

Lesson Topic

World Maps with Different Focal Points

Essential Question

How does the physical placement of a location on a map reflect our broader understanding of our position in the world?

Grades: 4-8

Standard/s

Grade 4: North American Geography

History and Geography: Map and Globe Skills

Grade 5: United States History: Geography, Economics and Government

History and Geography: Map and Globe Skills

Comparing and Distinguishing Maps,

Modern and Historical

Political and Topographic

Identify Specialized Maps

Grade 6: World Geography

Concepts and Skills:

History and Geography: Reading and Interpreting Maps

Economics

Preview

Map locations are determined by many factors. The convention is to place Europe at the center and the North Pole at the top. By placing an area in the center, the map maker is proclaiming its importance, literally its centrality. Alternative placements suggest a different set of values and the possibility of different priorities.

Content Objective/s

Students will be able to observe a map and record what they observe and hypothesize why the map was created.

Students will carefully analyze a map of Texas, including its illustrations and text, and answer a set of questions based on their analysis.

Students will engage in a close reading of a primary source document analyzing the words and phrases used to describe immigration to Texas.

Students will compare and contrast the message of the map and the primary source document.



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Students will synthesize information acquired from the map and the primary source and write a letter from the perspective of someone who emigrated from a southern state to the state of Texas.

Language Objective/s

Students will be able to identify persuasive words in the text of the map of the *Texas and the Pacific Rail Way*, as well as persuasive words in the text from the primary source document, *The Texas Immigrant Traveller's Guide Book*.

Materials

- 1581 Bünting, http://maps.bpl.org/details_M8795
- 1661 Cellarius, http://maps.bpl.org/details_M8727
- 1672, Valck, http://maps.bpl.org/details_M8712
- 1791 Sargent, http://maps.bpl.org/details_M8771
- 1844 Tsurumine, http://maps.bpl.org/details_14407
- 1851 Maury, http://maps.bpl.org/details_M8753
- 1943 Harrison (Great Circle Airways), http://maps.bpl.org/details_M8675

Preview

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Activity Procedure

Step 1: Review/Introduce with students standard map conventions and placement.

Step 2: Use a standard Mercator Projection, http://maps.bpl.org/details_12939 of the world and ask the following: How does this look familiar to them? What standard elements do they notice? To what are their eyes first drawn?

Step 3: Now divide the class into several small groups and have them look at the maps listed in the Materials Section and complete the Student Sheet. Alternatively, they may complete this work as class, individually, or for homework.

Step 4: Discuss their results. Have each group present its map and what they concluded about the placement of its geographic features.

Step 5: What other elements did they notice on their maps? Specifically engage the students in a discussion about the map illustrations. Did they enhance the cartographers' purpose?



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STUDENT SHEET

Maps don't all have to look alike. Map makers decide what to include and where to place important information. We are used to seeing maps where Europe is at the center and the North Pole is at the top. Although this placement is common, often map makers move the focus of the map. Look at the map your teacher gives you and answer the following questions:

1. How is this map like others you have seen?
2. How is it different?
3. What is at the center of your map?
4. Why do you think this place was important to the person who drew your map?
5. Can you tell the date of the maps?
6. Besides geographic locations, what else is on your map?
7. Why do you think they might have been important to the map maker?
8. What can you conclude about the world of the person who drew this map?