



# Geography Skills

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of EDSS 620

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# Unit Summary

This unit is comprised of lessons in geography to include latitude, longitude, mapping skills, regional attributes, cultures, customs and values. The unit includes technology resources for teachers looking for ways to include technology into their curriculum. There is a link to three bilingual lessons (Spanish) on latitude, longitude and hemispheres developed by one of the authors of this unit.

# Motivation

- “The strength of the United States is not the gold at Fort Knox or the weapons of mass destruction that we have, but the sum total of the education and the character of our people” (Claiborne Bell).

# Unit Objectives

Students will:

1. Understand what the study of geography is
2. Differentiate between the three types of regional classifications
3. Explain the concepts of hemispheres, latitude and longitude
4. Develop map usage skills
5. Explore the multiple cultures of the world by having them examine the regional attributes and customs.
6. Develop a positive attitude toward the different cultures from the various geographical regions that they discover.

# Lesson Plans

- Using Globes
- Where in the World A Geography WebQuest
- How Can Maps Help?
- Latitude and Longitude
- Latitude, Longitude, and Mapmaking
- Map Usage
- Types of Maps
- Contour Maps With DOGSTAILS
- Regions and Cultures
- Regional Guidebook

# Rationale

- "In a subject such as social studies, on the other hand, in which it is difficult to agree on an established hierarchy of information the sequencing of learning is usually established by either the interest or the experiences of the teacher or a curriculum committee" (Orlich et. all, 2004, 152)
- One of the unit authors had a background in both celestial and terrestrial navigation, which provided a comfort level for them to work with.

# Rationale

- Finding a place to start sixth graders out with in Social Studies may be difficult because of the trickle down effect from the fifth grade New York State Document Based Tests. The November test leads teachers to spend most of the early part of fifth grade in preparation mode.
- In a year that has most students in New York State moving into a middle school where they are expected to change classrooms numerous times in a single day. Starting them off with a Unit like geography is a good transition because you can liken it to their experience.
- In sixth grade the state standard calls for students to change their understanding of location from comparisons with other places to pinpoint accuracies.
- Instead of having them learn that the nurse's office is next to the principal office, students can start by learning by making a left out of the classroom and heading east seven doors they will arrive at the nurse's office.

# Technology Skills

- **Technology resources:** Illustrator, Inspiration, Internet Explorer, PowerPoint, Each individual lesson has a technology resource identified as well as recommended web based links.
- **Students Familiarity with Software Tool:** Student will have a lesson on each of the software programs as well as the proper use of computers with regard to the school and district acceptable use policies.
- When computer are used it is preferable that each student work independently. Some lessons where noted will call for group work.

# Technology Skills

- Technology will serve as an external motivator in this unit.
- All Technology will be used as an instructional tool for the purpose of helping students reach their learning objectives.
- Each piece of technology will be analyzed to make sure it is used to its greatest potential.
- Using the Internet will give students access to observe components of world regions and geography that they would not be able to see in the classroom.

# Differentiated Learning

- When developing content to be taught in this lesson the teacher will keep in mind the individual strengths and weaknesses of the particular students in the class.
- He/she will assess the pre-requisite knowledge of that group of students. Once this pre-requisite knowledge is established, the teacher will individualize and tailor the curriculum to that particular group of students.
- In addition to this personalization of curriculum, a teacher may choose to modify the curriculum for an individual student as well. By adding or reducing material, altering the pace of instruction or focusing on fewer objectives, students may be able to better grasp a subject matter.

# Assessment

- Continuously assessing where the students are
- General pre-assessment before the unit begins
- Find starting point
- Refine Unit based on daily assessment
- Rubrics are provided for each activity

# Web Resources

- [Where in the World? - A Geography WebQuest](#)
- [Lesson Plans - How Can Maps Help?](#)
- [National Geographic MapMachine](#)
- [Regents Prep - Earth Science](#)
- [Lesson Plans - Latitude, Longitude, and Mapmaking](#)
- [An Earth Lesson](#)
- [Lesson Plans - Contour Maps With DOGSTAILS](#)
- [National Geographic Atlas](#)
- [Lesson Plans - Regional Guidebook](#)
- [Round Earth Flat Maps](#)
- [OA Guide to Map & Compass](#)

# Web Resources

- [KidzWorld Reference Guide](#)
- [Using Maps in the Classroom](#)
- [Map Type WebQuest](#)
- [Topozone.com](#)
- [USGS - National Mapping Information](#)
- [Internet Public Library](#)
- [Web Resource Page](#)

# National Standards Addressed

- **USA- Nat. Council for Geographic Education: Geography Standards**
  - **Essential Element : THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS**
  - **Essential Element : PLACES AND REGIONS**
- **USA- ISTE: National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) for All Teachers**
  - **Standard II: Planning And Designing Learning Environments and Experiences.**
  - **Standard III: Teaching, Learning, and the Curriculum.**
  - **Standard IV: Assessment and Evaluation**

# State Standards Addressed

- **NY- New York State Core Curriculum**
  - **Subject : Social Studies**
    - **Level : Grade 6**
- **NY- New York State Core Curriculum**
  - **Subject : English Language Arts**
    - **Level : Grades 5-6**
      - • **Standard : Standard 1**
- **NY- New York State Standards**
  - **Subject: Social Studies (1996)**
    - **Learning Standard 3**

# Conclusion

- Finding ways to include technology in the current social studies curriculum takes some time but can be enriching for both the students and the teacher.
- Adding technology is not simply done by teaching a lesson using a PowerPoint presentation.
- Geography lessons do not need to be limited to pen and paper formats.
- The Internet provides many things that as a student in the late eighties and early nineties we found frustrating such as 3-D image options, quick reference guides and real time demographic maps.

# Reference

- Orlich, D., Harder, R., Callahan, R., Trevisan, M., & Brown, A. (2004). *Teaching Strategies: A Guide to Effective Instruction*. Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston.