

Power of Place

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks

OVERVIEW

Theme Introduction

In this unit, we're exploring "Power of Place." What has happened in the Cincinnati region throughout history? How has our region changed over time, and how has our natural environment shaped our history? We'll explore these questions and more.

Blog Post

[Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks](#) by Tyler Swinney, Manager, NAGPRA and Tribal Liaison at Cincinnati Museum Center

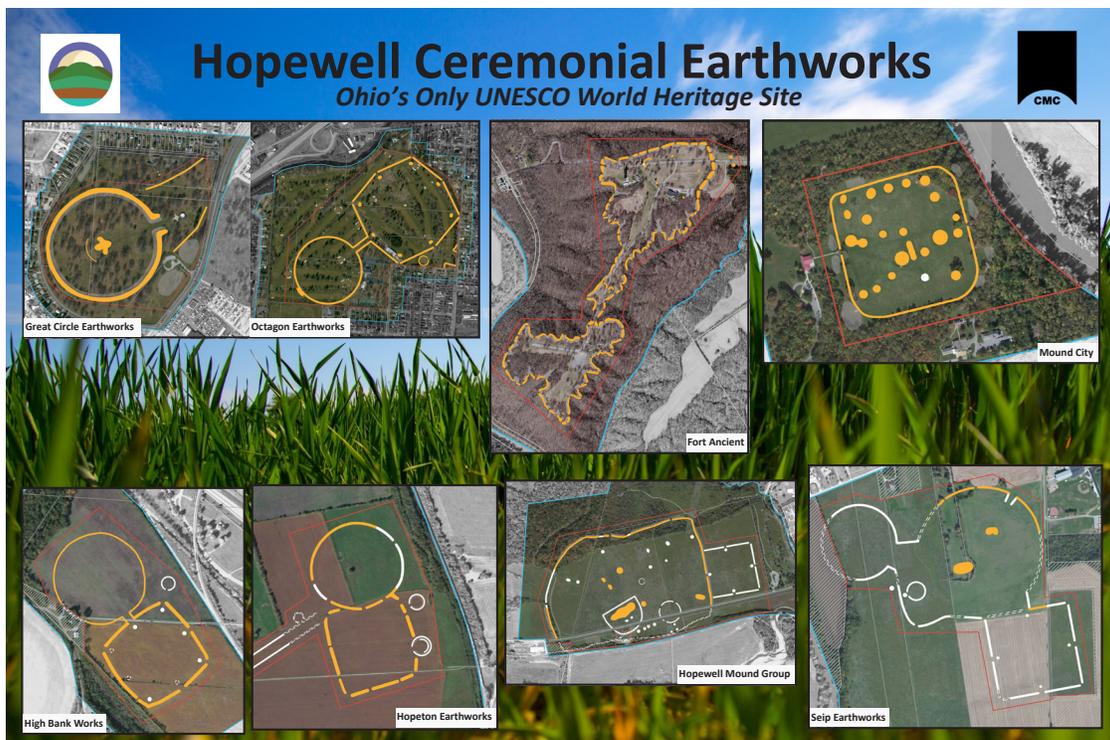
Guiding Questions

As students read the blog post, have them consider the following questions:

- Why did UNESCO designate the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks as a World Heritage Site?
- Who created the Earthworks, and why?
- How can a location and/or landscape shape a person's identity?

Key Vocabulary

- **Heritage:** Buildings, places, works of art, etc. that are historically important to people.
- **Pilgrimage:** A visit to a special place, where someone goes to show respect.



ACTIVITIES

Exploring Hopewell Earthworks

Recommended for grades 4-8

In the blog, we learned about the physical characteristics of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks. Important features include shapes within the Earthworks, their immense height and width and their alignment with the landscape, moon, sun and stars. In this activity, students will explore some of these design features.

Review what we learned about the eight Earthworks' physical characteristics from the blog and photos. Then, share or project the links below.

First, view the map that locates the eight Earthworks in Ohio. Discuss:

- Where are the Earthworks located?
- What natural features are near each Earthwork? Do you notice a pattern?
- Why might people have built Earthworks near natural features?

Next, view the individual site maps (second link below) and Earthworks photos (third link below). Discuss:

- What patterns do you notice in the Earthworks' positions? In their geometry?
- UNESCO designates World Heritage Sites as masterpieces of creative genius that bear unique testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization. How do these Earthworks fit that description?
- How did people use these structures, and why were they important?

Links for activity:

- Map of Ohio with the Hopewell Earthwork locations: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/203000>
- Maps of individual Earthworks: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1689/maps/>
- Gallery of Earthworks photos: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1689/gallery/>

Power of Place

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks



UNESCO Site Navigator

Recommended for grades 5-8

In the blog, we learned that there are now 25 recognized UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the United States. There are more than 1200 World Heritage Sites in 170 different countries around the world, including familiar sites such as Machu Picchu and the Great Wall of China. In this activity, students can explore additional World Heritage Sites to understand this designation's significance for Ohio.

