



Oh, The Places They Did Go!

Explorers

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Grade Level	4th – 5th Grade	Time Frame	50 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	1 Period
Course	Oklahoma Young Scholars/Javits		

Essential Question

Why did explorers travel around the world? How do you explore an uncharted path?

Summary

This activity helps solidify knowledge and practice map skills by studying European Explorers. Students make posters about European explorers after seeing an example about Christopher Columbus. Then, students act out the route that the explorers took on a large map of the world on the playground. Finally, they draw the route on their own maps and share an explorer's journey with the class. This activity is good for two classes to do together.

Snapshot

Engage Students will learn about European explorers and their routes, then go out to the playground where a map will be waiting.

Explore "Guiding" students will stand on the map and help "explorer" students reenact the route that their chosen explorer took on their journey.

Explain Students will find a partner to travel their explorer's path with them. This is recommended for two classes to do together.

Extend Students will draw each explorer's route on a map.

Evaluate Students will share with the class about the route every explorer took on their journey.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices (4th Grade))

4.2.1: Use maps and other geographic representations(such as globes and graphs), tools, and technologies to acquire, process,and report information from a spatial perspective.

4.2.1A: Use and describe various elements of maps, including keys/legends, scale, cardinal,and intermediate directions.

4.3.1C: Summarize the reasons for key expeditions of North America by Spain, France, and England and their impact on the development of each region.

Attachments

- [Exploration Timeline—Oh The Places They Did Go.pptx](#)
- [Guidelines for Cards—Oh The Places They Did Go.docx](#)
- [Guidelines for Cards—Oh The Places They Did Go.pdf](#)
- [Map of World—Oh The Places They Did Go.jpg](#)

Materials

- Map of the World (attached; one per student)
- Location Cards (guidelines are attached)
- Explorer Cards (guidelines are attached)

45 minutes

Engage

Start by asking the class what they know about Christopher Columbus. Listen to all answers, then share with the class that it can be hard to know what is correct and what is incorrect about events that happened a long time ago. Tell the class that they will all watch a video about Christopher Columbus together. Watch the video [Christopher Columbus | PBS World Explorers](#) together.

After the video, bring out one copy of the attached **Explorer Handout**. Ask students what name they should put down for the explorer, and fill in the rest of the handout by asking students what they learned about the explorer. Put down correct answers to fill out the “Area Discovered”, “Fun Facts”, and “Did He Succeed?” sections. Finally, draw a straight line from Spain to present-day Bahamas. Reflect with the class about what they learned about Christopher Columbus from this additional research.

45 minutes

Explore

Separate the class into groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the **Explorer Handout** and make sure each has access to an internet connected device. Assign each group an explorer from this list: Ponce de Leon, Hernando de Soto, Francisco Coronado, John Cabot, Sir Walter Raleigh, Henry Hudson, René-Robert Cavelier Sieur de La Salle, Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet. Have each group watch the relevant video for their explorers.

[Ponce de Leon](#), [Hernando de Soto](#), [Francisco Coronado](#), [John Cabot](#), [Sir Walter Raleigh](#), [Henry Hudson](#), [René-Robert Cavelier Sieur de La Salle](#), [Jacques Marquette](#) and [Louis Jolliet](#)

After each group has watched its video, provide time for each group to fill out their handouts. Check in periodically to see if they need any additional information or have questions on their routes. Take up each of the handouts at the end of class.

45 minutes

Explain

Paste every group's handout around the classroom before the start of the third day. Once class begins, give each student a small pad of sticky notes. Inform the class that they will participate in a [Gallery Walk](#) around the classroom. When they learn something new, they will place a sticky note next to the fact that they learned. Give students ample time to walk around and discuss, but no more than twenty minutes.

Bring the students back together after time has finished. Ask volunteers to mention facts that they remember from their classmates' handouts. After the volunteers have mentioned their facts, ask if anyone else found that fact interesting, and why they remembered it.

45 minutes

Extend

Review some of the explorers students learned about over the past few days. Tell them that today, instead of learning about explorers, they will “be the explorers.” Ask students to return to their groups and that they will make a map. Provide the attached **Map of the World** to each group as a reference.

Give students time to make a rough map using chalk on the playground outside or on butcher paper with marker. Tell students that the map does not need to look perfect, but each continent does need to be labelled.

Hand back each group’s handouts and instruct each student to walk the route they would take if they were each explorer. They must start at the same and at the same place as their explorer, but besides that, they can choose their own route through the oceans. Give the groups time to practice, then observe each group’s route. Bring everyone back to the classroom and congratulate them on becoming explorers!

45 minutes

Evaluate

Using the [Rose, Bud, and Thorn](#) strategy, have students reflect on the positive and negative knowledge they learned about the age of exploration over this week. For their “rose,” ask students to consider what could be explored by the next generation of explorers, including themselves. Pair students up and have them share their responses with their partners.

Differentiation for Gifted Learners

Resources