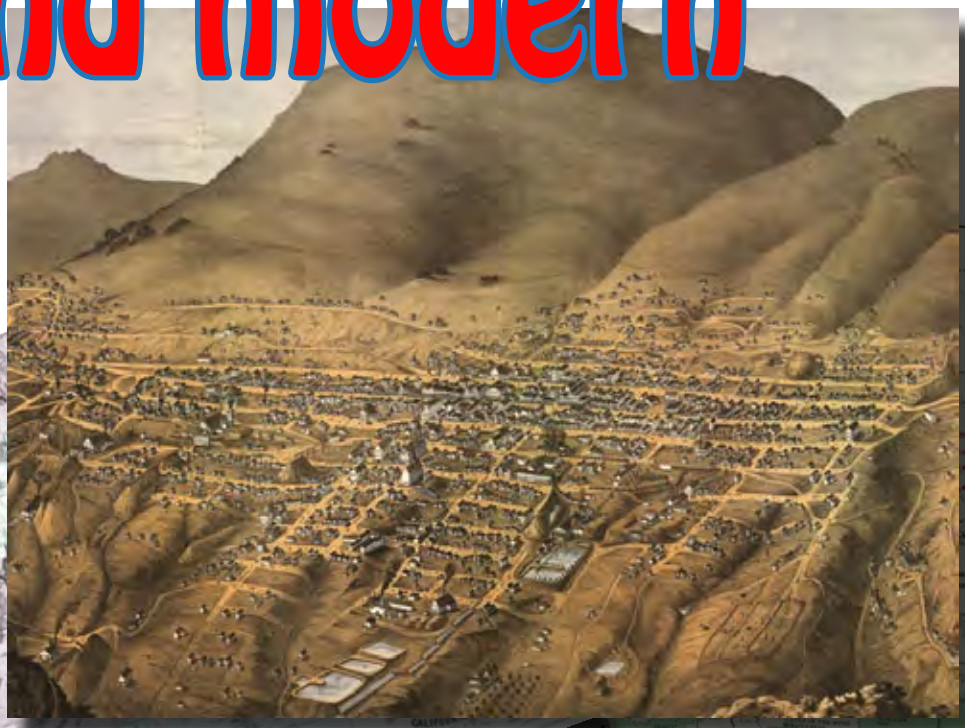
AMERICAN LEARNING LIBRARY

Historic and modern Maps



STATE STUDIES

Using the resources
Historic maps

- As you will know, the Library of Congress has a huge collection of historic maps that they have made available online. These represent an amazing source of materials from the past.

- We have scoured these maps for you to make some available as part of our memories collection that we think will enhance your state studies, and prove fascinating to your students.

- The main objective is to add a unique system of memories that are local, not just to your state, but also often to your city.

- We have chosen maps that are of great historic value, for example maps showing the initial exploration of the Mississippi. We have also shown, where possible, bird's-eye maps. These were a speciality of the late 19th century, and are easier for young children to understand than 'plan' views. We have also put several maps in if they are available for different dates, but of the same places.

- You can use these maps in many ways. For example, you can study the words used in the past, and compare the English to that of today. You can ask from these maps what people at the time thought was important, and wonder if that is the same today.

- If you need more, go to Library of Congress, digitized maps.

- Modern maps are in the folder called 'Maps', and historic maps are in the folder called 'Memories'.

- In many maps you may be able to locate your school and see what it was like over a century ago. You can, in any case, often see cities at times when the street plans were just being laid out at the start of the Gilded Age (see History of America book and following pages with suggested lesson plans). You can see how the topography affected the plan, and you can better see what are the historic crossing points of rivers, and think about why those should be so. In fact the things you can do with these maps is endless, both in geography and history.

- The LOC public collection mostly stops at 1922, which is the reason we cannot bring you much that is more recent than that.

- The main objective is to add a unique system of memories that are local, not just to your state, but also often to your city.

- The material we have gathered is in JPG format, and can be printed out. Depending on your computer, you may also be able to zoom into the map for more detail.

- Something to remember, and depending on the age and ability of your students, is that the material can seem daunting, so if you can bring the map up on a classroom board, so much the better, for then you can focus on a piece or a feature of the map and study just sections at a time.

- You will need to read these pages carefully before you use maps in class to decide exactly what approach to take. For example, are you going to use maps as a basis for a lesson on graphic design, or on the style of English literature a century ago, or for geography or history?

- Just one of these objectives will be quite enough for a whole lesson.

STATE STUDIES

Detailed use

▶ Make sure your students know where the map is located in your state.

▶ Here are some hints on how to use the maps. Suggested lesson plans with actual maps are on the following pages.

1. Look at the format. What does that tell you about the technology of the time (hand drawn, hand tinted, for example)?

2. Ask students to think where the map is. Locate it for them on an atlas and possibly on Google Earth.

3. Think about how the map was made. Was it made by explorers on foot, or sailors in a ship? The early cartographers had just a compass and simple ways of measuring distance, often by pacing. Explain that is one of the reasons the old maps might look different from new ones created using satellite imagery.

