



Map Reading

By: Lori McDonald
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Social Studies
Grades 6–8



Introduction

This is an introductory lesson for a unit on reading maps. In this lesson designed for 6th grade, very basic information about maps will be taught. More complex lessons will be presented after this lesson. This may seem like a lot of information for an introductory lesson. However, it is important to remember that these are skills that have been taught in earlier grades. Therefore, this introductory lesson on maps serves as a review. Only some of the information/vocabulary is brand new to the students.

Learning Objectives

The learner will be able to identify different kinds of maps, map tools, and directions on a map.

Materials Needed

- Different maps (amusement parks, hiking trails, favorite spots for students, etc.)
- Chart paper or board
- Projector
- Paper for sorting activity and “ticket out of class”

Procedure

1. Introduce Vocabulary – **political map, physical map, historical map, compass rose, cardinal directions, intermediate directions**
2. Project for students three different types of maps – political, physical, and historical, which each map labeled accordingly. Allow them time to work with a partner to determine what they think the differences in the three maps are. Give the pairs of students the opportunity to respond with what they have noticed that is unique about each map. Record the findings on a board or chart paper so students can see.
3. After all the pairs have contributed and all findings have been recorded, have students discuss the possible purpose of each map.
4. Restate these purposes that students have given you in written form for students to write in their notes.
For example:
 - **Political maps** show the boundaries of countries, states counties, cities, etc.
 - **Physical maps** show natural features of the land including landforms.

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- **Historical maps** show a place in another point in history in order for people to see how things were different, politically or physically, in the past.
5. Next, look at the following map tools: compass rose, cardinal directions, and intermediate directions. This will be a review for students. Discuss the purpose of each one of these tools.
 6. Partner practice – to review what each of these items is the students will work with their previous partner to sort the following terms into three boxes:
 - Three boxes - **Map Tools, Map Types, Direction**
 - Terms - **Compass Rose, Cardinal Directions , Political, Map, North, Physical Map, Southwest, Intermediate Directions, East, Historical Map, Northeast**
 7. After the students have had time to complete this activity, check it together. Have students correct their mistakes.

Evaluation

For an assessment today, students will complete a simple “ticket out of class” question:

Create a real-world problem in which you would need to use one or more of the things we have discussed today and a solution to the problem.