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| Lesson Topic | The Causes and Effects of Desertification in China |
| Class/Grade | 7th Grade Social Studies |
| Activity Type | Socratic Seminar |
| Lesson Objectives | The students will be able to:   1. Identify the following places on a map of China:    * 1. Beijing      2. Inner Mongolia      3. Gobi Desert      4. Taklamakan Desert      5. Kumtag Desert 2. Identify China, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan on a map. 3. Explain the causes of desertification, particularly in China. 4. Explain the effects of desertification on the following:    * 1. Farmers      2. The Chinese government      3. The citizens of China      4. The world population 5. Use evidence and persuasive strategy to defend a position in speaking and writing. |
| Essential Questions | How can individuals and institutions balance societal need with environmental protection? |
| Standards/  Benchmarks | KSDE Social Studies: 2.3 The student will investigate and connect the rights and responsibilities of individuals with contemporary issues.  KSDE Literacy/Common Core:  [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/WHST/6-8/1/a/)  [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/WHST/6-8/1/b/)  [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/7/1/) |
| Sources Used | * “Beijing’s Desert Storm” by Ron Gluckman, 2000. <http://www.gluckman.com/ChinaDesert.html> * “China Losing War with Advancing Deserts” by Lester Brown, 2003. <http://www.earth-policy.org/plan_b_updates/2003/update26> * A physical map of China: available in social studies textbooks * A political map of China: <http://www.maps-of-china.com/china-continent.shtml> * Preparing for and conducting a Socratic Seminar: <https://pms.pasco.k12.fl.us/wp-content/uploads/pms/2014/08/Socratic-Seminar.pdf> |
| Required Materials | * Copies of the readings from the websites (these readings may need to be condensed depending on time.) * List of vocabulary from readings (some words below: add to list as needed) * Physical and political maps of China * Internet resources |
| Time Requirement | 5-7 Class Periods |

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| Procedure |  |
| Pre-lesson Preparation | Day 1:   1. Bellwork/Introduction: To the best of their ability, have students list the following on a blank sheet of paper:   a) The political and physical features of China.  b) The countries surrounding China.   1. Have students compare and evaluate their lists with the student sitting next to them and make changes as needed. 2. Check lists as a class against a political map and a physical map of China.   4. Discuss with students what they thought, why they thought it and what was right or wrong about their impressions.  5. Hand out physical and political maps of China for students to label. Provide list of locations above. Allow students to fill out in class or as homework as time allows.  6. Tell students that they are going to learn about desertification in China. Ask them to examine the word desertification to determine what the general topic is. Discuss the meaning of desertification briefly.  7. Ask students to find the meaning of the following vocabulary words:  precarious cultivating Manchurians besieged  encroaching relentless sedimentation state-run media lambasted compost initiatives moratorium  8. In the last few minutes of class, have students, from memory, describe three features from the map (for example, Japan is east of China). This can be done in pairs. When finished, have them use two vocabulary words in a sentence. Partners will evaluate the correctness of usage. Sentences will be turned in to assess comprehension.  Day 2:  Plan:   1. Bellwork/Introduction: When students enter, have them write a three-line poem using at least one geographic feature and one vocabulary word from the previous day. Collect to check for understanding. 2. Review the meaning of desertification. 3. Hand out the reading. 4. Tell students that, as they read, they are to find the causes and effects of desertification in China and write them down on a sheet of paper. In addition, when they come across anything they find interesting, they should write that down too. 5. At the end of class, quickly brainstorm causes and effects.   Day 3:   1. Bellwork/Introduction:    1. Have students brainstorm three ways they have contributed to changing the environment in the last day (examples: using paper, riding on a concrete road, etc.)    2. Discuss with students if there are any similarities between their list and the causes of desertification. 2. Finish the reading and have students continue their notetaking. 3. Discuss as a class how desertification affects Chinese farmers, the Chinese government, the countries surrounding China, the citizens of China, the plants and wildlife of China and the world. 4. Rank in order from most affected to least affected. 5. Have students brainstorm the positives that come from cutting down trees, growing crops, and raising livestock. 6. Have students search the internet for ads that show products dependent on these activities (paper, food, etc.) 7. Share findings with class. 8. Homework: Have students take a stance: Deforestation, growing crops and raising livestock should continue even if it is causing desertification and the degradation of our environment **or** deforestation, growing crops and raising livestock should stop or be greatly modified to preserve the health of our only home planet. Students will write 2 paragraphs supporting their position for presentation at a Socratic Seminar the following day. |
| Lesson introduction | Day of Socratic Seminar  Bellwork/Introduction:   * 1. Have students reread and polish their opinion papers.   2. Have students write one argument someone on the other side might make and why that argument is flawed. |
| Activity | **Socratic Seminar:**  Discuss the questions:   * Is it acceptable for people to alter the environment in ways that are dangerous to the survival of the planet and future generations in order to reap benefits now? * In which ways might our approach be modified to preserve the environment and provide us with things we need? * How might we modify what we mean by “need”?   For information on conducting a Socratic Seminar, see [AVID Socratic Seminar Resources](https://pms.pasco.k12.fl.us/wp-content/uploads/pms/2014/08/Socratic-Seminar.pdf). While Socratic Seminars are typically based on discussion of a text, this lesson provides a level of preparation for lower-grade students who may be less familiar with academic discussions. By providing the students with questions and guidelines for productive discussion, the teacher prepares the class for more independent work on future discussions. |
| Wrap-up | Ask students to revisit their opinion papers. Did they hear anything from their classmates that they would like to add? Have they changed their minds about their stance or arguments? This can become the draft for their extension/assessment writing, or can be collected as is for points. |
| Extension/  Assessment | Students will write a letter to a Chinese official or an American official describing the effects of desertification in China, its impact on the health of the planet and their suggestions for modifying the effects and changing the way we live. The writing will be graded on proper use of grammar and usage conventions, persuasive ideas, factual content, and passion. |