

Geography

*Helpful maps, charts and
notes on using a one-room-school-house approach*



Geography in a One-Room Schoolhouse

By Leigh Bortins

Children of all ages like to draw. One time I challenged a classroom of 50 students ages 12 to 17 to be able to draw the continent of South America from memory and label at least 40 places at the end of an hour.

None of them even knew much more than that it was a continent, yet by the time the hour was up many could reproduce from memory a recognizable map with over 40 locations and all could draw the map and label many things. All I gave them was time, a goal, a pencil, a map of South America and plenty of paper.

At the end I asked them if they were proud of themselves. They were. Then I asked, "Why haven't we been shown how to do this before?" They didn't know. So I told them, "You have a good handle on a whole continent after one hour. There are only seven continents. Let's say you drew an hour a day. How long would it take you to grasp the seven continents? And what if you drew them off and on throughout a school year? Can you see that you'd be able to retain an understanding of places in the world?" Almost everyone wants to win a goal. We actually like to be challenged. So, you can see how this would work in a one room school house of 60 children ages 6 to 16. They can all talk about maps and draw for a while. Older kids would hopefully draw more and better maps. They may even give a friend or sibling hints on how to memorize a feature. I would talk the map out as I drew since I process aurally. Other kids would just be quiet and see the map.

My John would try to use as many shading techniques as possible if color wasn't available. My David would bounce while he studied the map and then sit on his knees as he drew. My perfectionist student would want to know exactly where to begin his drawing on the paper. Some kids would make it right the first time. Others would go through twenty sheets. Yet they can all do the project to some level of expertise and satisfaction.

This same technique can be used for verb conjugations, the periodic table, musical pieces, algebraic formulas, engine schematics, and biology dissections. Take a master page, get a piece of paper, and copy until you have the master in your head. Then start filing these master pictures into convenient shelves in your brain.

Soon you'll be able to pull a timeline event from its brain-shelf along with a map from its brain-shelf and a quote from Scripture from its brain-shelf and be able to apply that knowledge to make an intelligent prognosis on a current event. Then you'll not just be smart, but you'll also be wise.

Challenge A geography strives to remain a pure classically taught subject, without the use of modern conveniences. All that's really needed is an accurate atlas/map, a drawing utensil, and something upon which to draw. If a tutor in another country, like the Sahara region, doesn't have multiple atlases, extra paper, rulers, transparencies, vis-à-vis markers, etc., I don't want to list those as "required" supplies in the Challenge A guide or give a very detailed explanation of 'how-to' accomplish drawing the world. Tutors will help students flesh out those details in the areas in which they live.

*However, Americans have access to incredible tools. Use them!! Just know that the geography **guide** may always reflect the one-room schoolhouse model.*

Bobbie Smith

CC Challenge A Program Manager

Tutors must keep in mind that CC is intentional and deliberate about not taking the joy (and responsibility) of learning and teaching at home away from home school parents and students. As tutors, we have to constantly walk the delicate line between providing support and tools/helps to bring families along and encourage them in their own home school; and making everything so "easy" for parents and students that we remove the need "to think" and wrestle with new concepts for themselves. It is precisely in this "thinking" and wrestling that we humans learn; therefore we must tread carefully in order to not preempt this experience, but model "seeking, discovering, thinking, wrestling, learning a system, etc ..." and the rewards associated with walking through this process for oneself.

Remember that true teaching is not about showing how much the teacher knows, but inspiring and leading students to own the responsibility and process of discovering certain truths for themselves. Tutors at every level within CC strive to keep this in balance, as well as does every parent in the teaching of their own children! There is no formula concerning this balance, that's for sure! Just much needed wisdom as each community and family dynamic is unique.

Review Leigh Bortins' above article concerning teaching Geography in a one-room school house. While this model is a bit daunting for most of us "moderns", it is none-the-less a very effective learning process. I pray it will inspire you with the "spirit" and "vision" Leigh desires to convey through Challenge A's geography, while you strive to "flesh out" the practical side of teaching geography within your Challenge A program.

