

Lesson 3: What Is A Civilization?

Getting Started

? Big Ideas

- How do people change their environment?
- What causes cultures to change over time?



Facts and Definitions

- A **civilization** is a culture from the past that reached an advanced level of culture, science, industry, and government compared to other cultures of the time period.



Skills

- Analyze the effects of change in communities and predict future changes. (SS)
- Explain how science and technology have changed the way people meet their basic needs. (SS)
- Look at how technology changes communities and cultures. (SS)
- Identify uses of natural resources. (S)



Materials

- ✓ *Weslandia* by Paul Fleischman
- ✓ art materials
- ✓ colored pencils or markers
- ✓ poster board

Introduction

Ask your child if he has ever heard the term "civilization." Explain that a civilization is a culture from the past that reached an advanced level of culture, science, business, and government compared to other cultures of the time period. The elements of culture are all part of a civilization. In addition, a civilization might have had technology, a written language, schools, government, and a common currency (money).

Reading and Questions

Ask your child to read *Weslandia* aloud, and then ask him the following questions.

1. In what ways is Wesley different from other kids?

- Wesley does not like pizza, soda, or professional football. He also refuses to wear his hair in the popular fashion.

2. In what ways are you similar to Wesley? Different from him?

- Answers will vary.

3. Does Wesley change in the story? If so, how?

- Wesley becomes happier and finds a place where he fits in. He also gains friends by starting his own civilization and letting his schoolmates become a part of it.

4. How does Wesley change his environment?

- He allows a new type of plant to grow in his backyard and cultivates it, using it for all his needs.

5. Why do the other kids start to play with Wesley?

- Answers will vary but might include that they are interested by his new plants and ways or they are curious about how he is spending his time.

6. What does Wesley develop in his civilization?

- He makes a new language, games, an 80-letter alphabet, and a new clothing style. He also develops several uses for his plant (swist) such as food, insect repellent, and cloth.

7. Which of Wesley's ideas do you think is most interesting? Why?

- Answers will vary.

8. Did you enjoy reading Weslandia? Why or why not?

- Answers will vary.

Activities

Activity 1: The Natural Resource of Weslandia

Ask your child to describe how Wesley used the new plants in his civilization. Discuss that the swist plant was the basis of Wesley's civilization. Give him the sheet, "The Natural Resource of Weslandia," and let him write and illustrate the different uses of the plant in the bubbles. Then ask him to number the bubbles from most to least important use of the swist plant.

Possible Answers:

food, clothing, suntan lotion, mosquito repellent, sun dial, games, flute, and ink

Activity 2: Using Natural Resources

This is a creative problem-solving challenge for your child. Explain that Wesley was ingenious and industrious (discuss the meaning of both words) with his use of the swist plant. Give your child the sheet called "Using Natural Resources." Ask him to think about a way he can use a natural resource or a combination of natural resources to solve a problem for a practical purpose. Encourage him to brainstorm ideas, select his best or favorite idea, gather the materials, and demonstrate the purpose. On the bottom of the page, he can illustrate his idea.

Activity 3: Creating Your Own Civilization

Tell your child that today he will pretend to create his own civilization. He must think of a name for his civilization, and then ask him to think through the elements of a civilization and decide what his civilization will look like in each area. Remind him to think of new and unusual aspects of his culture. Be sure that his ideas reflect the natural resources and the environment he describes. For example, if there are no trees, then there cannot be log cabins in his civilization. He can borrow ideas from other civilizations, but his civilization must be unique. Ask him to record his ideas on the "Creating Your Own Civilization" page.

Activity 4: Advertising

Tell your child that you want him to create a poster or presentation that will tell people more about his civilization. The advertisement should excite people and include vivid language/pictures that encourage people to visit. Remind him that his natural resources will be tied to what food, clothing, shelter, and jobs are available. Review the idea that we combine natural resources to make new products or new materials.

Reading and Questions

Review the idea that cultures are always changing due to weather, war, other cultures, technology, and leaders. Ask your child to reread *Weslandia* and think about how *Weslandia* would change in each of the following situations. In each situation, ask him to identify what causes the change (war, other cultures, technology, weather, or leaders). Then ask him to think about what would happen to *Weslandia*, how the children would respond, and

what would change.

