Unit Plan

Unit Title: Geography of the United States
Subject/Grade: 5th grade
Teacher Name: Becky Glass and Rebecca Till

Unit Introduction: Students will learn the basic skills needed to understand the geography of the U.S. by creating a series of annotated maps and creating their own topographical map of North America, putting at least 5 settlement/city locations and one capital city/settlement on their map. These settlement choices will be based on the available natural resources, climate, land formations, and prospects for economic development.

1. Standards and Benchmarks: The students will use maps, globes, geographic information and other sources of information to analyze the natures of places at a variety of scales. The students will identify and locate geographic features associated with the development of the United States.

2. Enduring Understanding(s): Students will understand…physical features of the North American continent influenced by the location of political boundaries and settlement decisions, and how people lived according to location/culture/environment.

3. Essential Question(s): What are the major geographical features of North America? Studying the characteristics of these major features, where do you predict major cities would be located? How do you predict people would live and make a living in each major geographic location?

4. Summative Assessment: Students will create a topographical map of North America using salt dough or color/paper. There will not be any preexisting boundaries, only the natural resources/landforms. They will choose one place to be the capital city and at least 5 more settlement/cities. They must consider natural resources, landforms, climate and the prospects for economic development when choosing their settlements/cities. They will name each settlement/city based on the economic prospects and natural resources. i.e. Mountainville, Rainy Valley, Miners City etc. They may not use preexisting names. They must choose one city/settlement in each of the predetermined zone. This will hopefully eliminate the student from choosing all 6 settlements in one area. They must be able to “back up” their decisions in either an oral (debate) presentation or written paper.

5. Formative Instruction and Formative Assessments:

6. Differentiation:

7. Academic Language (vocabulary): geography, globe, topographical map, latitude, longitude, physical features compass rose, cardinal directions, landforms, specific geographical terms such as the four oceans, the seven continents, major North American rivers, and mountain ranges, different locations such as bay, and peninsula. This is to be done after the final map project.

8. Concepts: The students will understand the North American geography and how physical features/natural resources played (and still do) an important part in our countries history and development.
9. **Skills:** Students will learn how to read a globe and use latitude and longitude to find any place on Earth. Then they will use these skills to learn about specific terms (bay, peninsula, etc.) and physical features to describe the United States. They will be able to label the major parts on a map, such as the four hemispheres, the equator and a compass rose.

10. **Resources:** History Alive!5, Hands-on Geography, Geography Skills Activity Kit, Houghtlin-Mifflin.com, Harcourt Brace
Unit Why

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Who Cares?

● Students need to acquire mapping skills.
● Students need to develop an understanding of the many physical features of North America. They need to understand that the physical features determine where cultures originated and thrived…and still do today.
● Students need to develop an understanding how very important natural resources are… that these natural resources developed an economy for the land/country.
● Students need to know the history of the land on which they live. Geography is the basis for much history in our country.

What skills will I learn and/or practice in this unit?

● Students will learn and use the basic skills needed to understand the geography of the U.S. by creating a series of annotated maps and creating their own topographical map of North America. ● They will learn about specific natural resources and landforms.
● They will learn about the cardinal directions and lines of latitude and longitude.
● They will use maps globes and other geographical information to analyze the natures of places at a variety of scales.

Why is this learning important in my life?

● As a responsible citizen, students need to understand the importance of natural resources, and the preservation of these precious resources. Society affects and changes the land!
## Unit Outline

**Unit Title:** Geography of the United States  
**Subject/Grade:** 5th grade  
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Number</th>
<th>Lesson Topic/Type</th>
<th>Lesson Objective</th>
<th>Lesson Formative Assessment</th>
<th>Link to Lesson Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1             | *Unit Introduction  
*Labeling Parts of the World (skill building lesson and problem solving group work) | Students will be able to label key parts of the world | Label the main parts of the world on an annotated map | [link to lesson](#) |
| 2             | *Longitude and Latitude (skill building lesson and problem solving group work) | Students will learn how to use latitude and longitude to find locations on the Earth’s surface | Complete the map locations using latitude and longitude as a guide | [link to lesson](#) |
| 3             | *Using Geographic Terms (simulation lesson) | Students will use specific geographic terms to describe land and water | Construct a visual (diorama/drawing) showing the various geographic terms | [link to lesson](#) |
| 4             | *Physical features of the United States (skill building lesson and problem solving group work) | Students will learn the important physical features of the U.S. | Label the physical features of the United States using a series of “clues” | [link to lesson](#) |
| 5             | Summative Lesson-Topographical Map(simulation/role-play/debate/written lesson) | Students will create a topographical map of the United States or North America with 5 settlement/city choices and one capital. They will defend their choices in a written/oral/debate format | Students will have a realistic topographical map of the U.S./North America with “new” settlements/cities and logical reasons for their choices | [link to lesson](#) |
Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: Labeling the Key Parts of the World
Lesson Number: 1
Unit Title: Geography of the U.S.
Subject/Grade: 5th grade Social Studies
Teacher Name: Becky Glass and Rebecca Till

