

Basic Geography of Canada Lesson Plan

By: Sara Prendergast

Date: August 4, 2008

Description:

This lesson plan introduces Canada and its geography. It will focus on the major geographic features of Canada such as the major rivers, lakes, languages, capitals, cities, provinces, and territories. Map skills will be taught through utilization of Nystrom's *Atlas of Canada and the World* as well as Nystrom's *Map Explorer Atlas*. Students will be able to locate the regions and territories of Canada on a map, identify the flag that goes with each province, know the official languages spoken in Canada, and in each province, as well as the major rivers, provincial capitals and most major cities.

Grade Level(s):

Grades 4-6

Subject(s):

Social Studies/Geography

Duration:

Three 45-minute sessions

Goal:

The goal is to have students learn some of the basic geographical features of Canada and be able to locate these features on a map.

Objectives:

Students will:

1. identify the location and capitals of 10 provinces on a blank map of Canada: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Québec and Saskatchewan.
2. identify the location and capitals of 3 territories on a blank map of Canada: the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon Territory.
3. recognize major geographical features of Canada such as the following: rivers (Mackenzie, Yukon, Columbia); lakes (Superior, Huron, Erie, Michigan and Ontario); cities (Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Ottawa, Vancouver); provincial capitals (Edmonton, Victoria, Winnipeg, Fredericton, St. John's, Halifax, Toronto, Charlottetown, Québec City, Regina) and territorial capitals (Yellowknife, Iqaluit, Whitehorse).
4. recognize features on provincial flags that represent each region of Canada.
5. know that English and French are the two official languages in Canada, understand that not all provinces are bilingual, and appreciate that language and multiculturalism are an important part of who Canadians are.

Standards:

This lesson plan meets WA State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) for Geography Benchmark 1 (Grade 5) - The student uses maps, charts, and other geographic tools to understand the spatial

arrangement of people, places, resources, and environments on Earth's surface (see www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/SocStudies/geographyEALRs.aspx)

To meet this standard students will:

1.1 Use and construct maps, charts, and other resources to gather and interpret geographic information

1.2 Recognize spatial patterns on Earth's surface and understand the processes that create these patterns

Background Information:

Students will have had some prior class experience using maps to develop mapping skills. This lesson plan, however, does not require any prior knowledge about Canada though it is an excellent starting point for further exploration. An interesting pre-learning exercise might be to have students brainstorm, as a class, what they do know about Canada (considering the five themes of geography). It is useful for the class to consider some of the similarities and differences between the two nations since Canada offers fascinating comparisons in terms of the five themes. Allow for an open discussion and encourage students to draw connections between Canada and the US and their geographical relationship.

Materials:

1. Class set of desk maps
2. Around 12 Nystrom *Atlas of Canada and the World*
3. An overhead projector
4. Overheads of provinces and territories of Canada
5. Photocopied blank maps of Canada (available at www.k12studycanada.org/resources_lesson_plans.asp)
6. Pull down map of Canada

Procedures:

Day 1:

- Give an introduction to the class on the geography of Canada telling a little bit about each region and territory with students are actively learning by following along at their desk maps.
- Explain the differences between a province and a territory.
- Talk about the major languages of Canada. Although English and French are federally mandated as Canada's official languages, each province/territory has different languages identified that reflect the people who reside there (eg. Nunavut has recognized four languages in its region: Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, English, and French). *State that Quebec is 83% French speaking, and only 10% English speaking as an example of the significance of French presence in establishing both Canada and North America.
- Locate the 10 provinces and 3 territories on a map and discuss.
- Locate the major cities on a map and discuss.
- Locate the major lakes on a map and discuss.
- Locate the major rivers on a map and discuss.
- Have students quiz a partner on the location of the geographical elements by pointing at an area on the map and being able to tell what province or territory it is.

Day 2:

- Teach about the different geographic forces and elements that impacted the each region's landscape: including the way that the people are effected by the geography of Canada just like people are affected differently by geography in the US (consider home state vs Alaska or Florida).
- Have students display mapping skills by labeling a blank map of Canada (the provinces, territories, major cites, rivers, lakes, and capitals).

Assessment:

Students will be given a 20-minute blank map quiz on the third day and be asked to locate provinces and territories of Canada as well as labeling seven other geographical aspects of Canada that they learned about. They will also write a 5-sentence paragraph that explains a geographical connection between the US and Canada. The writing will be evaluated based on use of proper structure (previously taught), caliber of content and quality of style.