

BIG IDEA #1

Place includes both the environment and its people. A place is rooted in culture and shapes self-identity.

A place has human history and a geologic past; its inhabitants are part of a social, economic and political order: they import or export energy, materials, water, and wastes, they are linked by innumerable bonds to other places... Knowledge of a place – where you are and where you come from – is intertwined with knowledge of who you are.
– David Orr

A place is so much more than just the physical environment. From urban settings, with big buildings and four-lane highways, to rural areas with lush mountains and mangrove beaches, people and the relationship to their environment defines a place. Culture – the beliefs, customs, and daily practices of our community – are both deeply influenced by and influence our environment and environmental changes. And our community's culture helps individuals to shape self-identity: how we define ourselves and our roles in community and the world.

From prehistory until recently, there was a strong human concept of belonging to a particular place. This belonging has to do with a distinct identity or characteristic of our place that makes it special and sets it apart from other places. Even seafaring cultures embody certain aspects of place-identity as they move from island to island. We see evidence of this travel and the importance of our previous places in our stories, as well as in similarities in our tools and art. The concept of belonging to a place continues to change as humans become more mobile and as more people live in cities. Memory and belonging – autobiographical memory, which relives specific, contextual experiences of place – is an essential component in developing self-identity.



Reflect again on the prompt: Think about a place that was special to you as a child.

Use the following questions to guide your reflection.

Essential questions

1. How does the place you live in influence how you live?
2. How does this place, including the environment and people, shape your identity?

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3. How does place shape the identity of our community?

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4. How does culture impact our environment?
5. How have changes in climate and/or technology changed cultural practices? Do these changes have an impact on identity?

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What do you want to know about your students' learning?

Here is space for you to develop **guiding questions** to use with in your teaching. A guiding question is a more specific question that supports inquiry into the essential questions and big idea.

Example: How are my students exploring the impacts of the environment on local practices?

Standards

Identify which of your standards apply to this idea about place.

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