

CREATIVE GEOGRAPHY

ACTIVITIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Richard Di Giacomo
3rd Edition



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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS CORRELATION CHART

Lesson Number	National Standards Number	Highlights of Skills Covered in the Lesson
1	11, 16, 17	Importance of resources; economic interdependence; apply geography to interpret the past
2	4-6, 10, 12-13, 18	Apply geography to interpret the past and present
3	4-6, 12-13, 17	Characteristics of places; apply geography to interpret the past and present
4	1, 3, 5, 7-9, 11-18	Economic interdependence, settlement patterns, and ecosystems on the earth's surface
5	13, 17-18	Apply geography to interpret the past
6	10, 12-13, 17	Human migration; apply geography to interpret the past
7	10, 12-13, 17	Human migration; apply geography to interpret the past
8	6, 10-13, 16-17	Apply geography to interpret the past; importance of resources
9	6, 11-13, 16-17	Apply geography to interpret the past; importance of resources
10	1-3, 8, 12, 14-15	The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement
11	8, 11-15, 17-18	The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement
12	6, 8, 12-13, 17	Human migration; apply geography to interpret the past
13	1-6, 8, 10, 12-13, 15, 18	Division and control of Earth's surface
14	4, 6, 8, 10-13, 17-18	The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
15	4, 6, 8, 10-13, 17-18	How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface
16	2, 4-6, 11-14, 17-18	How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions
17	3-6, 8, 12-14, 16-18	How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface
18	1-6, 8, 10-16	The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement
19	11-18	Economic interdependence
20	3, 6, 10-13, 16-18	Economic interdependence; people's perceptions of places and regions
21	5-6, 8, 10-11, 13, 16-18	How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface

Introduction

The lessons in this book are extension activities that make geography more practical and relevant to students. It is assumed that students have learned the basic concepts and skills of geography in earlier grades, in the introductory part of a geography course, or embedded in a history course. These activities reinforce those concepts and skills and then go beyond them in open-ended activities that allow students to explore their individual interests and abilities. As such, the activities do not have answer keys because students may complete the activities in a variety of ways. The teacher should usually grade them based upon participation and the depth and quality of the work. The lessons do not have an overall grading rubric because they vary so widely, but the teacher may wish to create his or her own, in some circumstances. Similarly, evaluations vary from lesson to lesson. Suggested evaluations are provided for each lesson, but the teacher may wish to modify these, as well as the parameters of each lesson, to meet the needs of his or her students. In other words, feel free to add or take away parts of these lessons as you see fit. The important thing is that they work for your students.

Each lesson contains a list of suggested materials, but there are a few items that are highly recommended for any class using this book: a class set of atlases, historical atlases, almanacs, or encyclopedias, and computers with Internet access. A complete list of recommended works appears in the appendix of this book. The more maps you have on display in your classroom, particularly maps that students can draw upon, the better. Each lesson also has an estimated time that

it will take to be completed, but these are only estimates. Feel free to shorten or lengthen a lesson to meet the needs of your students.

Each lesson contains learning objectives and teacher recommendations that provide helpful tips on how to implement the lesson. You may contact the author directly if you need any further clarifications on how to use these lesson plans, or have comments, questions, or feedback on them (krinibar@aol.com). Often suggestions make it into the very next printing of the book.

Finally, each lesson contains debriefing questions that the teacher may use to draw everyone together at the end of the lesson, compare experiences, or think about further implications and extensions of the subject. These are valuable teaching tools, so make sure to leave time for them at the end of the lesson or at the very next meeting of the class. The questions often elicit critical thinking amongst students and lead to interesting class discussions. These may spark a student's interest to delve deeper into, and pursue further research on, the subject.

The lessons in this book are divided into four sections, but they can be done in any order that you like depending upon your course of study and time available. You may pick and choose the ones that best fit your course. Do not feel obligated to do all of the lessons. This book is not intended to be a substitute for a textbook or traditional geography activities book. It is a supplement to them. Part One: Yearlong Activities contains activities that may be done at any time throughout the year. Some may be repeated from time to time or may

be done in small portions throughout the year. Part Two: Historical Activities is designed to be used in a history class to highlight the sometimes-overlooked geography component of these courses, but may also be used in a geography class to reinforce certain skills and objectives. Part Three: Contemporary Problems and Issues highlights contemporary issues. The lessons may be used in a geography or current events class, or as a current events component in a government, history, or economics class. Part Four: Creative & Imaginary Activities may be used in any class emphasizing geography skills and concepts. Although they are imaginative and creative; they are not just for fun. The lessons teach important geography skills and concepts, so they may be used in any class at any time of the year. However, they are perhaps best used at the introductory part of a geography or history class,

