The Shape of Our Town

Purpose

Students will construct maps and graphs that show aspects of human/environment interaction in the local community.

Materials

For the teacher: city map and landform map of local community, chalk, chalkboard
For each student: paper, pencil, copy of Black Line Master (BLM) *Graph Your Town*, crayons

Activity

A. Map the Town

1. Post the city map and a landform map of the local area in the front of the classroom.
2. Direct students' attention to the landform map and discuss the different landforms in and around the local community.
3. Have students find physical landforms in the local community (e.g., bodies of water, hills, plateaus, forests) and list these on the chalkboard.
4. Have students look at the city map showing streets and urban areas.
5. Have students point out rural, urban, and suburban areas. Ask students:
   - "What types of landform are in rural areas?"
   - "What types are in suburban and urban areas?"
   - "How does the land affect where people live?"
6. Discuss where bodies of water are in relation to residential areas and commercial buildings. Discuss where the hills and roads are developed. Ask students: "Are there more roads in the city, outside the city, or around the city? Are there bridges?

B. Graph the Town

1. Tell students that they are going to graph the different examples of human/environment interaction in their community. Explain to students that humans construct things such as bridges, tunnels, and highways in their community depending on the environment (e.g., roads go around lakes, mountains, or forests and bridges are built to get over lakes and rivers).
2. Hand out a copy of the BLM *Graph Your Town* and a pencil to each student.

(continued)

EXTENDING THE ACTIVITY

Have students debate the benefits and disadvantages of different landforms. Have two or more groups debate several different landforms.

connecting across the curriculum

Science

Have students build bridges using paper clips, straws, toothpicks, and other small items. Discuss the physical reasons why certain bridges work better than others.

Standards Link
3.3.1

Activity (continued)

3. Instruct students to examine their local maps for information to complete the graph. Explain to students that they should count the bridges, lakes, hills, highways, and other examples of human/environment interaction in the local community, then graph the number of each in their community.
4. Instruct students to use this information to fill in the BLM.
5. Have students share their BLMs with the class. Compare and discuss students' results.

C. Draw a Community Map

1. Hand out paper, pencils, and crayons to students.
2. Tell students that they are going to draw a map of their community that includes rural, urban, and/or suburban areas, using the information they gathered on the BLM *Graph Your Town*. Instruct students to color these different areas of the map different colors.
3. Have students include and label the human elements that have become a part of their environment, such as bridges, tunnels, and highways.
4. Instruct students to make a map key to explain their maps.
5. Have students share their maps with the class and allow students to add features/elements to their maps as they view their peers' maps.

Questions for Review

Basic Concepts and Processes

While students are completing the BLM *Graph Your Town*, ask them questions, such as the following:

- Is your community near any lakes?
- Why are many communities near water?
- Are there any highways around your town?
  - Why do most highways go around the city and not inside the city?