1. **Expectations**: The student will be able to label the key parts of a world map.

2. **Engagement**: Before class, use white shoe polish on wood floors (it comes up much easier than making tape) or masking tape on carpet, to create a 5 foot by 9 foot rectangle on the classroom floor. In this area, randomly place several objects, such as tables, desks, chairs, overhead, garbage cans etc. Then label 6 sheets of paper A-F and 10 sheets 1-10. You will use these later to make a grid inside the rectangle. Begin by having students make a “quick” 5 minute map of the objects inside the rectangle. As they are drawing and comparing their maps, set up the grid. (A – F goes inside the 5 foot side and 1-10 go inside the 9 foot side). You may want to call out coordinates 3C etc. and have them call out what is in that “box”. Make sure none of the objects move once the map making has begun. Next, have them create the grid on grid paper (or have this ready for them, to save time) and redraw the objects using the grid/coordinate system this time. Which map is more accurate? How did the grid help make it more accurate? Or did it? Why are accurate maps important?

3. **Exploration**: Discuss the following geographical ideas… Use either a large world map or have an overhead. Compass rose- What is it used for? Equator- What do we call this line? Why is it important? (It divides the world into a northern and southern hemisphere.) Prime Meridian- What do we call this line? Why is it important? (It divides the world into eastern and western hemispheres.) How many continents are shown on this map? What are their names? How many oceans are shown on this map? What are their names? Have students label a world map with the following… 1. Label the smallest continent 2. Label the largest continent. 3. Label the ocean that touches the shores of Africa and South America. 4. Label the continents the equator runs through. 5. Locate the United States. Label the two hemispheres in which it is located? (western and northern…this was tricky for the students.) 6. Label the ocean that lies north of Asia. 7. Locate Africa. Label the hemispheres in which it is located. (eastern, western, northern and southern…this one blew some of the students away!) 8. Label the continent directly north of Africa. 9. Label the ocean that touches the shores of both Australia and Asia. 10. Label the ocean that lies to the south of Asia. The students that finish early may make up their own questions to ask the group at the end of the lesson, or other students near them. You may ask these questions one at a time aloud, or have them run off for students to do at their own pace or in groups. Go over the correct labels with the class. Have an overhead with them already don, or have students come up to label. If you don’t have an overhead, go over them on a large world map in front of the class.

4. **Explanation**: You will easily be able to see who has labeled the map correctly. The students may want to “fix” their maps to reflect the correct labels as you go through the process.

5. **Evaluation**: Students will be assessed by their correctness of their maps. Are there any spelling errors? Misplaced continents etc.?

6. **Etc.**: What other information must be provided for others to understand this lesson? What handouts are included with this lesson? What Web links are needed?
Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: Determining Location with Latitude and Longitude
Lesson Number: 2
Unit Title: Geography of the United States
Subject/Grade: 5th grade social studies
Teacher Name: Becky Glass and Rebecca Till

1. **Expectations**: The student will be able to use latitude and longitude to find locations on the Earth’s surface. They will understand what the parallels of latitude and the meridians of longitude and where they begin and end.

2. **Engagement**: The students will need a globe or map with marked lines of latitude and longitude. They will need to look at the map or globe to find the latitude and longitude of Mpls., MN. The students will make a chart by drawing two lines across a sheet of paper to make a large cross. Mark the ends “N”, “S”, “E”, and “W” to indicate directions. The horizontal line represents the latitude of Minneapolis. Write the number of the latitude next to the line. The vertical line represents the longitude of Minneapolis. Write the longitude number next to it. Make a dot where the two lines meet and write Mpls., MN. Use the map and follow the latitude of Minneapolis east and west to find other places that lie on the same line of latitude. Write their names on your chart in the order that they occur. Then follow the line of longitude north and south, and write down names of the places you find. Now you know a few places that are exactly north, south, east, and west from where you live.

