

North America Political and Physical Maps Lesson Plan

STANDARDS AND SKILLS COVERED

- How to use maps and other geographical representations, tools and technologies to acquire, process and report information from a spatial perspective.
- The physical and human characteristics of places.
- People create regions to interpret earth's complexity.
- How to apply geography to interpret the past.
- Using directions.
- Using latitude and longitude.
- Decoding map symbols.

TIME FRAME – 1 class period, without classroom extension activities.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTIVITY

Inform the students that they will be using the North America Political and Physical Maps on pages 44 and 45 for this activity. Draw their attention to North America's location relative to the other continents on the small inset map at the top of page 45. Ask the class what direction Asia is from North America. Next, have a student point out North America on a globe and ask the question again. Make sure that students always remember that they live on a spherical earth and not a flat map.

ANSWERS

1. Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Arctic Ocean
2. St. Lawrence River
3. Sierra Madre Oriental and Sierra Madre Occidental
4. Great Plains

5. Gulf Coastal Plain and Atlantic Coastal Plain
6. Mississippi River; any of the following: St. Louis, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Memphis, Baton Rouge, or New Orleans
7. Appalachian Mountains
8. Ottawa; Mexico City
9. Alaska Range
10. Ellesmere Island

EXTENSION QUESTIONS OR ACTIVITIES

Assign students to do research on some of the pre-European people of North America such as the Eskimos (Inuit) and the Mayas or Aztecs. Have them compare and contrast how these groups adapted to the extremely different climatic conditions that the vast north-south extending North American continent presented to them. Consider such things as shelter, clothing, and diet.

Readings on the lost Sir John Franklin expedition and the building of the Panama Canal are additional sources that demonstrate the extreme differences of landforms and climate that North America affords.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

On a blank outline map of North America, have the student label as many countries, major landforms, lakes and cities as they can.

OPTIONAL RESOURCES

Cram "Exploring World Geography" desk map program
Cram "Voyageur Experience In Global Geography" video series