

Geography Lesson: Exploring South America with Google Maps

Target Audience: Middle School Students

Learning Objectives:

- Identify major countries, physical features, and landmarks in South America.
- Use Google Maps to explore different regions and understand their geographical context.
- Appreciate the cultural and historical significance of key landmarks.

Materials:

- Laptops or tablets with internet access
- Google Maps website (<https://maps.google.com/>)
- Projector or whiteboard (optional)

Lesson Outline:

Introduction (10 minutes):

- Start by asking students what they already know about South America.
- Briefly introduce the continent's location, size, and diversity of landscapes.
- Explain the use of Google Maps as a tool for virtual exploration.

Activity 1: Physical Features (20 minutes):

1. The Andes Mountains:

- Show Google Maps image of the Andes Mountains:
<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msa=0&msid=214926281100106752157.0004a6f279caf3b56512f&ie=UTF8&ll=4.154679,-75.108032&spn=1.917466,3.295898&t=p&z=8&output=embed>
- Discuss the Andes as the longest mountain range in the world, stretching along the western coast of South America.
- Highlight the impact of the Andes on climate and biodiversity.

2. The Amazon Rainforest:

- Show Google Maps image of the Amazon Rainforest:
https://www.google.com/mymaps/viewer?mid=1tf5e5on_IJy1ImMTIKR7AayoiBs&hl=en
- Discuss the Amazon as the largest rainforest on Earth, its role in global climate, and the rich biodiversity it supports.
- Briefly mention the Amazon River, the world's second-longest river, and its importance for transportation and indigenous communities.

3. The Atacama Desert:

- Show Google Maps image of the Atacama Desert:
https://www.google.com/mymaps/viewer?mid=1UEWHzqknlQukZtw--WPIWnRNME&hl=en_US
- Discuss the Atacama as the driest non-polar desert in the world, its unique landscapes like the Valley of Mars, and its astronomical significance.

4. Iguazu Falls:

- Show Google Maps image of Iguazu Falls:
https://www.google.com/mymaps/viewer?mid=1Bc1NUI-L-wlgJ7Qxc5-0XBybvro&hl=en_US
- Discuss Iguazu Falls as one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the world, located on the border between Argentina and Brazil.
- Highlight the ecological importance of the falls and surrounding rainforest.

Activity 2: Cultural and Historical Landmarks (20 minutes):

1. Machu Picchu:

- Show Google Maps image of Machu Picchu:
https://www.google.com/mymaps/viewer?mid=16RFLiwph1-ZmjEzQVZhqBkPDc0c&hl=en_US
- Discuss Machu Picchu as an ancient Inca city high in the Andes Mountains, its historical significance, and its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Encourage students to explore the site virtually using Google Maps Street View.

2. Christ the Redeemer:

- Show Google Maps image of Christ the Redeemer:
https://www.google.com/mymaps/viewer?mid=1vDINKbb4vSW9WyZot-8qTy5WQ0c&hl=en_US
- Discuss Christ the Redeemer as a iconic statue overlooking Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, its religious significance, and its role as a symbol of the city.

3. Salar de Uyuni:

- Show Google Maps image of Salar de Uyuni:
<https://www.google.com/mymaps/viewer?mid=1hof1pbSYthrunOnTDrppQQX6Tvc&hl=en>
- Discuss Salar de Uyuni as the world's largest salt flat, located in Bolivia, its unique landscape, and its importance for lithium mining.

Conclusion (10 minutes):

- Briefly summarize the key landmarks and physical features covered.
- Encourage students to continue exploring South America using Google Maps and other resources.
- Have students share their favorite discoveries or ask questions about the continent.

Differentiation:

- For advanced students, provide additional information about the indigenous cultures,

environmental challenges, and economic development of different South American countries.

- For struggling students, provide additional visuals and support with using Google Maps.

Extension Activities:

- Have students create a presentation about their favorite South American landmark using Google Slides.
- Encourage students to research and report on a current event or issue related to South America.
- Organize a virtual "trip" to South America using Google Maps, planning an itinerary and visiting different landmarks online.

Remember to adjust the lesson to fit the specific needs and interests of your students. Have fun exploring South America with Google Maps!