Is There a Map in That Story?

Students create maps based on descriptive stories that they and others wrote.

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Grade Level: 6-8
Duration: 1-2 class periods

Overview

Literature provides our imaginations with a variety of settings from isolated Pacific islands to urban cityscapes. As we read, we are building mental pictures of the setting that are called mental maps. This activity uses a child’s listening skills to create a mental map of a story’s setting.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will read a written description of a place and create an accurate map of the story’s setting. They will then create their own stories using descriptive elements that could be mapped by the readers.

Materials

- Class set of the geographic description of Nussbaum’s Island.
- Blank 8 1/2 x 11 paper
- Large sheets of art paper
- Colored pencils
- Example for guided instruction

Objectives

The student will be able to:

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National Geography Standards

ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS
2. How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.
3. How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

Arizona Geography Standards

Grade 6, 7 and 8
Concept 1 The World in Spatial Terms
PO 1 Construct maps, charts, and graphs to display geographic information.
PO 3 Interpret maps, charts, and geographic databases using geographic information.

Other Arizona Standards

Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
6-8.RH.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
6-8.RH.10 By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
Production and Distribution of Writing
6-8.WHST.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Is There a Map in That Story?
- read and interpret a written selection, analyze it, and place elements from it in a logical order.
- identify the map elements found in a story, organize the information, and construct a map of the setting.
- write a descriptive story and create a map to accompany it.

Procedures

SESSION ONE
1. Introduce the lesson by reading the guided practice and ask the students if they think that they could draw a map from the example.
2. Read a paragraph as the students map the description depicted in the paragraph.
3. Distribute the description of Nussbaum Island and have the class read together or individually the passage. The students then should plot a draft of the map.
4. The students will use the checklist to be sure they have plotted all the elements.
5. Once the students have plotted the draft and are satisfied that it is accurate, they will proceed with creating the finished product.
6. The final product should be in color and contain all the elements from the story.
7. Collect the final project.

SESSION TWO
8. Have the students write a story about a real or imaginary place. They should focus on the physical characteristics of the place and then draw a map based on their stories. This map can later be used as a scoring guide. The students will exchange and draw maps from their peer's stories.

Assessment

Grade the first map checking to be sure that the student has included the key elements of the map and, using the checklist, has plotted the desired locations in their proper areas. Assign points to each landmark that should be drawn on the map. The student-generated maps can be peer assessed. Mastery will be considered 80% or higher on whatever scoring system you give to the map.

The writing assignment can be assessed through the Six-Trait Writing Rubric utilizing ideas, voice, and word choice.

Extensions

Students could draw a map based on the plot of another book or story that they are reading.

Students could draw a map based on stories that their peers have written.

Given a teacher-drawn map, students could write a story to accompany it.