Teacher Preparation**

Teachers should be familiar with the UNC Postcard Collection prior to this lesson (available at: [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc\\_post/](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc_post/)).

**Procedure**

**Hook Activity: Reviewing the Three Geographical Regions**

1. Ask students to divide a piece of notebook paper into three columns. Ask them to label one of North Carolina’s geographical regions at the top of each column, from west to east: Mountain, Piedmont, Coastal. Next (either individually or in partners), ask students to brainstorm and write at least one physical and one cultural characteristic for each region. Go over their answers as a whole group and make sure they have a complete understanding of each geographical region.
2. Display the following postcard on the board (attached and available at [http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/nc\\_post/id/1436](http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/nc_post/id/1436))



Ask students to comment on what they see and first notice, then ask specifically why they think the artist chose to draw these particular images on the postcard. Use the various drawings students point out as a gateway to identifying and discussing the various physical and cultural characteristics of each geographical region. Students should add these to their chart.

**Exploring North Carolina Geography through Postcards**

3. Explain to the class that they will now be using their expert knowledge to curate a display of postcards that best represents each of North Carolina’s three regions. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Give each group at least one laptop or tablet with internet access so that they can research the postcard collection. (If technology is unavailable, teachers will need to provide a copied set of some of the postcards from each

region.) Each group will also need the attached worksheet, “What Can a Postcard Tell You About NC Geography?”

4. Write on the board, or bookmark on each device, the following website:  
[http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc\\_post/](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/nc_post/).
5. Demonstrate how to navigate through the search browser. For this activity, it is probably easiest to research “By Location,” so that students can select a specific county/counties in each region to look for example postcards. You might want to select the county that your school is located in as an example. Ask students to discuss (and point out specific examples of how) the postcards change over time, and how this is reflective of the changes in the region’s physical and cultural landscape. Point out the typical physical and cultural characteristics of the postcards (example: beaches for the Coastal region, the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, the rolling hills of the Piedmont, Pine Trees, the Blue Ridge Parkway, etc.) so that students know what they should be noticing in the postcards to help them write their rationales.
6. Explain to each group that they will need to select three postcards, one for each of the three regions of North Carolina, that they feel best represents that region based on whatever rationale they choose. Students can print out the postcard (optional) or note its title and then write their rationale explaining why they chose that particular postcard to represent the region. They should include specific examples of how the postcard illustrates both the physical and cultural characteristics of that region.
7. As students are working, circulate the room to make sure students are on task, to answer questions, and to help them make connections. You might point out some of the differences between pictures from earlier time periods (for example: differences in landscape, technology, etc.) and help them see some of the smaller details in the postcards that relate to the regions’ geographical characteristics.
8. If time permits, ask each group to present their curated and explain their rationales. (This can be done by selecting a few volunteer groups to present to the entire class, or by combining groups and having them present to one another.)
9. For groups that finish early, you can give them the Extension Activity to work on while other groups are finishing up.

➤ **Differentiation:**

For students who need more support or who have trouble researching, you might want to pre-select a collection of postcards from each region. Print out colored copies of the postcards and try to make sure that the postcards’ regions are not too easy to identify. Ask them to examine the postcards and place each in one of the three region groups: Coastal, Piedmont, Mountain. Ask them to explain WHY they put each postcard in that particular region. They should write down the physical and cultural characteristics they notice in the postcards that helped them identify what region they belonged to.

**Extension Activity: Create Your Own Postcard**

10. In order to assess understanding, tell students to create their own postcard. Assign each student a specific region, county, or city (it would be best to give each student their own county or city so that you have a wide variety of postcards to display) and ask them to research the region, county or city and design a postcard that best reflects the physical and cultural geographic characteristics of that area today. They can use the UNC Postcard collection as a starting point, but they should create their own design. Pass out postcard-size paper (4x6) for students to use for their final product. You can even challenge them to send their design to the local mayor or county commissioner!



[http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/nc\\_post/id/1436](http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/nc_post/id/1436)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_

### What Can a Postcard Tell You About NC Geography?

**Directions:**

With your group members, research the UNC Postcard Database and select one postcard that best represents each of North Carolina’s three geographical regions. Write a RATIONALE that explains why you think each postcard best reflects the geography of that region. You should cite both physical and cultural characteristics that you notice in the postcard that matches with the physical and cultural characteristics of the region. For example, you might notice mountains in the background for the Mountain region, the rolling hills of the Piedmont, a landmark (like the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in the Coastal Region), etc.

#### POSTCARD #1

NC REGION: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcard Title and Website Link (copy and paste the URL for your postcard): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

RATIONALE:

**POSTCARD #2**

**NC REGION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postcard Title and Website Link (copy and paste the URL for your postcard):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**RATIONALE:**

**POSTCARD #3**

**NC REGION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Postcard Title and Website Link (copy and paste the URL for your postcard):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**RATIONALE:**