

Exploring the World Classroom Activity

The Classroom Activity introduces students to the context of a performance task, so they are not disadvantaged in demonstrating the skills the task intends to assess. Contextual elements include: an understanding of the setting or situation in which the task is placed, potentially unfamiliar concepts that are associated with the scenario; and **key terms** or vocabulary students will need to understand in order to meaningfully engage with and complete the performance task. The Classroom Activity is also intended to generate student interest in further exploration of the key idea(s). The Classroom Activity should be easy to implement with clear instructions.

Please read through the entire Classroom Activity before beginning the activity with students to ensure any classroom preparation can be completed in advance.

Throughout the activity it is permissible to pause and ask students if they have any questions.

Resources Needed:

- Some method of displaying ancillary materials¹

Learning Goals:

- Students will understand the context of the key ideas related to the topics:
 - The world is vast.
- Students will understand these key concepts:
 - There are many interesting places to see and explore in the world.
 - There are seven natural wonders in the world that many find interesting and choose to explore.

Exploring the World Classroom Activity

[Purpose: The facilitator's goal is to introduce students to the idea of world exploration and capture the students' interest in learning about some of the interesting things there are to see in the world. The activity will allow students to further explore the concept of the vastness of the world with its many features.]

Note: The following section can be modified to accommodate various teacher-student interaction types such as a teacher-led discussion with the entire class, teacher-student discussion for remote locations with a single student, or small groups.

[Divide students into groups of 3-4.]

¹ Facilitators can decide whether they want to display ancillary materials using an overhead projector or computer/Smartboard, or whether they want to produce them as a handout for students.

Facilitator says: “Today, we will get ready for the Exploring the World Performance Task. The world is a big place. If you could go anywhere in the world, or discover something new, where would you go or what would you hope to discover? Discuss your ideas in your small group.” [Give students approximately two minutes to discuss their ideas.]

Facilitator says: “Stand up with your group and find another group to share your ideas with.”

[Allow students 2-3 minutes to share their ideas with another group.]

Facilitator says: “In 1997, a cable news network came up with a list of what they thought were the most amazing creations of nature. Their list includes seven natural wonders in the world.”

[The facilitator displays **Figure 1: The Seven Natural Wonders of the World**. Note: For students who are visually impaired, read the description of the map in **Figure 1**.]

Facilitator says: “This map indicates where the seven natural wonders of the world are located. What do you notice about the locations of the seven natural wonders of the world?”

[Lead the students to the understanding that the seven natural wonders are spread out, and not all located in one part of the world.] [Divide the students into groups of 3-5 students.]

Facilitator says: “I am going to give each group one photograph of a natural wonder with some information about the place. In your group, discuss why the place in the photograph is considered one of the seven natural wonders of the world.”

[The facilitator hands out **Figures 2 to 9** to groups of 3-5 students (note: Figure 4 and Figure 5 should go to the same group as they are both about the Paricutin Volcano).]

[Give students approximately 7-10 minutes to discuss this in their group.]

Facilitator says: I would like one representative from each group to show their photograph to the class, read the information they were given about the place, and explain the reasons that were discussed in your group as to why this place is considered a natural wonder.”

[Lead the discussion to the learning goal that there are seven natural wonders in the world that many people find interesting and choose to explore.] [This discussion should take approximately 15 minutes.]

Facilitator says: “How do you think people felt when they discovered each of these seven natural wonders? Discuss your ideas with your group.”

