**Lesson Plan: Case Study of the Arkansas Delta**

**Anna-Lisa Dahlgren, 9th grade AP Human Geography**

**Objective / Rationale:**

* Students will complete mini-research to learn about the geographical connections of the Arkansas Delta.
* Students will apply specific AP Human Geography vocabulary to the Arkansas Delta.
* Students will practice writing responses to FRQ-style questions.

**Essential Questions:**

How does zooming in to a place’s history, culture, and geography help you better understand the idea of a sense of place? How does the Arkansas Delta provide a valuable case study in key AP Human Geography concepts?

**Context:**

This lesson can be completed at different times in the year, depending on the larger context and the teacher preference. For example, teachers may choose to complete this at the end of the year once students have learned all the required vocabulary for the course as part of review for the AP exam. They also may choose to pick specific terms and questions from the lesson and complete as part of the assigned work for the respective unit.

The questions use the AP Human Geography task verbs so students can practice with writing responses similar to what they will see on the AP exam.  This lesson should occur after students have been taught how to write responses to free response questions (FRQs).

**Standards**:

AP Human Geography:

* Course Skills:
  + 1.a Describe geographic theories, processes, models, and theories.
  + 1.b Explain geographic concepts, processes, models, and theories
  + 1.e Explain the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of different geographic models and theories in a specified context.
  + 2.a Describe spatial patterns, networks, and relationships.

Common Core Alignment:

* [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7](https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/7/)
  + Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
* [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.10](https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/9-10/10/) 
  + Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Procedures:**

1. Connection: Project a map to show where the Arkansas Delta is located.  As a class, brainstorm what students may already know about the Arkansas Delta. Record questions on the projector or whiteboard. Begin with these questions:
   1. What do you know for sure about the Arkansas Delta?
   2. What do you think you probably should know about the Arkansas Delta?
   3. What do you want to know about the Arkansas Delta?
2. Offer brief background information about the geographical location of the Arkansas Delta. Include site, situation, and relative location. Provide visual and text data to overview the geographical context.
3. Use the questions below for the next portion. Teachers may choose to assign each student a question or a few questions, ask students to work in partnerships on a question or a few questions, or ask students to choose the question(s) that are most interesting to them:
   1. Identify three agricultural products that come from Arkansas.
   2. Define the Arkansas Delta.
   3. Describe the cultural landscape of the Arkansas Delta.
   4. Describe how Mound Cemetery (Arkansas City) is an example of sequent occupance.
   5. Describe how the Japanese Internment Camps are an example of forced migration.
   6. Explain how Tontitown developed as an ethnic enclave.
   7. Explain the degree to which the flood of 1927 shows environmental determinism.
   8. Explain how historical settlement patterns of the Arkansas Delta reflect the importance of the Mississippi River.
   9. Explain the degree to which the Chitlin’ Circuit reflects Central Place Theory.
   10. Explain how music in the Arkansas Delta reflects both cultural convergence and diffusion.
   11. Explain the degree to which the locations of Japanese Internment Camps reflect Central Place Theory.
4. Facilitate opportunities for students to share with other students in the class. Options include:
   1. Pair and swap (speed date) with other students in the class
   2. Presentations in front of the class
   3. Gallery walk of the writing classmates completed
   4. Peer editing and feedback about writing based on FRQ writing guidelines.
5. Opportunities for cross-disciplinary connections:
   1. Collaborate with a higher-level AP social studies class for expert critiques of FRQ writing.
   2. Collaborate with English class for feedback on writing tasks.
   3. Present writing to a different social studies class to introduce the nuance of the history and geography of the Arkansas Delta.
   4. Highlight the economic connections associated with agriculture in the Arkansas Delta.
   5. Connect to environmental science classes to discuss why the soil quality in the Arkansas Delta is suited for agriculture.
   6. Make connections to current events classes and research current events in the Arkansas Delta. Highlight AP Human Geography connections in current events news articles.
6. Extension, differentiation, and application:
   1. Offer suggested websites or resources for students who need support researching.
   2. Provide a graphic organizer to capture notes and ideas.
   3. Review writing guidelines for FRQ responses as needed.
   4. Extend the responses to include a larger project outcome, such as National History Day or larger research project.
   5. Find authentic audiences for student writing beyond peers and teachers.
   6. Ask students to generate their own questions about the Arkansas Delta.

**Assessment**:

Student research notes are assessed as a formative component of this assignment.  Students are assessed informally during the research and writing. Students FRQ response(s) will be assessed as a formative assignment. Students will be formally assessed on this information in an end of unit assessment, as well as an AP exam at the conclusion of the school year.