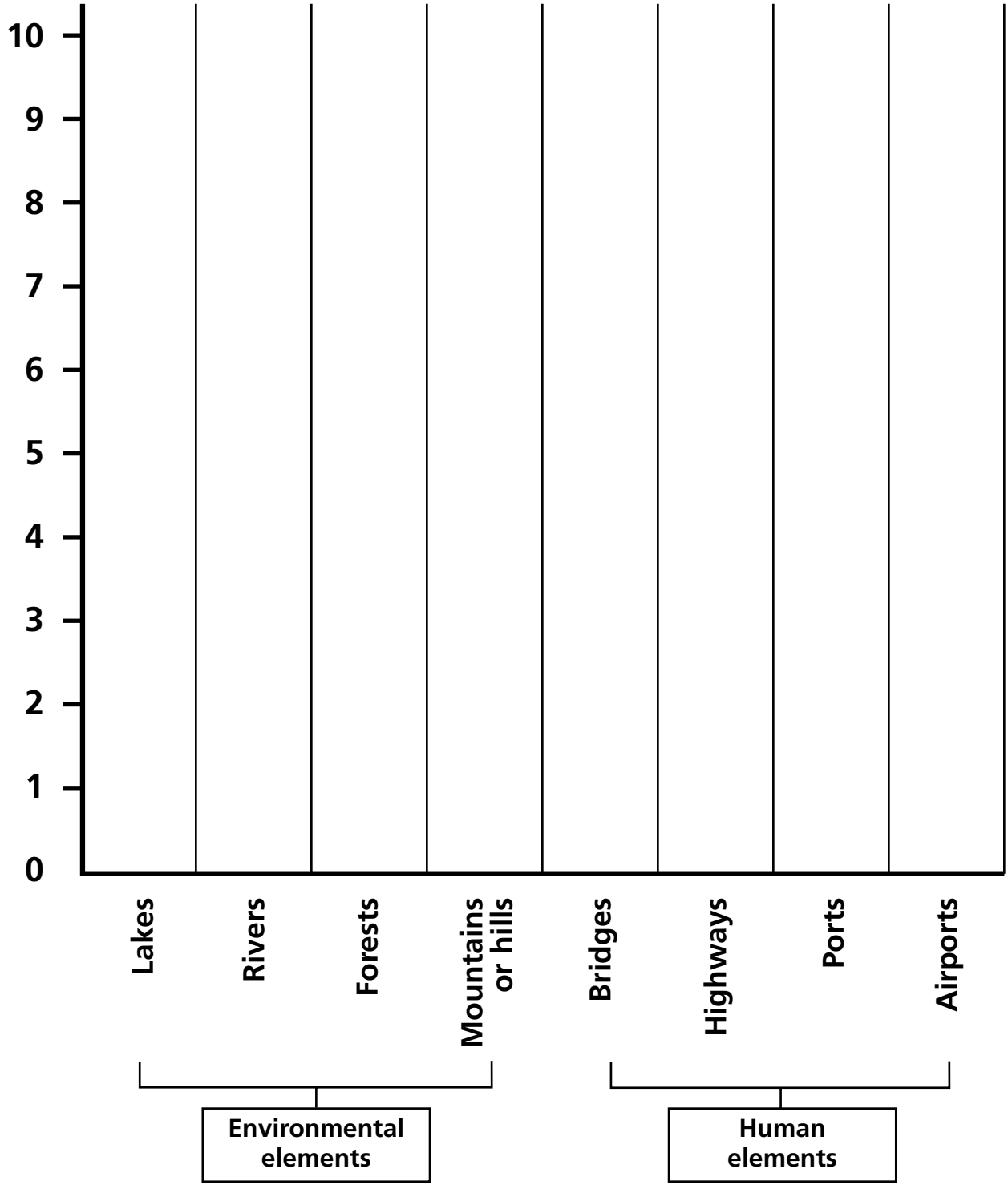
During the class discussion of students' completed BLMs, ask students questions, such as:

- Which environmental element did you find the most of? Fewest of?
- Which human element did you find the most of? Fewest of?
  - Why are there more lakes and rivers than bridges?

Name: _____

Graph Your Town

Count the number of each element in your community and then make a bar graph by coloring in each column for each element.



Graph Your Town

Teacher Directions

Tell students that they are going to graph the different examples of human/environment interaction in their community. Explain to students that humans construct things, such as bridges, tunnels, and highways in their community depending on the environment (e.g., roads go around lakes, mountains, or forests and bridges are built to get over lakes and rivers).

Hand out a copy of the BLM *Graph Your Town* and a pencil to each student. Instruct students to examine their local maps for information to complete the graph. Explain to students that they should count the bridges, lakes, hills, highways, and other examples of human/environment interaction in the local community, then graph the number of each in their community. Instruct students to use this information to fill in the BLM *Graph Your Town*.

Have students share their BLMs with the class. Compare and discuss students' results.

Answer Key

Answers will vary.