

Handout 1: Exploring a Map in Twelve Easy Steps

Part One: Developing a Context (whole class)

1. What is the title of this map? Add some additional words or phrases to the title to explain it a bit more. (For example: “The United States” might be elaborated into “A Political Map of the United States highlighting large cities but not mentioning our town.”)
2. Why was this map made? (For example: “To help motorists select a route” or “to show the wetlands in our area.”)
3. Who made the map? Was it a government agency, the advertising department of a large corporation, or an individual? Describe the audience addressed by the mapmaker.
4. When was the map made? How have things changed from then until now? Are the characteristics of the places shown quite similar or vastly different from the map’s time until today? Explain.

Part Two: Raising Questions (small groups)

5. Search your assigned section of the map to make a list of three to five details that interest you or your group.
6. Make a list of at least three questions raised by the content on your portion of the map.
7. Develop a statement about how your section of the map helps a reader understand the map as a whole.
8. Could your part of the map be turned into a piece to stand by itself? Why or why not? If so, what would be a good title for your “sectional” map?

Part Three: Calling Out Details (pairwork)

9. Develop a call out, a few sentences or a paragraph in length, pointing to one item or area of interest on your section of the map. You can start with a question and then develop your call out from the answer. For example: “What does this symbol mean?” or, “Why is this place named on the map?”

Part Four: Pointers (presentations to the class as a whole)

10. Place your section of the map on the bulletin board then wait your turn to present your call outs to the class. Each presentation should end with a comment pointing out how these details help viewers understand the map as a whole.

Part Five: What does this mean? (individual work)

11. Each student should write a caption for the map, explaining “What this map means to me.”

Part Six: Polishing the Apple (individual or committee work, as assigned)

12. Turning the bulletin board into a public display involves making sure everything is neat and presented in an attractive, understandable way. The display needs a title as a whole which might differ from the title of the map. The title and date of the map, however, should appear in an explanatory panel at the side of the display.

Author: Dr. Gerald Danzer Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago
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