Review that a location must “be of outstanding universal value” to be recognized by UNESCO. A site must also meet at least one of ten selection criteria, paraphrased below. It must:

1. represent a masterpiece of human creative genius
2. exhibit important developments in architecture, technology, arts, town planning or landscape design
3. bear testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization
4. be an outstanding example of design that illustrates a significant stage in human history
5. be a traditional human settlement or use of land or water that represents a culture or human interaction with the environment, especially when it has become vulnerable to change
6. be directly associated with universally significant events, living traditions, ideas, beliefs or artistic works
7. include areas of exceptional natural beauty and importance
8. be an outstanding example of a major stage in earth's history
9. represent major ongoing processes in the evolution of ecosystems and communities of plants and animals
10. include significant natural habitats to conserve biological diversity, including threatened species valuable to science or conservation

Share UNESCO's criteria with students (full text available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>.) Which criteria do the Hopewell Earthworks meet, and how? (Per UNESCO, the Earthworks meet the first and third criteria on this list.)

Next, share links (below) to the list and map of World Heritage Sites. Demonstrate the interactive map tool, which allows students to choose sites in a specific country, ones that meet selection criteria, ones in danger or ones that are natural, cultural or both. Invite students to choose a site and view its location, photos, date of addition and summary of significance. Students can investigate, then share:

- Where is this place located?
- Is this a natural or cultural site – or both?
- What criteria did it meet to become a World Heritage Site?
- Is this site connected to a specific culture?
- Does it include any unique architectural, archaeological or natural elements? If so, what?

Once students have explored, invite them to share their sites with the class. Then, lead them in a guided discussion:

- On the map, what do you notice about the distribution of World Heritage Sites? Which places have no sites, and which places have many? If you limit the map to cultural or natural sites only, does the distribution change? Why do you think this is? (For some thoughts on site distribution, see this article by the U.K. Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors: <https://ww3.rics.org/uk/en/modus/natural-environment/land/unesco-world-heritage-inscriptions.html>)
- What types of places are designated as having important universal value?
- Are there any places not listed that you think should be designated? Why?
- Many of these sites, such as the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, are important to communities or cultural groups. Which local places or features are important to you, your family, your community or your culture? Why?

Optional extension: Invite students to make a poster about their selected World Heritage Site for display.

Links for activity:

- List of sites: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>
- Interactive map of sites: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/interactive-map/>

Create Your Own Ceremonial Site

Recommended for grades 7-12

In the blog, we learned that Native Americans across multiple generations designed and built Earthworks as important ceremonial sites. In this activity, students will work collaboratively to design a meaningful ceremonial site for their student culture.

First, share images of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (links below). Review how Native Americans designed these structures across generations as important gathering places. The sites' size could accommodate many people to worship, connect and observe the sky. The Earthworks' locations and designs required great skill in scientific observation and geometry to align with solar and lunar cycles, important aspects of Hopewell rituals.

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks maps/images:

- Maps of individual Earthworks: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1689/maps/>
- Gallery of Earthworks photos: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1689/gallery/>

Divide students into groups and ask them to brainstorm significant aspects of their local student culture, including any important rituals. Ask them to imagine and plan a monument or site that highlights aspect(s) of their culture or helps people gather for an important cultural event. Remind them that large-scale sites such as the Earthworks require creativity and collaboration. Help students plan their sites with these prompts:

- Where would you locate your site, and why?
- What materials would you use to build your site, and why?
- What features (statues, Earthworks, buildings, decoration, etc.) will your site include? What purpose do they serve? What aspects of students' cultural identity do they represent?
- What activities would take place at your site? Why are those activities culturally important?

Next, provide building materials and invite students to create 3D models of their cultural sites. Then invite each group to share their designs and reasoning with the class.

Optional Modification: If building supplies are limited, students can draw blueprints of their sites or build them out of reusable materials, such as clay or playdough.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

- **OH Geography 3.4:** Physical and political maps have distinctive characteristics and purposes. Places can be located on a map by using the title, key, alphanumeric grid and cardinal directions.
- **OH History 4.3:** Various groups of people have lived in Ohio over time, including American Indians, migrating settlers and immigrants. Interactions among the groups have resulted in cooperation, conflict and compromise.
- **OH Geography 4.9:** A map scale and cardinal and intermediate directions can be used to describe the relative location of physical and human characteristics of Ohio and the United States.
- **OH Geography 5.8:** American Indians developed unique cultures with many different ways of life. American Indian tribes and nations can be classified into cultural groups based on geographic and cultural similarities.
- **OH History 7.1:** Historians and archaeologists describe historical events and issues from the perspectives of people living at the time to avoid evaluating the past in terms of today's norms and values.
- **OH History 8.15:** Modern and historical maps and other geographic tools are used to analyze how historic events are shaped by geography.
- **KY HS.G.HE.2:** Analyze how human settlements are influenced by or influence the relationship between people and the environment.