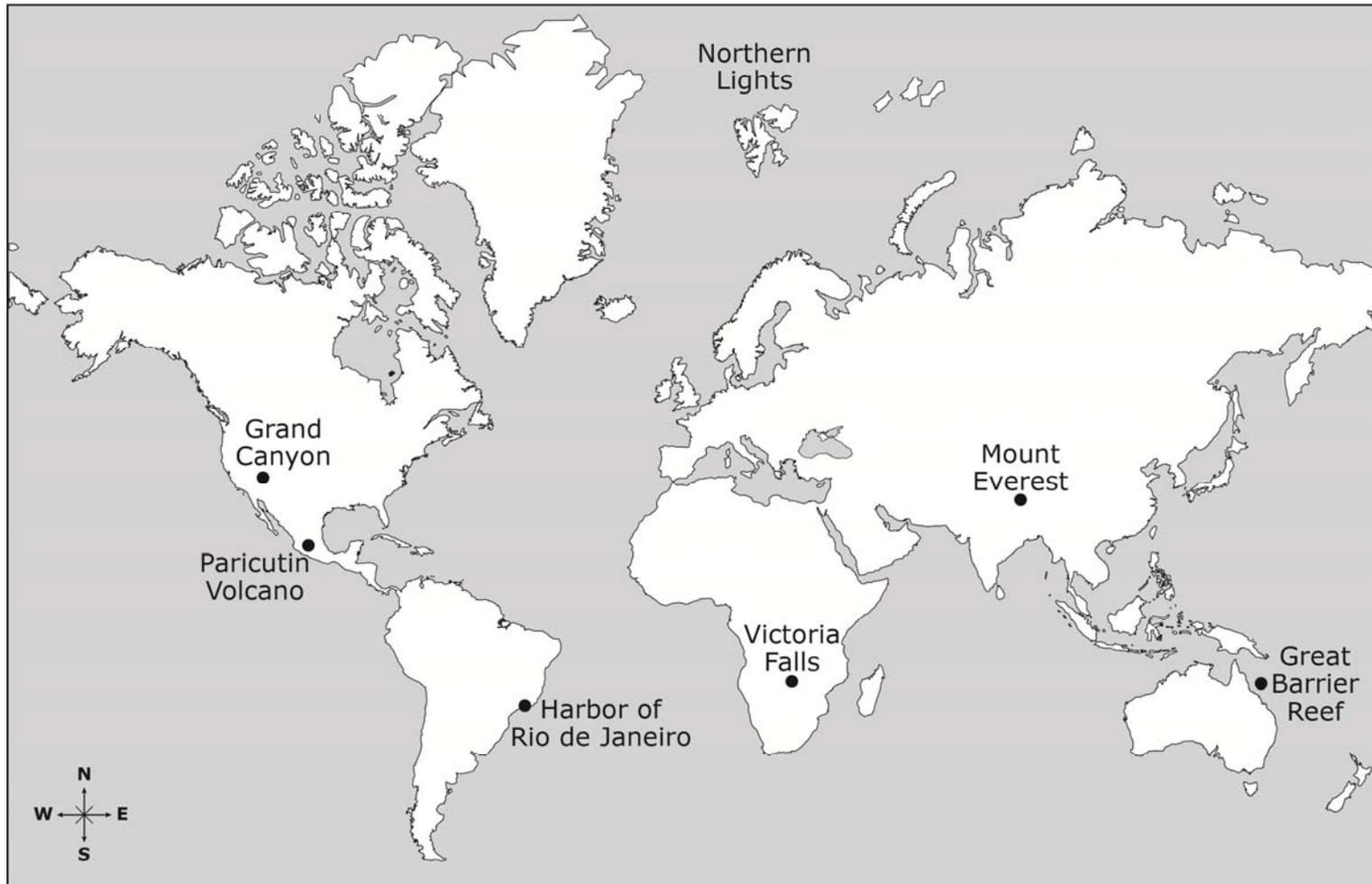
[Give students 3-5 minutes to discuss their answers with the members of their small group. Ask some students to share their answers with the class.]

Facilitator says: “There are many interesting things to see and do in different parts of the world. The discussion that we had today should help prepare you for the research and writing you will be doing in the performance task.”

Ancillary Material

Figure 1

The Seven Natural Wonders of the World





Picture Description: This is a map that is titled *The Seven Natural Wonders of the World*. It is a map of the world. In the bottom left hand corner of the map there is a compass rose that indicates the top of the map is north, the bottom of the map is south, the left side of the map is west, and the right side of the map is east. On the lower left side of the United States, the Grand Canyon is labeled. In Mexico, Paricutin Volcano is labeled. In South America on the east coast of Brazil, the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is labeled. In the southern half of Africa, Victoria Falls is labeled. Near the center of Asia, Mount Everest is labeled. In the ocean off the north eastern coast of Australia, the Great Barrier Reef is labeled.

