

Utah's Geography

Summary

This Utah/Geography lesson is designed to help 7th grade Utah Studies students assess different maps, identify landforms and physiographic regions of Utah, and determine how the land affects settlement, use, and economy in the three different regions.

Time Frame

2 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Pairs

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication

Materials

pencil, colored pencils, textbook, computer with arcview

Background for Teachers

Be familiar with three physiographic provinces of Utah, rivers, lakes, deserts, and mountains.

Student Prior Knowledge

Student will have studied Utah History in 4th grade. Student will be comfortable on the computer with teacher assistance. Students will have had experience with Venn diagrams.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Student will be able to analyze a satellite image of Utah. Student will understand how Utah is divided geographically and why. Student will use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the regions and how they impact settlement, land use, and economy.

Instructional Procedures

1. Teacher will guide/show the students how to get into arcview and bring up the maps of Utah already in the data base.
2. In pairs, the students will select three of the themes, ex. (county, waterways, satellite, contour, etc.) and write their interpretation of what these maps say about Utah's geography.
3. Each group will share ONE of their paragraphs while the other groups look at that map on their computer.
4. Looking at the satellite image of Utah and using their textbook, the students will draw in Utah's major mountains, rivers, lakes, and deserts. On the board, the teacher might have the number of each feature that they need to have on their map. Students will create a colorful key and label each major feature.
5. On arcview, using a blank map of Utah, have the students draw what they think might be the three major landform regions in Utah. They will use the drawing tool to draw their two lines that would divide Utah into three regions. If possible, show a few of the students hypotheses up on the screen.
6. Draw in the appropriate region lines and ask the students to determine how these came about. Explain the terms basin, plateau, drainage systems, etc.
7. Have a triple Venn diagram prepared for the students. Label one circle - Great Basin. Discuss with the students the characteristics of the region including landforms, population, businesses, resources, etc. Continue that same process for the other two regions, Colorado Plateau and Middle Rocky Mountain.

Step seven completes your contrasting activity. 8. Step #8 will be your comparing activity between the three regions. Notice if there are similar features, size of towns, land use, businesses, etc. Where all three circles overlap, find at least a couple of areas that all three regions have in common.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

For gifted students, have them divide into three groups representing the regions and set up a debate between the students where they will highlight why their region would be the best place to reside. For struggling students, be more teacher oriented, check periodically for understanding, and take more time.

Assessment Plan

Students will make a 3-D three-sided diorama. Each side represents a physiographic region where a background is drawn and at least one 3-d object is constructed to represent that region. Accompanying the diorama will be a one page reflection on the relationship between physical geography and Utah's settlement, land use, and economy.

Bibliography

Arcview, textbook (Utah, A Journey of Discovery)

Authors

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