



Humans and the Environment: Outdoor Stories from Michigan

Teacher Guide

Michigan Diaries:
Schools

[mi-diaries.org/
teacher-resources](http://mi-diaries.org/teacher-resources)

Leah Nodar 2026

Grade: 6

Subject: Social Studies

Prior Knowledge	• Types of maps of an area (geographic, political) • Map of the state of Michigan • Types of outdoor activities
Lesson Objective(s)	SWBAT... • Analyze and interpret maps of Michigan • Draw on map information to explore the relationship between geographic features and human activity • Contrast the influences of different geographic features on four Michiganders' outdoor activities and relationships with nature • Evaluate four Michiganders' impact on their natural environments • (Extension) Evaluate, express, and share the way geographic features in their own areas affect their outdoor activities and relationship with nature
Standards	CCSS.SOCIAL STUDIES-SPATIAL THINKING.6 - G1.1.1 • Use a variety of geographic tools (maps, globes, and web-based geography technology) to analyze the world at global, regional, and local scales. CCSS.SOCIAL STUDIES-GEOGRAPHICAL INQUIRY AND ANALYSIS.6 - G1.2.3 • Use, interpret, and create maps and graphs representing population characteristics, natural features, and land use of the region under study. CCSS.SOCIAL STUDIES-HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS OF PLACES.6 - G2.2.5 • Generalize about how human and natural factors have influenced how people make a living and perform other activities in a place. CCSS.SOCIAL STUDIES-ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY.6 - G5.1.1 • Describe examples of how humans have impacted and are continuing to impact the environment in different places as a consequence of population size, resource use, level of consumption, and technology.



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Materials Needed	Students will need... • Writing utensils • Colored pencils or markers • Printed copy of workbook – see mi-diaries.org/teacher-resources Teacher will need... • A way to play MI Diaries audio for: ○ Mackinac Island: https://mi-diaries.org/2024/04/24/11102/ ○ Tahquamenon Falls: https://mi-diaries.org/2023/05/21/9346/ ○ Warren Dunes State Park: https://mi-diaries.org/2021/01/31/4173/ ○ Western UP: https://mi-diaries.org/2022/04/10/6307/ • Workbook – see mi-diaries.org/teacher-resources
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Time (minutes)	Learning Task	Methods or Procedures
5	Warm up	Have these questions on the board at student arrival: <i>What outdoor activities do you like to do?</i> <i>Where in Michigan can you do them?</i> Students write individual answers, then share and discuss in pairs or as whole class.
20	"Maps of Michigan" activity (Workbook pages 1-8)	Students review topographical, hydrographic, and population density maps of Michigan and compare the characteristics of different areas. They answer information questions about four areas and synthesize their understanding in a creative drawing.



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		This activity may be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
25	"Outdoor Stories from Michigan Diaries" activity (Workbook pages 9-11)	Students listen to four stories of Michiganders' outdoor experiences and answer questions about the impact of the environment on the speakers and the impact of the speakers on their environment. This activity is best for students to complete alone, then compare answers with a partner or small group.
10	Wrap-up: "My Michigan Environment" (Workbook page 11)	Students describe the geographic characteristics of their own area and write down a list of their own outdoor experiences. This is intended for students to complete alone as an exit slip or formative assessment.
30	OPTIONAL Extension activity: "My Own Outdoor Story" (Workbook pages 12-15)	Drawing from the list of their own outdoor experiences, students select one experience and share that story with a partner or small group. Peers provide structured feedback. Then students write out their personal narrative. Teachers who have signed up for the "Just Talking" app (https://sneller7.msu.domains/) are encouraged to use this app for recording student oral practice and feedback.