3. **Exploration**: What do we call the lines that run east/west on a map? (parallels of latitude) Where do they begin and end? (They begin at the equator and end 90 degrees north and south of the equator) What do we call the lines that run north and south on a map? (Meridians of longitude) Where do they begin and end? (They begin at the prime meridian and end 180 degrees east and west of the prime meridian.) Find a few examples of places using longitude and latitude... 60 degrees north and 15 degrees east etc. Using a map with the lines of latitude and longitude, the students will label the following... 1. Write the name of the parallel at 0 degrees latitude (equator). 2. Write the name of the meridian at 0 degrees longitude (prime meridian). 3. Label the ocean where 45 degrees north latitude and 45 degrees west longitude is located. 5. Label the three continents through which 45 degrees north latitude runs. 6. Label the ocean that lies at 75 degrees north latitude. 7. Label the continent where 15 degrees south latitude and 60 degrees west longitude is located. 8. Label the continent where 15 degree north latitude and 15 degrees east longitude is located. 9. Label the continent where 30 degrees south latitude and 135 degrees east longitude is located. 10. Label the ocean where 45 degrees north latitude and 165 degrees west longitude is located. Those students who finish early can find “mystery” places to stump the group or individuals.

4. **Explanation**: When you go over the maps, it will be easy to see who have correctly labeled the places. You may check them individually or as a whole class on the overhead or on a large wall map.

5. **Evaluation**: Students will be assessed by the correctness of their maps. Did they label the correct places? Did they understand the concept? Are the reversing the lines of latitude and longitude?

6. **Etc.**: What other information must be provided for others to understand this lesson? What handouts are included with this lesson? What Web links are needed?
Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: Using Geographic Terms
Lesson Number: 3
Unit Title: Geography of the United States
Subject/Grade: 5th grade
Teacher Name: Becky Glass and Rebecca Till

1. **Expectations**: The students will be able to describe land and water by using geographic terms.

2. **Engagement**: Have the students look at a map of North America or the United States. Brainstorm the different land forms do you see? i.e. mountains, rivers, lakes, oceans (generic not specific names) etc. Have the students select 5 of the landforms on the “lost”. Have them draw an imaginary place and include these landforms or bodies of water. Students should label each landform or body of water. Students may wish to share their “new” land.

3. **Exploration**: There are obviously more landforms and bodies of water than they have just brainstormed. Have them look at an atlas with geographic terms or Harcourt Brace pp. A16-17 as a reference. Once you have gone over some of the terms, the students will then be able to label a map with a specific list of terms or make a diorama using some of the specific terms discussed. If you choose to do the diorama, make sure they students plan out their layout before constructing the diorama. Then have them make label for each physical feature shown in the diorama. Possible geographic terms to use…bay, canyon, cape, coast, delta, gulf, island, isthmus, lake, mountain, mouth of a river, peninsula, plain, plateau, river, tributary, valley

4. **Explanation**: You will be able to quickly see if the students understand the geographic terms. Have them share their maps/dioramas with the class in a “museum walk”.

5. **Evaluation**: They should have at least 5 of the terms shown in the diorama and all of the terms labeled on the map of North America/United States. Are they correct? Are they spelled correctly?

6. **Etc.**: What other information must be provided for others to understand this lesson? What handouts are included with this lesson? What Web links are needed?
Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: Identifying Physical Features of the United States
Lesson Number: 4
Unit Title: Geography of the United States
Subject/Grade: 5th grade
Teacher Name: Becky Glass and Rebecca Till

1. **Expectations:** The students will be able to identify important physical features of the United States.

2. **Engagement:** Looking at a map, students will compare and contrast landforms and bodies of water in different parts of the U.S. “How is the land different in northern Alaska different from the land in northern Maine? What landforms and bodies of water do you see near Minnesota? Are there any landforms or bodies of water in Minnesota that poses a challenge? i.e. are there rivers that flood, mountains that have avalanches, or desert areas? How do the physical features in Minnesota affect our lives?

