

Mapping Our Way Through History

Conducting an Inquiry Process of Historical Maps Using Journaling and Questioning Strategies

Introduction

Students need to possess geographic thinking skills that provide the tools to address social studies issues from a geographical perspective. They need to be able to use geographic thinking to construct and interpret various types of maps (i.e. historical, physical, political maps) to broaden understanding of topics being studied. Why were maps made in the past? What types of information did they provide for the users? Were they accurate? What can historical maps tell us now about Alberta and its people?

Project Explanation

In this project, students will develop an appreciation of the development of maps as both a science and an art. They will rigorously examine a historical map using the student process questions provided in order to gain a deeper understanding of the topics being studied and to augment geographic thinking skills.

Alberta Social Studies Curriculum Unit Connections

Grade Four - Alberta: The Land, Histories and Stories

- 4.1 Alberta: A Sense of the Land
- 4.2 The Stories, Histories and People of Alberta
- 4.S.3 develop skills of geographic thinking (interpreting historical maps)

Grade Five - Canada: The Land, Histories and Stories

- 5.1 Physical Geography of Canada
- 5.2 Histories and Stories of Ways of Life in Canada
- 5.S.3 develop skills of geographic thinking (interpreting historical maps)

Grade Seven

- 7.S.3 develop skills of geographic thinking (interpreting historical maps)

Materials and Resources Needed

- *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* - Character Biographies and Online Artifacts
<http://www.glenbow.org/mavericks>
- Historical Map-Based Learning: Student Process Guide

Procedures

Students will undertake a historical map-based inquiry using the historical maps on the *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* site. The process would be similar to how an actual historian would approach a study of any historical materials. Students will examine a primary historical source map using journaling and questioning strategies.

The teacher may use the written information contained in the Maps section of the *Mavericks: An Incurable History of Alberta* site to introduce the unit, as it will provide some background for the students on the importance of maps in the past.

Students may work individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Each will choose one of the historical maps to complete an inquiry on. They will need to gain an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the background and history of the map, its creator, and its uses so that they may share their map with the class at the end of the project.

Students will use the following questions to guide their inquiry, choosing the ones that are appropriate to their specific historical map.

Historical Map-Based Learning: Student Process Guide

- Who created the map?
- When was the map created?
- What do we know about the creator from examining the map?
- Was the map created by hand or by machine?
- Do they belong to a specific group, organization or culture?
- What does it tell us about their group, organization or culture?
- Why was the map created in the first place? What was its purpose?
- Who would use this map? What would they use it for?
- Is there a scale on the map?
- Is there a legend on the map?
- Are there any symbols, designs, or decorations on the map? What do they mean?
- Is there a great deal of detail on the map? Would it be helpful for other people to use if traveling to the area represented?
- What areas does the map represent? Are they represented accurately? (Compare to a modern map of the area in an atlas)
- Are there any mistakes contained in the map?

- What information is contained on the map about its topic? What does it tell us about the time in which it was created?
- Are there difference between this map and a modern map of the same area? Have any borders and boundaries changed?
- What did you learn about that time period from the map?
- Are we able to infer any ideas about how people lived at the time from the map?
- What does this map tell us about Alberta or Canada and its growth?
- What do you think is the historical significance of this map? Why is it important to a museum?
- What questions do you still have about the map or its subject?

Once the historical map inquiry is completed, students may create a large-scale version if time permits to aid in the presentation of their findings.

Assessment and Evaluation

- Students and their teacher should develop their own rubric by identifying evaluation criteria for the project that will match their own learner outcomes. This allows students to understand the expectations for their work and to have input into the ongoing evaluation process.
- Individually or in small groups, students might evaluate the work of two or three other students in order to gain insight into how their peers approached the project.
- After completing the project, students may talk or journal about what they felt they did very positively, what they had difficulty with, and how they would change how they would approach a similar project in the future.

Ideas to Enrich this Project

- Students may make a comparison of two different historical maps and examine how their purposes and information are different.
- Students may create their own historical or personal maps using a variety of methods. They can choose a topic, making sure they label all pertinent information that they include.
 - Using ICT, they can draw it using grid lines in Word or Kidpix of their school or community
 - They can create their own version of a historical map. It could be based the map they studied or on the travels of one of the Mavericks, including any locations where important events took place. They could even attempt to make it look old and worn.
 - They can create a map of the future. What will Alberta look like in 2105?