Ancillary Material

Figure 2

The Grand Canyon



Picture Description: This is a picture of the Grand Canyon. It has a brown river running from the bottom left corner over to the mid-right of the photo. There are small patches of grass located along each side of the river. There are rock formations on either side of the river. The rocks are layered and the layers vary in color.

Interesting Facts about the Grand Canyon: The Grand Canyon is a long trench or canyon in the ground. It is located in the United States of America. The Grand Canyon was carved out by the Colorado River. It was formed millions of years ago and is 277 miles long. At its deepest, the Grand Canyon is over one mile deep.

Grand Canyon and Colorado River photo © REUTERS/Mario Anzuoni.

Ancillary Material

Figure 3

Mount Everest



Picture Description: This is a photo of Mount Everest. In the foreground of the photo the ground looks like it is covered with gravel. The mountain in the background has white snow on it. There are rocks showing through the snow in some places on the mountain. The sky is blue.

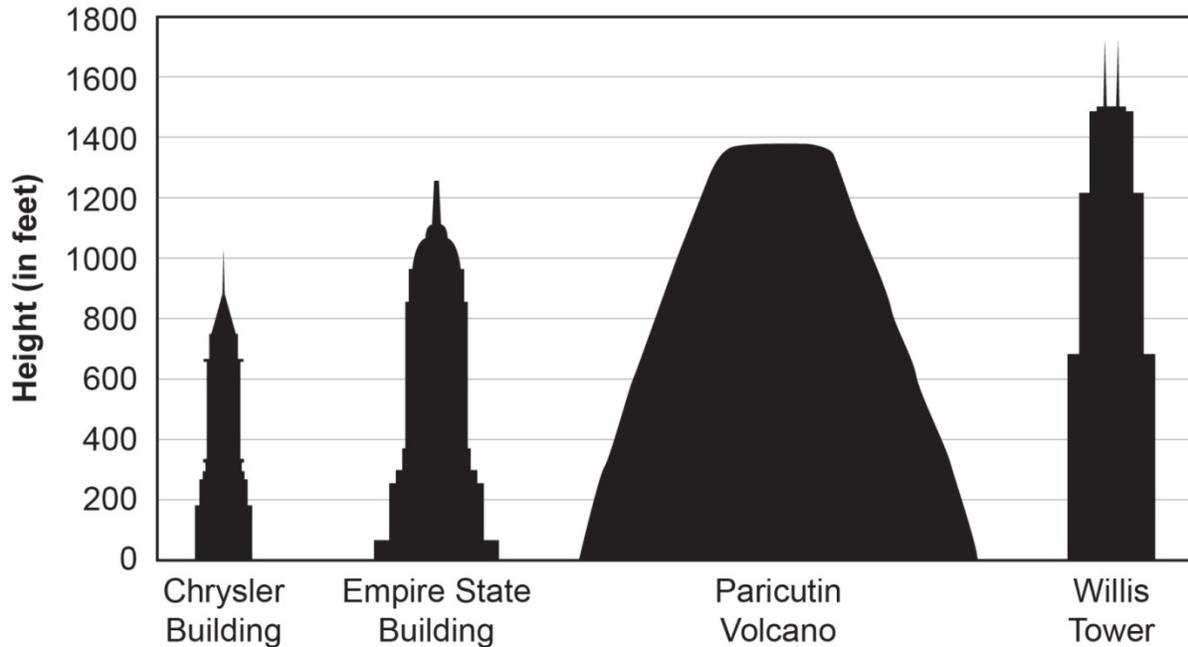
Interesting Facts about Mount Everest: Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world that is above sea level. The summit of Mount Everest is 29,028 feet above sea level, or about 5.5 miles high. Mount Everest is located in Asia on the border between Nepal and China. Climbing this mountain is the ultimate achievement for many mountain climbers.

Mount Everest from Rongbuk photo, in the public domain.