3. **Exploration:** Using a map of the United States, have the students label the major physical parts of the U.S. The students may either label the areas, or draw the features in themselves. Give them a list of features or have them label according to these clues…1. Label the ocean that lies of the west coast of the U.S. 2. Label the ocean that lies off the east coast of the U.S. 3. Label the large body of water that lies between Texas and Florida. 4. Label the Great Lakes that from the border between Canada and the U.S. 5. Label the flatlands along the southeast coast of the U.S. 6. Label the river that runs all the way from the Rocky Mts. Into the Mississippi River. 8. Label the river that runs northeast from Lake Ontario into the Atlantic Ocean. 9. Label the longest and biggest river in the U.S., which has its source in Minnesota and its mount in Louisiana. 10. Label the main river just west of the Appalachian Mts. That runs into the Mississippi River. 11. Label the river that forms part of the border between the United States and Mexico. 12. Label the large flatland between the Rocky Mts. and the Mississippi River. 13. Label the main mountain range that runs through the eastern part of the United States. 14. Label the first mountain range west of the Great Plains. 15. Label the high mountains in the western U.S. with a Spanish name. (Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean,

4. **Explanation:** The students will have a map labeled with the important physical features of the U.S.

5. **Evaluation:** The students should have all 15 features labeled and spelled correctly. They can self correct or discuss within their groups.

6. **Etc.:** What other information must be provided for others to understand this lesson? What handouts are included with this lesson? What Web links are needed?
Lesson Plan

Lesson Title: Topographical Map of the United States or North America
Lesson Number: 5  The Summative Assessment
Unit Title: Geography of the United States
Subject/Grade: 5th grade
Teacher Name: Becky Glass and Rebecca Till

1. **Expectations:** The students will create a topographical map of North America or the United States. They will correctly represent the physical features and natural resources. They will use either dough or color to show elevations/altitude. They will then choose 5 areas for settlement/cities and one area as the capital. They will be able to defend their choices in either a written format, debate format, or an oral presentation.

2. **Engagement:** Where would you like to live? Why? Where would you predict major cities? How would you predict people would make a living and live in a particular area? Now that we have learned what the United States and North America are made up of…its time to create you own country be selecting your own places for settlement/cities.

3. **Exploration:** The students will create their own topographical map of the U.S/North America. Making a 3-D RELIEF MAP: Place a map of the U.S. /North America (your choice…depending on how “big” you want this project to be) on a piece of 10 by 12 inch card board. Cover the cardboard with aluminum foil. Make the dough. Here is a simple recipe. 4 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 1.5 cups warm water. Mix in a large bowl. Knead until dough is smooth and elastic. Wrap tightly or place in a covered container. Some people like to add 1 T. cooking oil for softer dough. The student will form an outline around the map on their cardboard. Once the map is formed, students should make the physical features listed in Lesson #4. When dry they can use tempera paint to color the rivers, mountains, lakes etc. Next, they need to choose the 5 city/settlement locations and one capital city location. They can draw, paint, place toothpick flags with the “new” names. (They may need to do the toothpick flags before their map totally dries, which requires advance thought or layout preparation!) They should choose the areas based on land formations, natural resources, and prospects for economic development. REMEMBER- they are under the assumption, they are the first developers of the United States/North America!! There is nothing there, except what Mother Nature has supplied! When the topographical maps are completed, they are to prepare either an eight paragraph paper defending their settlement/city choices, including correct spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and evidence of logical reasoning. They are to also include an introduction and conclusion. Or, prepare an oral presentation defending their choices. It may be fun to set up a debate and discuss the “best” choices!

MAKING A MAP USING COLOR TO SHOW ELEVATION/ALTITUDE: Students will create their own map of North America/United States. They can either fill in an already produced map, or draw their own from scratch. When the have added all the natural features listed in Lesson #4, they will color in the various elevations. For Example- 10,000 feet= red, 5,000-10,000 feet= brown, 1,000-5,000 feet= yellow, 0-1,000 feet=green, Land below sea level=gray, water below sea level=blue. The “rules” are the same as mentioned above. The “defending” piece is also mentioned above.

4. **Explanation:** When they students are done with their map, they should have a product that reflects the actual landscape of North America/United States and six settlement/cities that show understanding of why cities are formed and how the land plays into the economy!
5. **Evaluation**: If the student has a correct, neat map of North America/United States and has logical reasons defending their “new” settlement/cities they have understood the unit!

6. **Etc.**: What other information must be provided for others to understand this lesson? What handouts are included with this lesson? What Web links are needed?