



Exploring the World's Geography

Subject

Geography

Grade level

5-8

Duration

Three to four class periods

Objectives

Students will

- make a papier-mâché globe of Earth's continents;
- identify the prominent physical features of each continent; and
- compare the geography of all seven continents.

Materials

- White construction paper (at least 7 sheets per student)
- Masking tape
- 12-inch pieces of string (one per student)
- Pencils, glue, and rulers
- Colored markers or crayons
- Black felt tip pens
- Newspaper, cut into strips
- White glue, watered down
- Large balloons (one per student)
- World maps, geography textbooks, and other library resources
- Computer with Internet access (optional)
- *Exploring the World's Geography* video and VCR (or DVD and DVD player)

Procedure

1. Begin the lesson by discussing the diverse geography of Earth's seven continents. A good way to introduce this topic is to show segments of the program *Exploring the World's Geography*. After watching, ask students these questions: How is Europe different from Asia? Where is South America located? Where are the Andes? Is North America the largest continent? Also, have them describe the Pampas, taiga, or other geographic features.
2. Using a globe, point out the equator and the prime meridian. Ask students which continents are below the equator and which continents are above it. From the information they learned in the program, how does the climate near the equator

differ from the climate near the poles?

3. Tell students that they will be making their own papier-mâché globes, which must properly display all seven continents, the equator, and prime meridian. Students will clearly label the following physical features:
 - continents
 - all oceans
 - major rivers and lakes on each continent
 - other major physical features associated with each continent: mountains, deserts, forests, volcanoes, and islands.

Have the class come up with a list of symbols to identify the features.

4. Demonstrate how to make a papier-mâché ball.
 - Inflate a balloon and tape a length of string to one side.
 - Dip the newspaper strips into the glue and then apply them to the balloon.
 - Be sure to leave the string free.

Have students blow up their balloons, attach the strings, and cover them with about three layers of newspaper. Identify each balloon with strips of masking tape with the students' names. Place the balloons in a warm place to dry for about two days.

5. During the class periods while the globes are drying, have students use geography texts, maps, library materials, and the Internet to research the seven continents. Have them look at several examples of maps that resemble the size of the continents they should be drawing. Have them draw an outline of each continent on construction paper. Remind students that Earth's continents are not all the same size and that they should try to keep the relative sizes of the continents in mind. After outlining each continent, students need to use their research materials to label the geographic features. Listed below are some helpful Web sites:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/geography/continents>

<http://www.worldatlas.com/geoquiz/thelist.htm>

<http://members.aol.com/BOWERMANB/101.html>

If necessary, allow students time at home to finish drawing and labeling their continents.

6. On the dry papier-mâché globes, have students draw the equator and the prime meridian. Next, show students a map of the world and discuss the locations of the continents on the globe. Ask them related questions (Is North America above or below the equator? Is Europe anywhere near South America?). Once students understand how to place their continents, have them cut out their paper continents, glue them to the globe, and label the oceans.
7. Hang the finished globes in the classroom, and invite students to discuss the different features of the continents, including anything interesting they learned about the geography of the world.

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students actively participated in class discussions; used the research materials wisely and without teacher guidance; and created finished globes that correctly met all established criteria.

2 points: Students somewhat participated in class discussions; used research materials with limited teacher guidance; and created finished globes that correctly met most of the established criteria.

1 point: Students somewhat participated in class discussions; were unable to use research materials without teacher assistance; and either did not finish their globes or produced globes that were missing a majority of the established criteria.

Vocabulary

archipelago

Definition: A group of islands

Context: Southeast Asia includes numerous archipelagos that connect Asia to Australia and other Pacific island nations.

climate

Definition: The average condition of the weather at a place usually over a period of months or years as defined by temperature, wind velocity, and precipitation

Context: The Mediterranean region has a warm, subtropical climate.

continent

Definition: A continuous mass of land; one of six or seven great divisions of land on the planet

Context: South America is one of Earth's seven continents.

elevation

Definition: The height above the level of the sea

Context: Europe has relatively low elevations, except for the Alpine mountain system that runs west-to-east.

savanna

Definition: A tropical or subtropical grassland containing scattered trees and drought-resistant growth

Context: Below the Sahara, the continent receives more rain, and the landscape gradually changes to savanna.

taiga

Definition: A belt of mostly coniferous, or needle-bearing, evergreen trees, which begins in Scandinavia and covers much of Siberia.

Context: The taiga is the primary source of Europe's timber.

Academic Standards

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of the NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following standards:

- Culture
- People, Places and Environments
- Global Connections

The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) provides 18 national geography standards that the geographically informed person knows and understands. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.ncge.org/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following standards:

- The World in Spatial Terms
- Places and Regions
- Physical Systems
- Environment and Society

Credit

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