

**Spring 2009 Teaching with Primary Sources Quarterly
Learning Activity – Secondary Level**

Maps and MapMakers: Seeing What's On the Map Activity



Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 World Map

Martin Waldseemüller. *Universalis cosmographia secunda Ptholemei traditionem et Americi Vespucci aliorum que lustrations*. [Strasbourg?]: 1507.
Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress

Library of Congress Bibliographic record:
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3200.ct000725>

OVERVIEW

Overview

In this activity, students examine Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 map of the world to discover a new way of thinking about what was important to the mapmaker. Students, working individually or in pairs, will look closely at different types of information on the map to consider choices the mapmaker made about what to put on the map, and what to leave off. They will hypothesize about what would have been the most important information to the mapmaker, consider the types of information they consider to be most important on the map, and later defend their conclusions in class discussion.

Objectives

After completing this learning activity, students will be able to:

- Describe how mapmakers work to create maps (i.e., adding different layers of information)
- Analyze the details of a map to speculate about the map's intended audience and use
- Explain how a mapmaker's choices about what information to include and highlight on a map are influenced by perspective

Time Required

One class period

Recommended Grade Range

7-8

Topic/s

Geography

Subject

Social Studies

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OVERVIEW (CONT'D)

Standards

McREL 4th Edition Standards & Benchmarks

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

Geography

Standard 1. (The World in Spatial Terms) Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies

Standard 6. (Places and Regions) Understands that culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions

Standard 17. (Uses of Geography) Understands how geography is used to interpret the past

Language Arts

Standard 1. (Writing) Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Standard 9. (Viewing) Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

PREPARATION

Materials

Have these materials ready before the activity:

Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 World Map (online map with zoom feature)

<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3200.ct000725>

Maps and Mapmakers: Seeing What's On the Map online activity

<http://myloc.gov/Education/OnlineActivities/Pages/onlineactivities/mapmaking/index.html>

Note: Requires prior download of Flash 9 or higher. Direct link to an external site with free software for download is available from the Library's myloc.gov Web site.

Internet-ready computer for each student or pair of students

- Set up access to run the online activity
- Bookmark both the map and the online activity (see above)

Worksheet

- One copy for each student (see attached document)

Resources

Before leading students through the exploration process, teachers should make themselves familiar with the background of this map by reading:

Recognizing and Naming a New Continent (see attached document)

Additional Library of Congress resources are listed in the **Maps and Mapmakers: Seeing What's On the Map** online activity's "Teacher Resources" section (lower right corner):

<http://myloc.gov/Education/OnlineActivities/Pages/onlineactivities/mapmaking/index.html>

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PROCEDURE

Introduction to the map:

1. Assign students to work at computers individually or in pairs.
[**Note:** Bookmark the online map on the computers in advance or provide the url address.]
2. Explain that students will first investigate details of Martin Waldseemüller’s 1507 World Map to discover why it is one of the world’s most important maps.
 - Hand out the **worksheets** to students (one copy per student)
 - Ask students to open the bookmarked map
 - Review worksheet directions on how to use the online map
3. When all students have completed the worksheet, briefly discuss their responses to the worksheet’s questions.
 - Emphasize that Waldseemüller’s 1507 World Map is the first known map:
 - to show the continents of the New World separated from Asia by the Pacific Ocean
 - on which the name “America” appears (thus called “the Birth Certificate of America”).
 - Connect this understanding to the broader concept that all mapmakers make choices about what information to include and highlight depending on their own perspectives and a map’s intended audience and use.
4. Explain that students will now do an online activity to examine more closely one small area of Waldseemüller’s map to demonstrate the process of how mapmakers create a map by including different layers of information.

Activity:

1. Ask students to open the bookmarked activity, working at computers individually or in pairs.
[**Note:** Bookmark the site on the computers in advance or provide the url address.]
2. Remind students to explore all six types of information on the map from both the mapmaker’s perspective and their own perspectives before responding to the online activity’s last three questions.
3. When students complete the activity, ask them to select **Print** to print a copy of their responses to the last three questions.
 - Students should prepare to defend their responses to the class by using information from the online activity and the map.

Culminating Discussion:

1. As an entire class, discuss students’ hypotheses about the most important type of information to Waldseemüller, their own opinions and any information missing from the map. Ask students to explain and defend their choices.

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PROCEDURE (CONT'D)

2. Encourage students to explain how the map's intended users and purpose and Waldseemüller's own perspective and knowledge may have influenced his choices about the types of information to include and highlight. Possible questions include:

- How do you think Waldseemüller intended this map to be used? By whom?
(Possible answers: exploration, land disputes, historical record, scholarly use?)
 - What clues do the map's physical characteristics (size, material, language) offer about its intended users and purpose?

[**Note:** Refer students back to the online map's bibliographic information.]
- How might Waldseemüller have revised this map for different purposes or users?
- What missing information might Waldseemüller have added to later maps based on new discoveries?

EVALUATION

- Active engagement with online map resulting in thorough completion of worksheet
- Active engagement in online activity resulting in printed written responses
- Active, thoughtful participation in pre- and post-activity class discussions



Rivers, Edens, Empires. Prologue <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lewisandclark/lewis-prologue.html>

Recognizing and Naming a New Continent

Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 world map grew out of an ambitious project in St. Dié, France, during the first decade of the sixteenth century, to document and update new geographic knowledge derived from the discoveries of the late fifteenth and the first years of the sixteenth centuries. Waldseemüller's large world map was the most exciting product of that research effort, and included data gathered during Amerigo Vespucci's voyages of 1501-1502 to the New World. Waldseemüller christened the new lands "America" in recognition of Vespucci's understanding that a new continent had been uncovered as a result of the voyages of Columbus and other explorers in the late fifteenth century. This is the only known surviving copy of the first printed edition of the map, which, it is believed, consisted of 1,000 copies.

Waldseemüller's map supported Vespucci's revolutionary concept by portraying the New World as a separate continent, which until then was unknown to the Europeans. It was the first map, printed or manuscript, to depict clearly a separate Western Hemisphere, with the Pacific as a separate ocean. The map represented a huge leap forward in knowledge, recognizing the newly found American landmass and forever changing the European understanding of a world divided into only three parts--Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Name _____

Maps and MapMakers: Seeing What's On the Map Activity

Every map was made by someone.

Martin Waldseemüller made his 1507 *Universalis cosmographiae* (World map) following the discoveries of Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci and other explorers during the late fifteenth and first years of the sixteenth centuries.

What makes this map one of the most important maps in the world?

You will use an online version of the map to look closely for clues to the questions below.

Directions:

- Go to the bibliographic record for **Waldseemüller's 1507 World Map**:
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3200.ct000725>
- Select the image of the **map on the left**
- Select the window size **640 x 480**
- Select desired **Zoom Level** (try starting in the middle)
- Click on the **Zoom View map** to view details
- Click on the **Navigator View map** to select different map areas

1. Look closely at the continents. How does this depiction differ from your knowledge of the continents?

2. Now look at the information given about the continents. What does this suggest about Waldseemüller’s point of view and knowledge as the mapmaker?

3. What political boundaries or borders, if any, can you find on this map? What about any other details that may show “ownership” of lands at that time?

4. Locate the Pacific Ocean on the map. This is the first known map to include this ocean. What significance might the existence of the Pacific Ocean have had for people living in 16th century Europe?

5. What other details do you see? Who do you think Walseemüller hoped would use this map and for what purpose?

6. What else do you want to know about this map?
