

Shopping Rules!

Urban geographers study cities. One topic they study is how land use is arranged in cities. Where are the manufacturing plants? Where do people live? How do shop owners decide where to put their stores? How does the transportation system affect where different types of activities are located?

This activity looks at one kind of land use, retailing, better known as shopping. Geographers might classify retail areas into three categories: centers, ribbons, and specialized areas. Ribbons are commercial districts strung out along a street or highway. Specialized areas are created when businesses selling the same product, like cars or antiques, are grouped together. Centers are also groups of retail businesses, but they contain a variety of stores. This activity is concerned with centers.

Shopping centers come in a variety of sizes. The largest store in a shopping center is called the anchor. The anchor in small shopping centers can be a grocery store, a drug/variety store, or a small department store. In bigger centers, full-size department stores are the anchors. Bigger centers are called either regional or super-regional centers. Regional and super-regional shopping centers are often referred to as “malls.”

YOU ARE THE GEOGRAPHER

On a street map of your town or city, locate and mark the shopping centers. On your map, distinguish between (use different colors or symbols for) small and medium-sized centers on the one hand and regional and super-regional centers on the other. If you live in a large city, you may be able to map the shopping centers in only part of the city, or only the regional and super-regional centers throughout. Study the map.

1. How many small and medium-sized centers did you map? How many regional or super-regional? About how far apart are the small and medium-sized centers?

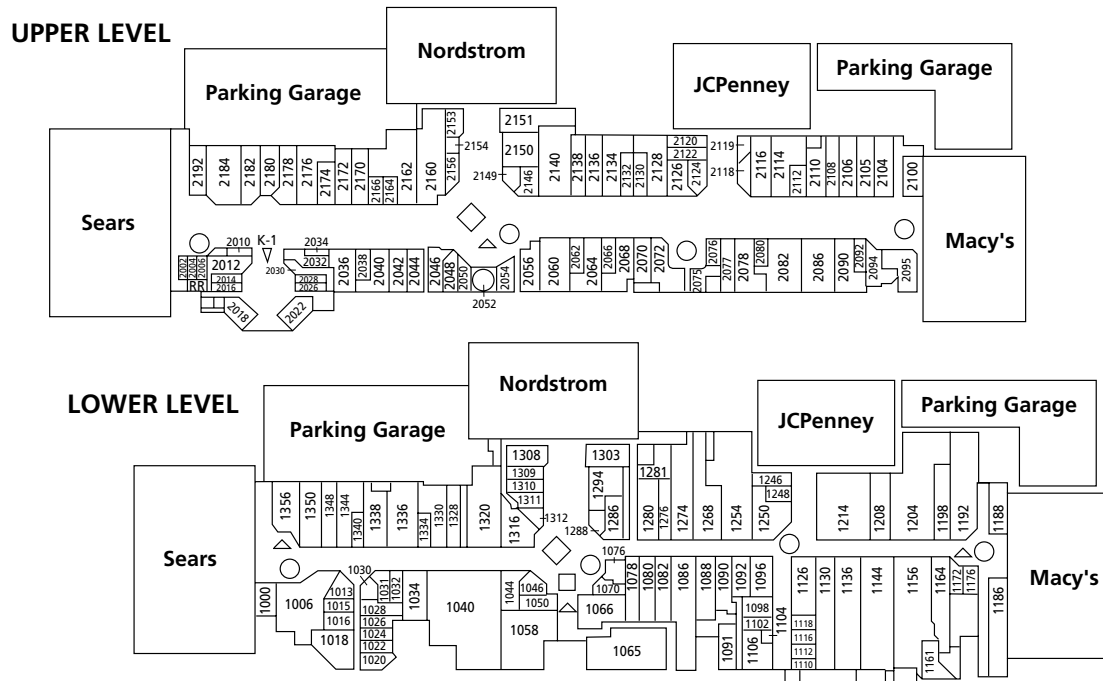
2. Are the regional and super-regional centers in your city surrounded mostly by residential land uses (houses and apartments) or are they part of a larger cluster of commercial land uses (offices, other retailers, hotels, and so on)?

Shopping Rules, *continued*

Geography for Life

We can also study the internal geography of shopping centers. In a regional or super-regional mall, the anchors are placed at opposite ends of the mall. Customers must then pass all the other shops to get from one anchor to the other. As for how to arrange the other shops, there are several plans. One plan groups together all the stores selling the same thing. Another plan spreads them out. Grouping the stores allows customers to comparison shop very easily. Spreading out similar stores may encourage the customers to do more walking. In this way, every customer is exposed to every type of store. These factors may generate more total purchasing. Most malls use a combination of these principles, as you will see when you look at the example that follows.

The plan below is for the Arden Fair shopping center in Sacramento, California. It is the largest mall in the metropolitan area, which has a population of about 1.7 million people. Use a set of felt pens or colored pencils to color the various categories of stores as indicated in the table. After you have finished color-coding your plan, answer the questions on the next page on a separate piece of paper.



Shopping Rules, *continued*

Geography for Life

Type of Store	Color	Location
Apparel—Family and Children’s	Red	1016, 1136, 1156, 1208, 1268, 1320, 2054, 2062, 2064, 2066, 2077, 2114
Apparel—Women’s	Pink	1066, 1078, 1092, 1126, 1186, 1192, 1204, 1286, 1294, 1326, 1336, 2036, 2042, 2090, 2140, 2146, 2154, 2153, 2160, 2192
Apparel—Men’s	Blue	1034, 1172, 2086, 2128, 2170, 2180
Beauty/Fitness and Health	Purple	1020, 1026, 1040, 1288, 1311, 1312, 2048, 2108, 2138
Electronics/Entertainment	Light green	1356, 2004, 2092, 2104, 2105, 2119, 2178, 2182
Home Furnishings and Accessories	Gray	1050, 1082, 1254, 2068, 2080, 2106, 2122, 2184
Jewelry	Orange	1013, 1032, 1044, 1076, 1096, 1276, 2076, 2126, 2149, 2156, 2164, 2166
Services	Leave white	1000, 1022, 1024, 1098, 1281, 1309, 1344, 2100, 2120
Shoes	Brown	1080, 1198, 1280, 1334, 1350, 2040, 2044, 2050, 2072, 2110, 2112, 2118, 2136, 2150, 2172
Specialty (includes books, cards, gifts, toys)	Black	1015, 1028, 1030, 1088, 1090, 1102, 1144, 1188, 1214, 1234, 1246, 1250, 1274, 1303, 1310, 1338, 1340, 2006, 2034, 2046, 2060, 2095, 2130, 2132, 2174, 2176
Sports	Dark green	1006, 2075, 2082
Food	Yellow	1031, 1058, 1065, 1070, 1104, 1106, 1110, 1112, 1116, 1118, 1308, 1348, 2002, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, 2026, 2028, 2030, 2032, 2124

3. What patterns can you detect in the plan? Look in particular at “women’s apparel” and “beauty/fitness and health” with respect to the two more prestigious anchor department stores (Nordstrom and Macy’s).
4. What shops might men be more interested in?
5. How are the jewelry stores, shoe stores, and places selling food grouped?
6. For each type of store, what can you say about its location within the mall?