Ancillary Material

Figure 4

Paricutin Volcano Height Chart



Picture Description: This is a graph to show the height of the Paricutin Volcano. The graph is titled “Paricutin Volcano Height Chart.” The graph has the heading “Height (feet)” up the left side of the graph. The numbers up the side of the graph are 0, 200, 400, 600, 800, 1000, 1200, 1400, 1600, 1800. From left to right are the words: Chrysler Building, Empire State Building, Paricutin Volcano, Willis Tower. The graph shows that the Chrysler Building is approximately 1000 feet tall, the Empire State Building is approximately 1300 feet tall, the Paricutin Volcano is almost 1400 feet tall, and the Willis Tower is about 1700 feet tall.

Ancillary Material

Figure 5

Paricutin Volcano



Picture Description: This is a photo of the Paricutin Volcano. This photo has been taken from someplace that is higher than the volcano. The ground in the photo is all shades of brown. There are lines on the ground coming out from around the volcano where the lava has cooled and formed rock. The volcano stands in the center of the photo. The crater at the top of the volcano can be seen. The sky is blue.

Interesting Facts about Paricutin Volcano: This volcano was created very quickly. It first appeared in a farmer's corn field in 1943. Within a year it had reached a height of 1,102 feet. It now stands at a height of 1,391 feet. It has not erupted since 1952.

Paricutin Volcano photo, in the public domain.

Ancillary Material

Figure 6

The Northern Lights



Picture Description: This is a photo of the Northern Lights. The photo is very dark because it is taken at night. There is an outline of a house in the foreground. Above the house, there are streaks of bright green light that spread across the sky. About half way up the photo, the streaks turn to red.

Interesting Facts about the Northern Lights: The northern lights are also called the “aurora borealis.” They can potentially be seen from anywhere in the Northern Hemisphere, but the chances of seeing them are greatly increased as you head north toward the magnetic pole. There is a similar phenomenon that occurs near the South Pole called “aurora australis.” It can be viewed from places in the Southern Hemisphere. The northern lights are bright, dancing lights that can be seen in the sky. They can be a wide range of colors, but most commonly they are green, pink, and purple. The best time to see the northern lights is in March, April, September, or October.

Northern Lights photo © REUTERS/LEHTIKUVA/Pekka Sakki.

Ancillary Material

Figure 7

The Great Barrier Reef



Picture Description: This is a photo of a person snorkeling/diving at the Great Barrier Reef. The person is in the center of the photo. There are small black and yellow fish swimming around the person. In the foreground of the picture are different types and colors of coral including yellow, orange, purple, and green. The coral have different shapes similar to trees and/or flowers. There are also some small blue fish that have yellow tails swimming around the coral. The water is very clear and is a bright blue color.

Interesting Facts about the Great Barrier Reef: The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef. It stretches for about 1400 miles. This reef is home to many different species of animals and can be seen from outer space. The length of the Great Barrier Reef is equal to the length of about 250 Mount Everests stacked on top of each other.

Great Barrier Reef, Australia photo © REUTERS/HO/Great Barrier Reef National Park Authority.

Ancillary Material

Figure 8

The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro



Picture Description: This is a photo of the harbor of Rio de Janeiro. The harbor is a body of water surrounded by land except for one area where the harbor connects to the ocean. In the foreground of the photo there are many very tall buildings. The harbor water is very blue. There are several boats in the harbor that appear very small because the harbor is so big. There is a small mountain on the right side of the harbor. There are other small mountain islands that are sticking out of the ocean in the background.

Interesting Facts about the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro: The harbor of Rio de Janeiro is located in South America, in Brazil. It was created by erosion from the Atlantic Ocean. When this bay was discovered in the early 1500s, it was mistaken for the mouth of a river and was originally called “River of January.”

Scenic View of Rio de Janeiro by Beatriz Posada Alonso. Used under Creative Commons license.

Ancillary Material

Figure 9

Victoria Falls



Picture Description: This is a picture of Victoria Falls in Africa. In the foreground of the picture there are some tree branches with green leaves on them. Across a trench are the waterfalls. There is a big sheet of white water falling over the falls. In the background there are trees. The sky is blue with some white fluffy clouds in it.

Interesting Facts about Victoria Falls: Victoria Falls is located in Africa on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. It has the largest single sheet of flowing water falling from it. It isn't the tallest waterfall, and it isn't the widest waterfall, but with the height and width combined Victoria Falls has the biggest area of water falling from it.

Victoria Falls photo by John Walker, in the public domain.