

## New Geography Workshop Primer

How we map the world reflects our world view. Introducing geography to elementary age school children is a brilliant opportunity to explore the world through the lens of many world views, many viewpoints. The inspiration behind the song New Geography is to promote exploration of the 21<sup>st</sup> century 'human-o-sphere' through a kaleidoscope of world views.

Here are primer questions following the verses in the song New Geography to help educators open up the subject of geography in new ways:

*Get to know the world, the people and the places  
The language of the rainbow spoken on the faces*

The amazing planet we live on is kaleidoscopic in expression. Humans vary in skin color, eye color, hair color, facial characteristics and many other physical traits, depending on their origins. What causes people to look different to one another? Why do humans have different skin colors? What are the major ethnicities on our planet? What is your ethnicity?

*Get to know the world, get to know the human story*

What stories do you know from world folklore?  
What American folklore stories have you heard?  
What ancient myths have you heard about?  
What examples of folklore, stories or myths have you heard or read or seen on video from Native American tribal culture?  
What is an oral tradition?

*Help the land you live in to show its hidden glory*

What is unique and special about the land you live in?  
What native plants, trees and animals live there?  
What is the landscape like?  
What is the climate like?  
What kind of weather happens there?  
What are the histories of human life and culture there?  
What are the indigenous or "first peoples" ways of life there?  
What colors, patterns or symbols are used in the tribal peoples' decorations, clothing, dwellings, shields and headdresses?  
What kind of dwellings did/do they live in?  
What ceremonies and celebrations do they have?  
What is the history of European settlement there?

What would you include in a poem about the land you live in?  
If you were going to show a visitor from a foreign land the best thing about where you live, what would you show them?

*From Africa to Asia, Australia and Japan  
The world it will amaze ya, if you try to understand  
North and South America, from Greenland to Peru  
Europe, Russia. Middle East, all inviting you to...*

*Get to know the world, get to know the human tribe*

How is the whole of humanity a tribe?

*Hop on a magic carpet, let wonder be your guide*

Wonder is a big key. What are *your* seven most amazing wonders about the world?

*North, South, East and West*

Right where you are, right now – point north, south, east and west!  
Why do maps always have North at the top? What ‘world view’ decided we should look at maps in this standardized way?

*Be a point of light upon the map!*

Why do we have expressions like -  
“She’s very bright!”  
“Let’s shed light on the subject.”  
“Don’t leave me in the dark!”  
“You light up my life.” And verbs like –  
Elucidate, brighten, illuminate, enlighten... ?  
Do humans give off light?  
What could it mean to – be a point of light upon the map?

*This is lesson one in Geography*

Lesson One is – to be a point of light in the world!

*Get to know the world, the rhythms and the dance  
The songs of many nations, from Mexico to France*

What folk dances or songs do you know from where you live?  
What world folk dances and world folk songs have you seen or heard?  
What contemporary songs or dances do you know?

Where do they come from?

Name a country you would love to travel to. Find a song or a dance from that country. Learn it. What's it like? What's its nature? How does it make you feel? What is the story behind this song or this dance? Did you know you don't have to physically travel to be a world explorer?

*Get to know the world, the joy and the sorrow*

Do you know any person from a foreign land?

Do you have any friends from another country?

What languages do they speak?

What is their life like?

What is their family like?

What is their favorite food?

What are their hopes and dreams for the future?

What games do they like to play?

*The wisdom of the elders, the heartbeat of tomorrow*

Do you know the elders in your community?

Do you know the elders in your family?

What are their hopes and dreams?

What are their life stories?

What do they love?

Children everywhere are the hope and 'heartbeat' of the future.

What are your own hopes and dreams?

*From Africa to Asia, Australia and Japan*

*The world it will amaze ya, if you try to understand*

*North and South America, from Greenland to Peru*

*Europe, Russia, Middle East, all inviting you... to*

What are the Earth's major continents?

What are some of the countries on those continents?

What are the people called who live there?

*Get to know the world, get to know the world in you*

Pretend you are a world. Ask a friend to draw an outline of your whole body on a big sheet of paper on the floor. Now make a map of your world inside the outline of your body. Where's north? Where's the equator? What are your different lands and countries?

What kind of people live in the different places?

What animals, plants and trees live there? What is your world called? What are the hopes and dreams of *your world*?

*Let your native colors come shining through*

What are your native colors?

What are the traditional colors of native dress and celebration (costume and custom) where you live? Hint: look to the folk dances, parades, festivals and pageantry.

And then... there is you! *You yourself* are a unique, first-time human appearance in this world. What are your true colors, your lights?

*North, South, East and West*

*Be a point of light upon the map!*

*North, South, East and West*

*This is Lesson One in Geography!*



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