▶ Making your own local map based on triangulation, and using a compass and a measured base line, is an example of triangulation, and can be used as a demonstration of the importance of math.

4. Why do some maps have detail evenly placed, while others have detail just along rivers or coasts? The answer is that these were the places that the navigators could get to. The rest was completely unknown. Emphasize that this was an exciting time, when it truly was a 'New World' for the Europeans.

5. Think about the purpose of the map. Was it to help pioneers navigate across the Rockies, for example, or to find their way along the New England coast? Was it to tell of trading posts along the Mississippi, or was it to tell which places were navigable? Was it to provide a plan, or give the general public a bird's-eye view for their entertainment? Once you know the purpose of the map, it goes a long way to explaining what kind of detail you will find.

6. Go on from this point to think about the purpose of what was intended to be shown on the map. Students may think a map is a map is a map. So you need to explain that a map is a selective representation of the world as a whole, designed to provide information connected to its purpose. So a road map will not have the same information as a topography map, or if it does, then one aspect will be subdued, and the primary objective enhanced. Get students to look at a variety of maps to try to find out why they look as they do. Compare a road atlas with a world atlas, for example. Can they find more maps from the school library (library skills) and if so where would they look (elsewhere in the American Learning Library)?

7. Think about how expensive paper might have been, and how difficult it was to make in the past. Would that have affected the number of copies produced and how they were made? Why was there no use of color?

8. Print off parts of the map (use the full sized JPG and select just a quarter or less, so different groups can have different bits). Ask them individually or in groups to examine it, and then summarize what it shows. Then they should tell the rest of the class what was in their section. If you get a number of readings like this, you will build up a snapshot of the whole map. But students will need a great deal of help with this task, or they will not see what to do. Tell them what the scale is, so they can, for example, work out that 'summerville' was 4 miles from 'winterville' and six miles from 'springville'. They can look to see how many settlements were on rivers, how many crossing there were, and whether that affected where the settlements were.

9. For more advanced years, you can use this map section to talk about the history of the time, who owned it (was it a colony, a territory, or a state, for example?).

10 Again for advanced learners, sometimes we have maps of more than one date. They can be asked to talk about the way a place grew, and why they thought it grew in the directions it did (increasing population but also better transport systems). Look also inside the city to see if that changed, too.

These are just starting points for all manner of cross-curricular investigations. Enjoy viewing them – we have!

Plenary session

- Review the way that historic maps help us to see life as it was in the past far better than a textbook alone could. Review also any limitations students might have seen in this kind of historical record.

3. Further work/homework

- Get students to visit the local library or contact the local historical society and see if they can find other historic maps.

Example lesson plan 1

▶ A bird's-eye map of San Francisco.
(We have many bird's-eye maps, and you should find one in your state's portal.)

1. See if you can find a modern map to keep at hand in case you need to show students where features are in the context of what they are used to.

2. Look at the format. This is a birds-eye map. What is its purpose?: to give the general public a 'wonder and awe' version of their city.

2. Because its use is visual, it is not drawn to scale. What implications does this have?: it means some distances and shapes may not be accurate, but have been enhanced.

3. Think about how the map was made. It was made before the age of airplanes, so it was made from maps, with the cartographer imagining what it would look like. This was skillful stuff, but may result in some errors.

4. Which parts can most be relied on?: The street plan is easiest to draw, and so can most likely be relied on. Get students to notice that this was a time when most American cities were expanding and streets were being laid out in grid patterns, often with not respect for landscape (hence the famous Lombard St. in San Francisco, and why the film 'Bullit" was so dramatic in its car chase sequence.

▶ NOTE: this reference to a film is NOT just a throwaway. You have a mixed ability class with a wide range of interests, so find popular things that can be used to engage reluctant learners. For example, if they have not seen Bullit, encourage them to do so at home (Parents permitting due to subject content, or for parents to show them just the city car chase sequence) and they will then think"I saw that place on a bird's-eye map, and come back to the map and try to find it.

That relates the real world to classwork.

There are many other films where the setting can be related to a map.

5. Now find out how much they can spot. Are there any bridges? Show them a picture of San Francisco today (go to picture gallery in California portal on American Learning Library) and notice the Golden Gate Bridge was not there, the Bay Bridge was not there etc.

6. What can they tell about the function of San Francisco from the map?: they can tell it was a major port. That is why there are piers, to maximize the number of vessels that could dock.

