

Mapping *The Oregonian* coverage

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Geographic Question: What is the spatial distribution of newspaper stories in a major newspaper?

Overview:

This lesson involves the mapping of *The Oregonian* story locations throughout the world and Oregon. The students will analyze the spatial distribution of these stories. They will then speculate where reporters will be stationed by the *The Oregonian*.

Introduction:

The purpose of this lesson is twofold. First, the students practice using mapping skills to make logical connections. Second, the students will understand that using maps and drawing conclusions from them can greatly influence decisions that may affect their daily life.

Connection with curriculum:

Common Curriculum Goal: Understand the social, cultural, and economic processes that change the characteristics of places and regions over time.

Benchmark 12/CAM: Analyze issues and effects of population demographics, distribution, and cultural and movement patterns within a specific context.

Additional ties to various History, Economics, Math, and Language Arts benchmarks

National Geography Standards Addressed:

Standard #1 How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

Standard # 18 How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Grade Level: Directed for 12th, but certainly could be used at other levels.

Objectives:

The students will:

- 1) Map and analyze the spatial distribution of the *The Oregonian*'s stories.
- 2) Chart the locations of the stories
- 3) Predict where the paper locates its reporters, mapping their locations and verbally defending their selections.

Materials:

- a. At least one copy of the *The Oregonian* per group (preferably more).
- b. 1 blank world map, 1 blank U.S. map, 1 blank Oregon map, and 1 blank metro area map for each group.

Procedures:

1. Discuss and clarify entire lesson initially. This is also a time to clarify any vocabulary (not expected) or any other issues. Introduce the lesson as an opportunity for the students to practice management skills through business operational planning.
2. Break the class into groups of approximately 4 to 6. The group size does not really matter in this lesson.
3. Give each group a copy of the *The Oregonian*. This can be a) the same day b) M,T,W,Th,F or ,c) consecutive Mondays. The rationale for using one day (i.e. Monday's) is that it reduces daily differences.
4. Students are to map the spatial distribution of *The Oregonian* news articles. They are to use whatever map combination they should use the largest scale map they can for each article. For example, the first headline article may occur in Moscow. The correct map to plot this story is the world map. Another article may be from a specific neighborhood in the metro area (for example Rockwood.) This should be plotted on the metro area map. I suggest using only the "A" section and the "Metro" section, although certainly all sections could be used. Ideally, all 4 types of maps will incur use.
5. The students are to create a chart of the story locations. Such a chart would list location of story, number of stories from that location, and the map used to plot this information. This chart could also be combined on the board so each group could come write their data and compare with other groups.
6. Students are to map (on the same maps) where they believe *The Oregonian* has hired reporters to focus their work. Students are also to list locations and numbers of reporters. For example, the students may speculate that the *The Oregonian* has 2 reporters in Salem because of the number of stories from that location.
7. Students are to orally justify their predictions. This is an excellent time for discussion and checking for learning.

Assessment:

1. Objectively give the groups credit for map accuracy. Ideally, try to create a chart to use as a scoring guide. It would then be a simple matter to create a number correctly plotted vs. number of stories.
2. Subjectively give the groups credit for analysis, depth of thought, and believability of group placement of reporters.
3. Extra credit possible. A group could do this assignment on their own every week for comparison. A group could create a presentation. This presentation would involve planning distribution of reporters for a new, competitive newspaper using known data and information.

Extensions:

This lesson could work at lower grade levels by removing various pieces of the lesson. For example, you could work with only the front page. You could use the student newspaper and a map of the school. Many changes seem possible with this lesson to fit it into many different situations.

Assessment

Mapping Data

Correct map: 10 pts

- 10 pts- all points placed on correct map _____
- 5 pts- most points placed on correct map _____
- 0 pts- all points placed on incorrect map _____

Chart: 10 pts

- 10 pts- all points placed neatly and clearly _____
- 5 pts- most points placed neatly and clearly _____
- 0 pts- no points placed neatly and clearly _____

Number of Stories: points will change as the paper changes.
Simply give one point for every correct story used. _____

Oral Presentation and Written Analysis

Analysis: 10 pts

- 10 pts- analyses taken from multiple perspectives _____
- 5 pts- analyses taken from one perspective only _____
- 0 pts- no effort of analysis shown _____

Depth of Thought: 10 pts

- 10 pts- justification both thorough and complex _____
- 5 pts- justifications exists, but not thorough nor complex _____
- 0 pts- no justification for ideas, random placement _____

Believability: 10 pts

- 10 pts- solid logic throughout, presentation very convincing _____
- 5 pts- logic and be followed but has gaps that reduce believability _____
- 0 pts- completely fanciful and illogical _____

Total _____