

Nigeria and Africa: Using Mental Maps to Organize Information

Dr. Kay Weller – UNI

Grade Level (Req.): 7th-10th grade	Content Area (Req.): World Geography	Unit (Opt.):
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		
Time Frame (Req.): Varies – this may be something that you work on throughout a unit on Nigeria or throughout a semester as students work on mental maps.	Goal (Req.): To learn to generate mental maps and analyze them.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will draw a mental map of the world from memory. Students will draw a mental map of Africa from memory. Students will generate a list of their life experiences and write an analysis of how those experiences contributed to their perception of Africa as seen on their map.	
Materials Needed (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line maps of Africa for each student • Pull-down map of the world • Enough tracing paper that students can practice making maps a number of times • Pencils • • • 	New Vocabulary (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	
Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): How do life experiences affect a person’s perception of a place based on mental maps.		
Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have students draw a mental map of the world from memory and label as many countries, features, and cities on it as possible. 2. Have students pair with a neighbor and analyze by discussing why they have included what they did on their map. 3. Initiate the discussion by writing the following questions on your blackboard and ask them to discuss with a partner. What region/continent of the world is focused at the center of the map? (Likely the US) Why do you think that is the case? Are the continents realistic in their size? If not why do you think that you drew your map as you did? (Research shows that students tend to be egocentric and draw the world from the perspective of their own country.) 4. Next ask students to now draw a mental map of Africa labeling as many countries, features, and cities on it as possible. (This can serve as a location pre-test of knowledge about Africa and be repeated as a post-test after students have practiced the activity.) 5. Students should generate a list of life experiences that will help them analyze why they included things on their maps and explain in an essay an analysis of their map with their life experiences list. 6. Have students hand in these mental maps. 7. Students should begin practicing the skill of drawing mental maps of Africa by giving them the student instructions included. 		

8. When you feel that the class has mastered this skill, give the students an exam by generating a mental map of Africa that includes detail you feel is important.
9. Extending the Lesson: Have students ask a parent, guardian, sibling or friend to generate a mental map of the World and one of Africa. Have the student analyze the maps and write a reaction paper explaining their analysis. Have students interview the person who generated the map about their life experiences and analyze how those life experiences influenced their perception of Africa.
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Formative Evaluation (Req.): Class participation

Assessment (Req.): Pass/fail for generating the original World and Africa mental maps. One point per correct item on the mental map exam per your decision.

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand the use of geographic tools to locate and analyze information about people, places, and environments.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

- Speaking and Listening, grade 6-12: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on specific grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
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NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context
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Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):

- Location
- Place
- Region
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School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):

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21st Century Universal Constructs (Opt.):

Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):

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Other Essential Information (Opt.):

Other Resources (Opt.):

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Creating Mental Maps: Student Instructions

1. Go to the window and trace the map of Africa, placing countries on it, several times, in block style.
2. When you have mastered this activity do the same thing from memory at your desk.
3. When you are able to do this from memory begin adding detail to your map. You will likely need to use an atlas so that your map looks more natural. Detail should include the list that follows: countries, Nile R., Lake Victoria, Congo R., Mt. Kilimanjaro, Cape of Good Hope, Atlas Mountains, Sahara Desert, Niger R., Jos Plateau, Kalahari Desert. (You may wish to generate your own list based on what you will be doing in the future.) You will need to practice this many times.
4. Practice the above activity from memory so that you will be able to complete this task on an exam.