

Colorado

Giant Traveling Map Lesson

TITLE / AUTHOR:

Place Names, Keys to the Past / Dave Kosley

COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS / SUITABLE DISCIPLINES:

- Social Studies, Geography: Fourth Grade Standard 2, Grade Level Expectation 1: Use several types of geographic tools to answer questions about the geography of Colorado, Evidence Outcome a: Answer questions about Colorado regions using maps and other geographic tools (DOK 1-2).
- Social Studies, History: Fourth Grade Standard 1, Grade Level Expectation 1: Organize and sequence events to understand the concepts of chronology and cause and effect in the history of Colorado, Evidence Outcome d: Identify and describe how major political and cultural groups have affected the development of the region (DOK 1-2).
- Social Studies, History: Fourth Grade Standard 1, Grade Level Expectation 2: The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas and themes in Colorado history and their relationships to key events in the United States, Evidence Outcome a: Analyze various eras in Colorado history and the relationship between these eras and eras in United States history, and the changes in Colorado over time (DOK 1-3)

OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- define boundaries of “Spanish Territory” as they once existed in Colorado, identifying the natural features creating boundaries.

RECOMMENDED GRADES: Fourth

TIME NEEDED: 30-45 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Plastic chain
- 12-20 folding road maps or other detailed Colorado maps
- Sticky notes
- Colorado History textbook
- Spanish-English dictionaries

PREPARATION:

- Students should be able to recognize some Spanish words and should have sufficient map skills to transfer the location of a place found on the small maps onto the Giant Traveling Map. Explain to the students that much of Colorado was once Spanish Territory and today they will try to discover the boundaries of that territory.

RULES:

- Shoes are not allowed on the map. Please have students remove shoes before walking on the map.
- No writing utensils on the map.
- No sliding on the map.

DIRECTIONS:

Before you go to the giant state map: (Optional segmenting of the lesson)

1. Organize students into pairs or small groups and give each group a folding/detailed map of Colorado and several sticky notes.
2. Groups will identify place names (city/town, county, mountain, National Forest, river/stream, for example) with a Hispanic name on the folding/detailed map of Colorado.
3. The group will write place names, one per sticky note.

On the map: (Optional segmenting of the lesson)

1. Each group will take turns placing the place name sticky note on the Giant Map. This will require approximating the location on the map in most cases. Some place names are deceiving and are not actually of Spanish origin. Teachers should use discretion in re-directing errors. Some information about Colorado place names can be gotten at <http://genealogytrails.com/colo/placenames.html>.
2. Once students seem to have exhausted the possibilities, or you have only 15 minutes remaining in class time, stop placing sticky notes on the map.
3. Students then gather around the map and look for a concentration of Spanish place names. Point out that as with statistics, there will be outliers which perhaps should not be considered.
4. Select several students, perhaps one from each group, to place the chain on the map where they think the Spanish Territory border was.
5. Once the chain is in place ask if the students recognize any natural features that might form part of the border. Ask why that might be, rather than the straight lines like those that form the present borders of Colorado.
6. Take a picture of the map if possible. This will allow for the students to refer to the outcome of the map exercise after it has been put away, as they read the textbook to see if their border agrees with the textbook. Discuss the timeline of Spanish control.

MODIFICATIONS:

Reasonable accommodations can be made based on the needs of each student. ELL students might be able to use the translation of place names as a vocabulary builder (for example, learning English words by translating Spanish words).

EXTENSIONS:

Place names can be looked up in the Spanish-English dictionaries. Ask the students why that name may have been given. Culebra (snake) Peak is a great example, since the ridge of the mountain serpentine toward the summit. To show this a physical relief map of Colorado would be helpful.

Students could investigate place names in other languages. There are several Native-American and French place names in Colorado, for example. They could try to determine if there is a spatial pattern associated with these place names also.