

# Maps Through Time

## Summary

In this activity students will analyze explorers' maps and put them in chronologically order. They will then learn about the major explorers and the routes that these explorers took.

## **Enduring Understanding:**

Students will understand the exploration and colonization by Europeans in North America

## **Essential Questions:**

Can you identify the different parts of the early explorer maps and the tools they used?

What are some examples of early European maps and tools? Explain their importance to the growth and development of the early American colonies.

## Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 5th Grade

[Standard 1 Objective 1](#)

## Time Frame

1 class periods of 60 minutes each

## Group Size

Small Groups

## Materials

- *The Librarian Who Measured the Earth*  
by Katheryn Lasky
- Historical maps
- Venn diagram

## Background for Teachers

Why isn't America called Columbia? Columbus died thinking he'd reached the East Indies. (That's why he named the native people "Indians") Many explorers were looking for the Northwest Passage. It may be helpful, using the web site provided, to research the major explorers and their routes of exploration.

## Student Prior Knowledge

Students should have a pre-assessment of map skills and have reviewed skills in class.

The teacher will ask general questions such as:

- 1.) What type of map is this?
- 2.) What is the title, date, and who is the mapmaker?
- 3.) What is the scale of the map?
- 4.) What tools did they use to create the map?

Then read "The Librarian Who Measured the Earth" by Katheryn Lasky to talk about early beliefs of the earth's geography and maps.

## Instructional Procedures

Introduce the topic by handing out atlas or use a classroom map. Ask students how we got our maps today and did they always look like this? How do we know what various landforms are?

Break the class into 5 groups and provide a copy of each map for each of the groups without the dates. The kids will analyze the maps and put them in order chronologically based on the progression of the maps' accuracy. Have each group present the order that they placed the maps in and support their decision. Have a class discussion to find the correct order, and then give the dates. After completing this activity introduce the major explorers and show the maps that they might have been looking at based on the dates. Show the routes that these explorers took and discuss why they might have taken those routes.

Key terms: measuring chains, chronometer, sextant, level, quadrant, compass

### Extensions

Have students create their own maps from early explorer/colonists' perspective.

### Assessment Plan

Students will compare and contrast the Speed map with the modern map using a Venn Diagram.

### Bibliography

- *Don't Know Much About American History*  
by Kenneth C. Davis
- *Using Primary Sources in the Classroom*  
by Kathleen Vest, M.A. Ed.

### Authors

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