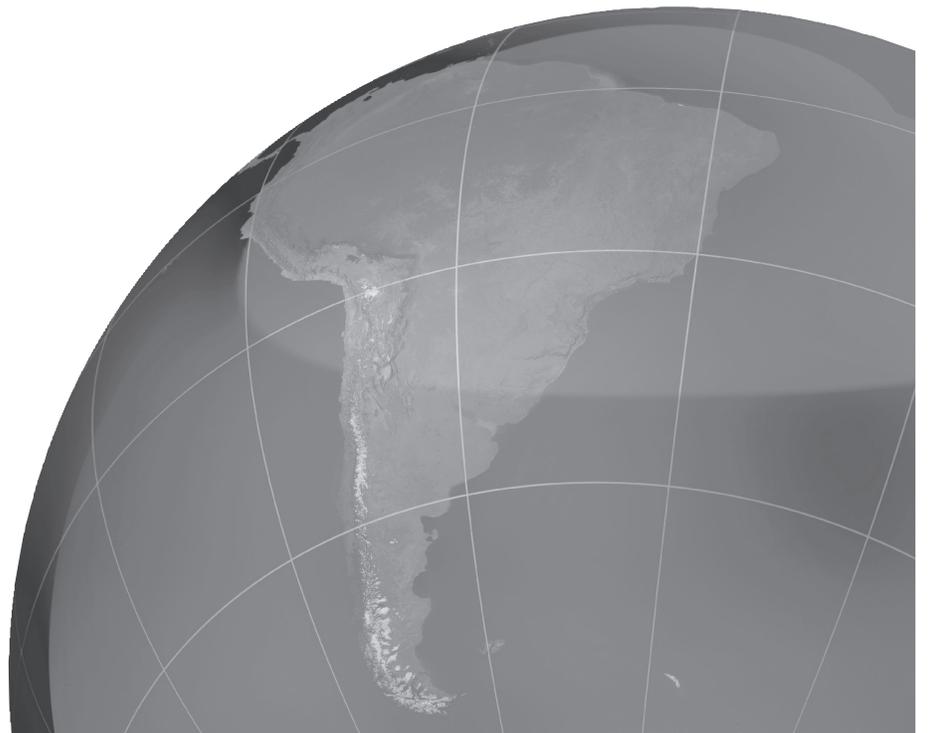


Critical Thinking about **GEOGRAPHY**

South America

Jayne Freeman

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LESSON

1

Reading a Political Map

✦ **Goal:** To develop concepts and skills related to reading and understanding a political map

National Geography Standards

Standard 1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

Preparing Students for Instruction

Before starting this activity, review the following with students:

- ✦ Latitude and longitude
- ✦ Equator
- ✦ Tropic of Capricorn
- ✦ Tropic of Cancer
- ✦ The use of a compass rose
- ✦ Using a map scale to measure distance

Map Overview

This political map of South America shows how the continent is divided into countries. The capital city of each country is named and located. The map includes major rivers. It is organized by latitude and longitude and includes a compass rose and a map scale.

Answer Key

1. Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil
2. The Amazon River; Brazil and Peru
3. About 4,300 km
4. Cape Horn
5. The land is owned by France (French Guiana) and the United Kingdom (Falkland Islands). Answers will vary as to reasons for this landholding. Students may speculate that France and the United Kingdom earn money through taxes, by importing goods from South America, or through the tourist trade.
6. Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Uruguay
7. Answers will vary. Students may conclude that the lack of a major supply of fresh water might affect population and settlements. Bolivia has a large lake, and other countries may have small rivers and alternate water supplies.

Discussion Guide

To support students in reflecting on the activities and to gather some formative information about student learning, use the following prompts to facilitate a class discussion to “debrief” the map activities.

Prompts/Questions

1. Which countries in South America do you think have warm climates? Why?
2. Which South American countries are landlocked? What effect might this have on their economies?
3. Which capital city is at the mouth of a river? How might this location help its economy?

Suggested Appropriate Responses

1. Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia have warm climates because they are close to the equator.
2. Bolivia and Paraguay. Student reasons may vary but may include the following: They would not be able to ship goods from their country or to receive goods from abroad by ship. Not having harbors might mean less tourist income, for example, from cruise ship passengers.
3. Buenos Aires. The shipping industry from both the South Atlantic and the Paraná River should generate business that would help the economy grow.