Lastly, a word should be said about standards. Geography standards vary widely from state to state and even from district to district. A chart linking these lessons to the National Geography Standards has been provided below, but not every school adheres to these. It should be remembered that standards are merely suggestions on what to teach, not hard and fast rules that are written in stone. Think of them as a roadmap that keeps a teacher from wandering too far off of course, not the only way to get to your destination. Remember

that these standards were designed to try to provide a guideline on what to teach for teachers who are new to the subject and to correct teachers who had too little structure or content in their courses. Others in the past spent too much time on subjects that were personal favorites or fit their political biases and then left out whole units in the course of study, much to their students' detriment.

Please do not feel reluctant to use the lessons in this book because you may not be able to point out to an administrator or evaluator which standard you are currently addressing. As long as you are covering the course content that you should be, there is nothing wrong with doing an enrichment or creative activity along the way. The lessons in this book reinforce a wide variety of geography skills, whether they fit a particular standard precisely or not. In fact students often find these activities to be much more enjoyable and learn more than they do from traditional classroom activities. They often remark that these were among the most memorable activities in the entire course. Critical thinking, creative, and enrichment opportunities may produce the kind of learning that is not easily recorded on a standardized test, but is much more valuable in the long run. The skills developed using these lessons support real life learning that students will use in their adult life for years to come.

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ESSON

OBJECTIVE

To understand why battles occur in certain places

Historical Battlegrounds

DURATION

1 hour

MATERIALS

- Historical atlases or history books, blank maps of the world

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute the historical atlases and blank maps of the world to each student.
2. Search the atlases for battles that have occurred nearest to the home of the students.
3. Students label the historical battles that have occurred closest to their home from 1 to 5, 1 being the closest battle and 5 the farthest.
4. Compare students' results with the entire class.
5. Ask the debriefing questions.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The battles may be from any time in history. If more than one battle occurred in the same place, they may both be labeled.
2. The battles need not be major ones if nothing like that occurred in your area.
3. If some of your students were born overseas, have them plot the battles nearest their birthplace.
4. Suggest other sources of information such as the Internet, military history books, and other reference books that may be helpful. Make these sources available to the class or take the class to the library, if needed.
5. Students' answers may vary depending upon their choices of battles and upon the information available to them.

DEBRIEFING

1. Is there any pattern to where and when these battles occurred?
2. Was geography a factor in the location of the battles?
3. Why is it that more than one battle sometimes occurs in the same place at different times in history? Did you notice that more than one battle has often occurred in places that are crossroads, coastal areas, places lacking easily defendable borders, or places that are rich in resources?
4. Has your region seen many battles or few? Why?
5. Have the size and frequency of the battles in your area changed over time? Why or why not?
6. Which places in the world seem to have had the least battles? Are there many battles in the open ocean, arctic areas, remote areas, deserts, or high mountains? Why or why not?

EVALUATION

Grade this worksheet based on completeness and accuracy. You may also wish to add points based upon a student's participation in the class discussion and debriefing session.

ASSIGNMENT

Label at least twenty major historical battles with a star. Write the name of the battle next to the star in bold letters.

DEBRIEFING

1. Do you have an appreciation now of how difficult it is to draw a map from someone else's descriptions?
2. How much of what the explorer described was based upon his preconceived notions of what he expected to find in the newly explored territory?
3. What did the explorer say when confronted with unexpected geographical features or unfamiliar forms of terrain or climate?
4. Did the explorer name the places based on locations in his homeland or other territories familiar to him? Why?
5. Did the explorer mention any inhabitants of the newfound land? How does he describe them?
6. Why do the maps from the time period of the explorer look so different from those of the area today?
7. How and why has mapmaking changed over the years since then?
8. If we were to explore a new planet today, how might we describe and name the places we would see?

EVALUATION

For enrichment, you could compare this with another primary source account of exploration in the same area or a different area. You could also compare the account that you read with another one describing the same area in a different time period. It might also be challenging to have the students write an imaginary account of an explorer encountering a new area for the first time.