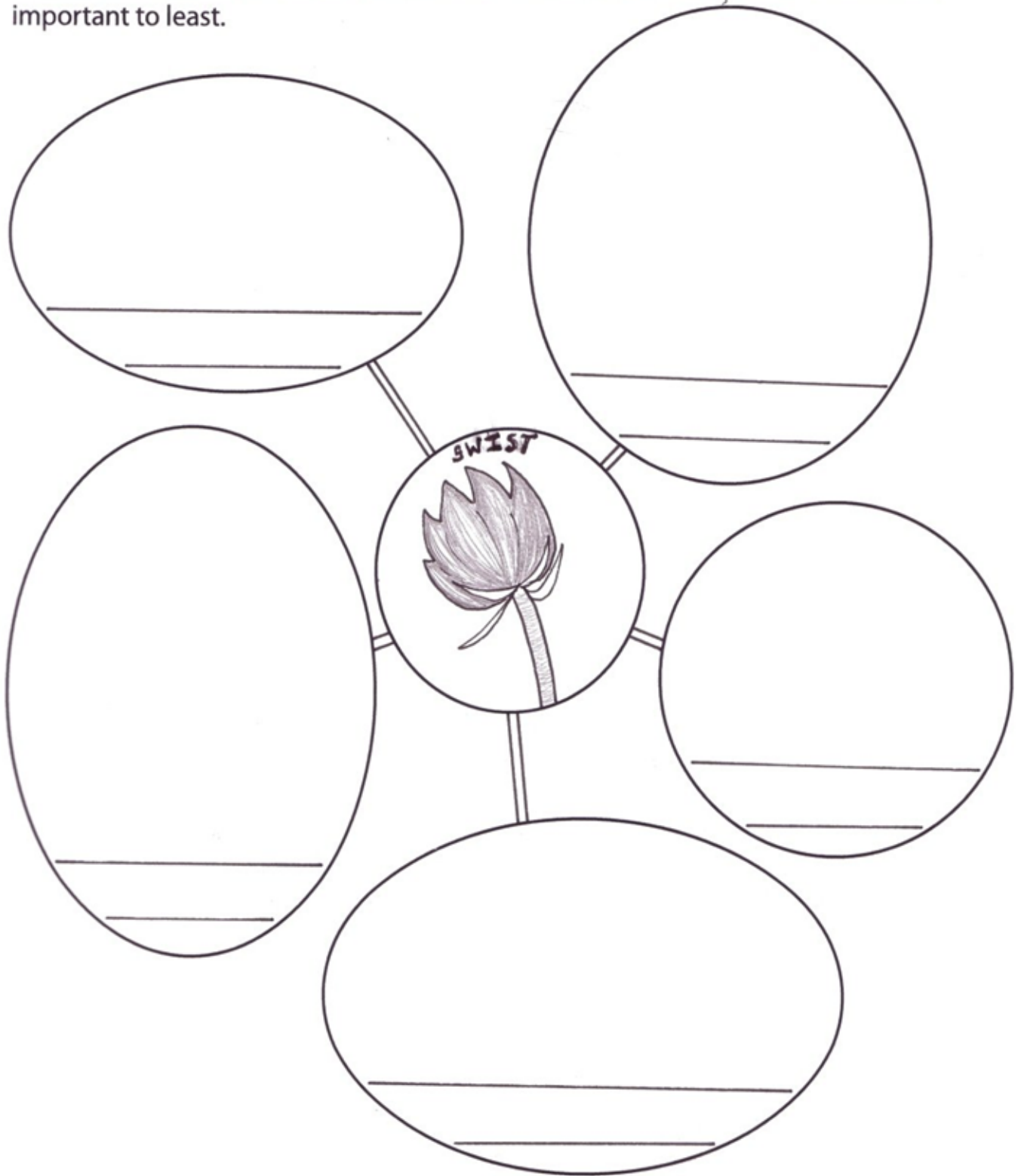
1. The swist plant stops growing when the winter comes, and it freezes.
 - Weather.
2. A group of kids from another neighborhood comes to Weslandia and cuts down all of the swist plants.
 - War.
3. Wesley develops a technique that combines the swist plant with water and heat to make a material similar to plastic.
 - Technology.
4. Wesley begins to hoard all the swist plants for himself and his closest friends.
 - Leaders.
5. A new group of neighborhood kids discovers Weslandia and wants to trade products from their civilization for products from Weslandia.
 - Other cultures.

Wrapping Up

Ask your child to describe why he would enjoy living in his imaginary civilization. Ask him to think about some challenges he might face in his civilization.

The Natural Resource of Weslandia

Directions: Describe how Wesley used the plants in his civilization. Write the different uses in the bubbles and illustrate each one. Then number the bubbles from most important to least.



Using Natural Resources

Directions: Think about a way you can use a natural resource or a combination of resources to solve a problem for a practical purpose. Select your favorite idea, gather the materials, and demonstrate the purpose. Illustrate your idea.

Natural Materials: _____

What will the materials be used for? _____

What must be done to the materials? _____

How will it work? _____

Draw



Creating Your Own Civilization

Directions: Think about the following elements and create your own imaginary civilization. Be sure to reflect the natural resources of your location.

 **Natural Resources:** _____

 **Environment:** _____

 **Language:** _____

 **Homes:** _____

 **Food:** _____

 **Jobs:** _____

 **Recreation:** _____

 **Music:** _____

 **Clothing:** _____