Extending and Enhancing Learning

- ✦ Have students work in pairs to research the geography of one South American country. They should find out about major population centers, economic resources, how most people earn a living, and how all these factors are affected by geography. Geographic factors to consider include the type of land—flat, plateau, or mountainous; distance from or nearness to the sea and rivers; and climate zones and annual precipitation. Each pair then presents their information to the class. Post reports in the classroom.
- ✦ For students who need more support, ask them a series of questions based on the map. Use the following questions, or others of your choice:
 - ✦ Which South American city is located near the equator? (Quito)
 - ✦ What country is north of Argentina? (Bolivia)
 - ✦ Which country has the largest land mass? (Brazil)
 - ✦ Which capital city is the farthest north? (Caracas)
 - ✦ Which capital city is the farthest south? (Stanley)
 - ✦ What major river runs through Brazil and Peru? (the Amazon)
 - ✦ What oceans surround South America? (Atlantic, Pacific, South Atlantic, South Pacific)
 - ✦ Through which countries does the Paraná River flow? (Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina)
 - ✦ Between which two countries does this river form a boundary? (Paraguay and Argentina)
- ✦ To challenge students further, have them research the development of the Panama Canal and the reasons why it was created. Include information about the trip “around the Horn” that had to be made before the canal existed.

LESSON

1

Reading a Political Map

Geography Vocabulary

equator: a line of latitude that circles the earth and divides it evenly in half

strait: a narrow channel joining two bodies of water

Tropic of Capricorn: a line of latitude at 23 degrees south of the equator

 **Reading the Map**

A political map shows the way people have divided up a large piece of land into smaller units. A political map of a country shows states or provinces within that country. A political map of a continent such as South America shows the countries in that continent. This map also shows distances north or south of the equator. As you read this map, notice the location of the Tropic of Capricorn. The Tropic of Capricorn is 23 degrees south of the equator. It marks the farthest point south of the equator where the sun shines directly overhead.

This map shows the latitudes and longitudes where South America is located. Lines of longitude run from the North Pole to the South Pole. Lines of latitude run east and west parallel to the equator.

 **Understanding the Map**

1. Which South American countries are crossed by the equator?
2. What is the longest river in South America? Which countries does it flow through?
3. Using the map scale, measure the length of Chile in kilometers, from its northern end to its southern tip.

 **Analyzing the Map**

4. The farther north one goes from the equator, the colder the climate is. This is also true when going south of the equator. Name the coldest spot on the map, based on latitude.
5. Two areas on the map are owned by European countries. What countries are they, and what benefit do you think these countries derive from owning land in South America?
6. Which countries have no major rivers running through them?
7. How do you think the absence of major rivers might affect the economy of these countries?

Name: _____

Political Map of South America



LESSON**2****Using the Legend and a Compass Rose to Read a Site Map**

✦ **Goal:** To develop concepts and skills related to using a map's legend and compass rose to get information from a site map

National Geography Standards

Standard 1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

Standard 2. How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.

Preparing Students for Instruction

Before starting this activity, review the following with students:

- ✦ compass rose
- ✦ map legend

Map Overview

This map shows the site of the ruins at Machu Picchu, Peru, in detail. This map includes about half the area. When introducing this map, tell students that site maps like this are common in everyday life. There are site maps of shopping malls, apartment complexes, hotels, state parks, RV parks, and more. Your school may have a site map for visitors, so they can find the classroom they want to visit. Students may be able to name different site maps they have seen or used. Tell students that major sites on the map are shown by numbers in the legend. This map also has a compass rose. Students will work with the compass rose as well as the legend.

Answer Key

- | |
|--|
| 1. West |
| 2. The lower cemetery |
| 3. South |
| 4. North |
| 5. A holy or religious place |
| 6. Since there was a place for common people, there was probably a place for people of high rank. This was a society with levels of hierarchy. |
| 7. All are associated with religious practices. |
| 8. Answers will vary. Students may postulate that the plaza was used for large gatherings of people, either for social or religious purposes. |

Discussion Guide

To support students in reflecting on the activities and to gather some formative information about student learning, use the following prompts to facilitate a class discussion to “debrief” the map activities.

Prompts/Questions

1. What evidence on the map would lead you to conclude that this area had a religious purpose?
2. The map is oriented with west at the top. What reasons might there be for west to be an important direction for this group of people?
3. The Sacred Square is much smaller than the central plaza. What group of people might have gathered in the Sacred Square?

Suggested Appropriate Responses

1. There are several temples and a sacred stone.
2. Answers will vary, but students may decide that west is where the sun sets, and perhaps the people worshipped the sun, or tracked its movements through the sky during the day.
3. Answers will vary, but students may imagine that some kind of elite group, priests or royalty, may have gathered in the smaller square. Since it is surrounded by temples, possibly priests or religious hierarchy gathered there for worship.

Extending and Enhancing Learning

- ✦ Have students research the history of Machu Picchu and its discovery. Groups may write a play or make a PowerPoint presentation about this interesting event.
- ✦ For students who need more support, have them identify and list the seven sites on this map. Students then write what they think each site was used for. As an alternate activity, have students create a site map of their school, their neighborhood, their home, or a nearby park.
- ✦ To challenge students further, have them research the history of Peru’s invasion by the Spanish. Have them use their research to create a play or film about these events, and present it to the class.