LESSON 28

OBJECTIVE

To demonstrate a grasp of geography concepts and skills by creating a country of your own design

Design Your Own Country

DURATION

1 to 2 hours plus some library and homework time for research

MATERIALS

- One copy of the **Design Your Own Country** handout per student
- A set of atlases, almanacs, or geography software
- Rulers, paper, and drawing materials



PROCEDURE

1. Distribute one copy of the **Design Your Own Country** handout per student.
2. Decide whether you will have your students do the project individually or in groups, depending on the ability level of your students.
3. Explain the criteria for designing a country, and give examples of what types of things a student may include.
4. If possible, demonstrate a completed project as a sample of how to do the project.
5. Monitor the progress of the students and provide assistance as needed.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is best to use this project as a culminating activity to evaluate how much the students have learned about the concepts and skills of geography.
2. This activity may be done at any level from 5th grade and up by varying the complexity of the final product required by the teacher.
3. Keep in mind that the students come into this activity with limited map-making experience. They are probably unfamiliar with how information is depicted on a map. They must be instructed on how to research and depict this information. This research is the most important learning aspect of the project, and it will weigh heavily on the success and grade of the project.
4. If you decide to make this a group project, monitor the groups to ensure that every student is doing his or her share of the work. Divide the project into regular due dates to make sure that adequate progress is being made. Provide feedback along the way as to the geographical accuracy and feasibility of the country they are designing.

EVALUATION

Collect the projects and grade them according to the rubric on the student handout.





Imperialism Monopoly Game

Name _____

Assignment: Using the concepts of imperialism, a group of two to four students will make a game based on the time period from 1500–1914. Use any history book or historical atlas that could help you. The game may be similar in format to popular board games that involve purchasing and developing properties or may be any other kind of game, as long as it has something to do with Europeans competing for colonies.

STEPS TO COMPLETION

1. Discuss and plan with your partners how the game will work.
2. Draw a sketch on scratch paper of what your game board will look like.
3. Draw the actual board, and find or make pieces, dice, and so on.
4. Type the rules on a separate, firm piece of paper or cardboard.
5. Test the game with your team to make sure that the rules work, that the game makes sense, and that all of the pieces are there. Make sure that the game is not too hard or too easy, too long or too short.
6. Turn the game over to another class for playing and evaluating.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1. Give your game a catchy name and a year that play begins.
2. Choose which of the European major powers will be your four players.
3. Choose symbol markers to represent these four countries.
4. Decide which territories of the world are to be up for grabs in the game. Check a historical atlas for names of colonies in the time period you are studying. Use colonies from Asia, Africa, the South Pacific, Latin America, or a little of each. **DO NOT USE MODERN PLACE NAMES.** If a place has a European name on it, like French West Africa or British Honduras, take that part of the name out because in this game it may end up belonging to anyone. Make rules for how these territories are obtained, such as by combat, purchasing, bargaining, or sending settlers.
5. Decide how players will get around the board. Will they use dice, a spinner, cards, or other means?
6. Assign a value to each colony based on its relative worth in resources, land, population, size, and so forth. Decide on an equal number of obstacles and advancements for a player as they travel around the board. Will they be held back, lose a turn, lose money or a colony, or gain these things? How will you decide when a player gets one of these penalties or advancements? Cards? Random events charts? Special spaces on the board?
7. Will there be costs for maintaining a player's colonies? What would it take to lose a colony? Will there be some kind of warfare allowed between players? If so, how will it work?
8. Will there be spaces similar to *Go!*, *Free Parking*, or *Jail*? If so, how will these spaces work for a whole country? (You can't put a whole country in jail, so what other calamity could they face?)



Bringing Fantasy Worlds Down to Earth

Name _____

1. Do the landforms make sense in their geographical context? Could they have been formed by known geological processes? If not, does the author provide a reasonable explanation of how alien forces and physics shaped that world?
2. Could the geographical features of the planet really coexist alongside each other? For example, would a torrid desert really be right next to a frozen area?
3. Would humans or other sentient beings really change and affect the landforms in the ways depicted? For example, would the transportation, cities, and dwellings really be possible?
4. Is the planet too oversimplified? Did the author design it to be all desert, all ice, or one great big city? Are the people shown as all one race or culture? Is that realistic on a planet, or would there be variations of climate, race, language, and so forth, as on planet Earth? Does the author provide a rationale for the single-form planet?
5. How knowledgeable about geography do you think this author was?
6. Are there any unknown regions depicted on the map, and why?
7. Are there any features on the map that are similar to or named after those of Earth? Why do you think the author included them?
8. Is there anything you would change about the world to make it more geographically accurate, and why?

