

U1L1A3 | Using the Inquiry Process to Define Sustainability

overview

In this activity you will actively engage in the inquiry process by learning about each stage (ASK, ACQUIRE, EXPLORE, ANALYZE). You will use this process to investigate the concept of sustainability. After, you can demonstrate your understanding by completing Activity 6 (ACT).

learning goal

- To identify and understand the steps in the inquiry process.
- To think critically about each stage, particularly with respect to evaluating sources of information.
- To use the inquiry process to investigate the concept of sustainability.
- To determine the key ideas for themes of sustainability.

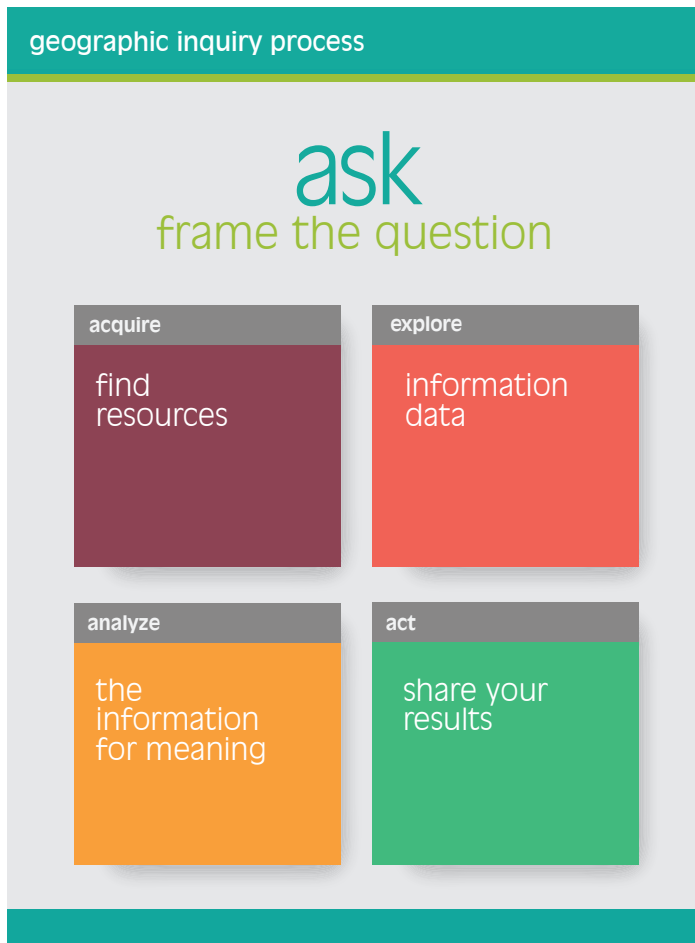
success criteria

- To produce five key ideas for a chosen theme of sustainability.
- To analyze a current issue using sustainability criteria co-constructed by the class.

Inquiry Question

- What is the inquiry process, and how can it be used to understand the concept of sustainability?

The inquiry process



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Ask: Frame the Question

Approaching a problem involves asking a question. What is the problem you are trying to solve or analyze, and where is it located? Why is it important? Being as specific as possible about the question you're trying to answer will help you with the later stages of the inquiry process. Understanding different levels of complexity when asking questions is important.

Acquire: (Find) Resources

After clearly defining the problem, it is necessary to locate information needed to answer your question. It is important to find sources that are reputable and recent. It is also helpful to use a wide variety of sources to gain different perspectives on an issue.

Explore: Information (Data)

You will not know for certain whether the information you have acquired is appropriate for your study until you thoroughly examine it. You could access video, articles, graphics, maps, interviews. There are many ways to explore resources prior to analyzing them for particular meaning.

Analyze: The Information for meaning

The information is grouped and analyzed based on the themes or parts of the question you are asking. In analysis, you read through all your point-form notes or activities and reorganize them into which part of the question they answer. At this stage as well, you can sometimes discard information that you find is not as relevant. You do not discard repetitive information, however. It is good inquiry practice to have multiple sources that confirm the same information. It is also at this stage that you may find you need more information to answer the inquiry question.

Act: Share Your Results

The results and presentation of the analysis are important parts of The Inquiry Process. The results can be shared through reports, maps, organizers, tables, and charts and delivered in printed form or digitally over a network or on the Web. You need to decide on the best means for presenting your analysis. In addition, taking action based on your results can be a way to make change toward greater sustainability.