Heather Shirley

CC Program Director

Challenge A Geography

Supplies:

Challenge A Guide
Mercator Map w/
Outlined Continents

Compact Atlas
Tracing paper
Paper

Pencil
Dictionary

Weekly Work:

1. Continent Map-to-Scale Work

- a. Locate a Mercator map with the continents drawn to scale. This will be your model to copy each week. (provided by CC)
- b. Using a (a) blank Mercator Grid map or (b) a student/parent-created blank, Mercator map, practice of placing/drawing the continents in correct proportion on the map.

*Note that "purist" classical students would **create** their own blank Mercator map (option b above) with longitude and latitude markings ©from the model!*

2. Locating and Drawing Weekly Locations

- a. Refer to the **Challenge A Guide** to determine the list of locations for that week.

Note that some weeks are flexible toward the end of the semester, allowing students to work more quickly or to break the work out over more weeks.

- b. Continent Focus for the week:

✎ Draw continent outline and specified country outlines.

Using online or CC provided outline maps, practice tracing and eventually drawing each continent's countries outlines.

✎ Locate, mark, and label capital(s)

✎ Draw, mark, and label features (rivers, mountains, waters, ...)

Modern Tools: *Continent tracing may be done using tracing paper or transparency. Drawing may be done freehand using a lap whiteboard or blank paper. Note that the last day of class students will be handed either a blank piece of paper or a Mercator map – so practice accordingly.*

*Use **Compact Atlas** to locate country capitals, rivers, mountains, waters, and other features.*

See the overview "Maps by Week" on the next page. This will show the "system" in which you may "build" a continent every few weeks.

3. Geographical Terms

- a. Refer to the **Challenge A Guide** for each week's geographical Terms. Use a **dictionary** to define each week's geographical terms.

Challenge A Maps-by-Week

Assigned Week/ Completed by Seminar	Continent	Details	Terms
1/2	North America	US- States and Capitals	Altitude, archipelago, arm, atoll, bank, basin
2/3		US-Rivers and Features	Bay, bayou, beach, bluff, bog, branch
3/4		Canada-Provinces and Capitals	Breakers, brink, brook, canal, canyon, cape
4/5		Canada-Bodies of Water and Features	Cave, cavern, chasm, channel, cinder cone, cliff
5/6	Central America	Countries, Capitals, Waters	Coast, continent, continental shelf, country, cove, crag
6/7		Features	Crater, creek, cultivated land, current, dale, dam
7/8	South America	Countries and Capitals	Dell, delta, desert, dike, divide, downstream
8/9		Rivers and Features	Drainage basin, dune, earth, elevation, estuary, fall line
9/10	Europe	North Western Countries	Field, fjord, foothill, ford, forest, glacier
10/11		Eastern Europe & Balkans	Glen, gorge, grove, gulch, gulf, harbor
11/12		Waters, Rivers, and Mountains	Headland, hill, horizon, iceberg, inlet, irrigated land
12/13		Review/Catch-up	Island, isthmus, junction, keys, knob, knoll
13/14		Review/Catch-up	Lagoon, lake, land, latitude, ledge, left bank
14/15	All: US, Central, South, Europe	Review All	Levee, locks, longitude, marsh, meadow, mesa
1/2	Asia	Eastern Asia	Mine, mountain, mountain chain, mountain range, mouth, moor
2/3		Southwestern Asia	Natural resource, peak, oasis, ocean, pass, pasture
3/4		South Asia	Peninsula, point, piedmont, pier, plain, plateau
4/5		East Asia	Pond, pool, prairie, precipice, rapids
5/6		Southeastern Asia	Reef, reservoir, ridge, right bank, river
6/7	Africa	Northwestern Africa	River mouth, river source, sandbar, savannah, sea
7/8		Northeastern and Central Africa	Sea level, seaport, shoal, shore, shoreline
8/9		Southern Africa	Slope, snowline, soil, sound, spit
9/10		Features of Africa	Steppe, strait, stream, summit, swamp
10/11		Review/Catch-up	Tableland, terrace, tide, timber, timberline
11/12	Oceania	Australia & New Zealand and Features	Topography, tributary, tundra, tunnel, upstream
12/13		Other Countries and Waters	Vale, valley, vegetation, volcano, waterfall
13/14		Review/Catch-up	Watershed, waves, wharf, whirlpool, woods
14/15	Review All	Be Ready to Draw your Map!	Review All







