

LESSON DESIGN

ARCHAEOLOGY

USGS MAPS

OVERVIEW: The students will learn how to read the description, details, directions, distances, and designations of USGS maps which archaeologists use the most.

OBJECTIVE: Given a USGS map of your area the students will be able to identify contour lines, high and low elevations, etc. by pointing to the areas, or by marking them lightly in pencil.

SET: The teacher holds up a USGS map and says. “Who can show me the highest elevation on this map?” Wait for a response. If there is a correct one, recognize it and then say, “Today we are going to begin to learn how to read a USGS map. This is the type of map that archaeologists use the most.”

INSTRUCTION AND ACTIVITIES: Put students in groups of four, and give each group a USGS map. Model how to find longitude and latitude on the map, then write designations on the board and have each group find them. Model how to read the contour lines, and show them that every 5th line is darker and is marked with the elevation. Have them find certain elevations. Point out to them that these are the maps that archeologists use to do surveys and write site reports.

TEST OF OBJECTIVES: The teacher will move about the room asking the groups to point to the answers to the questions. The teacher may also have the students indicate in pencil where the places are. The teacher may also call on each group to show the other groups what they were assigned to find.

EXTENSION: For higher students and classes you may add a compass and have them find directions. You may have them find the best routes to places. If you have been reading about cultures in the area, you may ask them, based on their knowledge, where they would most likely find sites.

GRADE LEVEL, MATERIALS AND TIME: 1st through 12th. Enough USGS maps, pencils, and paper for groups of four students. One period.

GENERAL COMMENTS: An excellent book is Be Expert With Map & Compass: The Orienteering Handbook by Bjorn Kjellstrom.

ANY QUESTIONS? E-mail me at schneiderg@sbcglobal.net
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