7. Are there any skyscrapers?: no, because it was before that age.

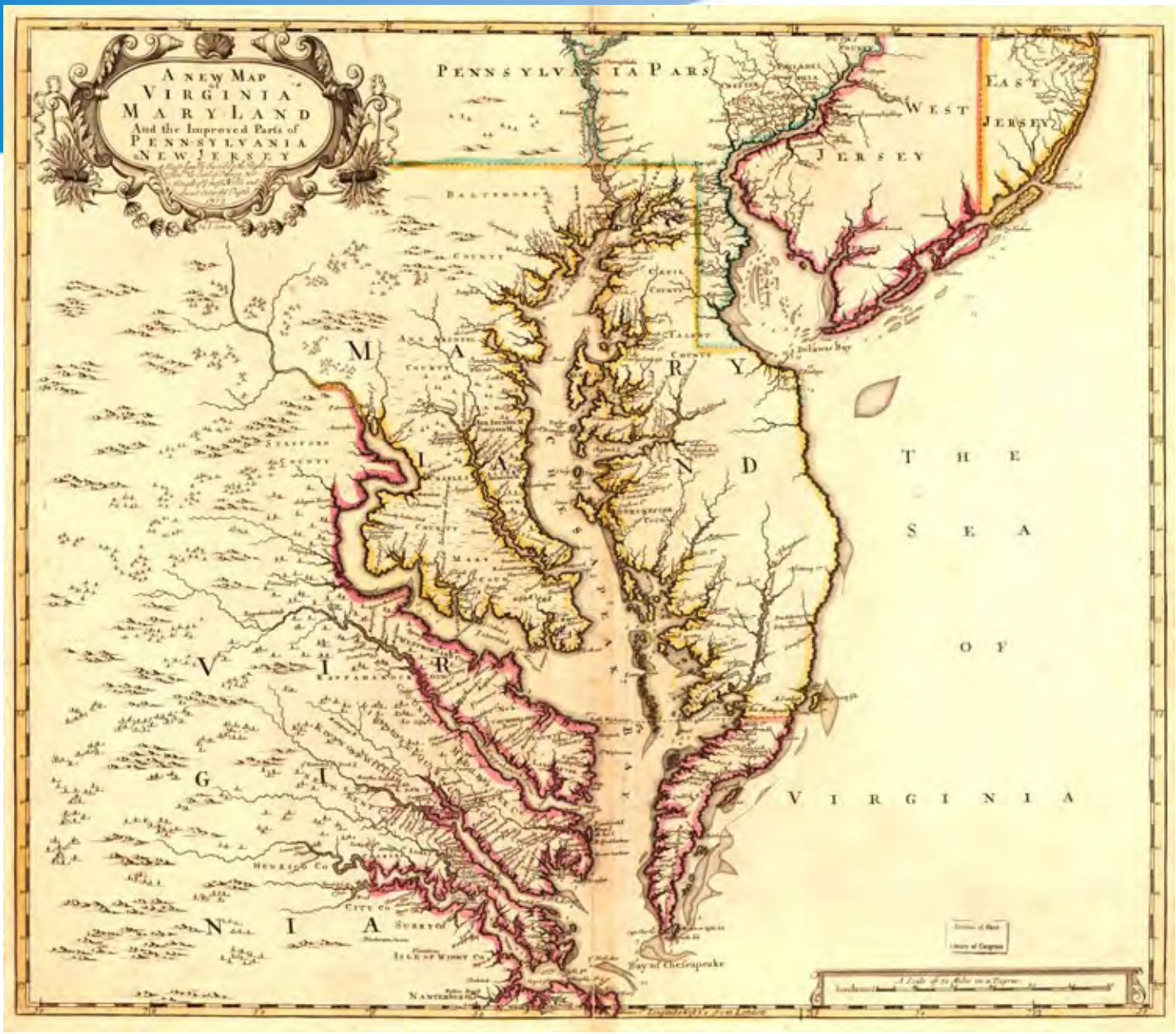
8. Move on to more difficult subjects like topography. Can students describe the nature of the landscape.

And that is probably enough for any one lesson.

Plenary

- Review with students when the map was drawn, what its purpose was and how well they think it met that objective. Ask them to comment on which features were emphasized as a result of the objective.

Example lesson plan 2



1. Look at the format. This is a very old map. Students should be introduced to very old maps of their country, and state if available, to see the way that it has evolved. This map is 1740, even before the idea of independence had taken hold. Ask students what they know about colonial times. How many colonies were

there and what were they called? Can they find them on this map (starting with the name plate top right)?

2. Look carefully around this map. See if students are aware that it says 'East Jersey' and 'West Jersey'. What other name changes can they spot that differ from modern day usage? Why is that?

3. Names tell a lot about the history of a place. Where did the name Pennsylvania come from? What about Jersey? What about Maryland? What about Virginia? This is a good opportunity to use a map as a vehicle for talking about colonial history (or if you are in another map, whatever history period that refers to) .

4. Slowly it will dawn on students that not only are names different (e.g. Sea of Virginia), but the places shown as not evenly spread as they are today but clustered along the rivers. Again, this tells us about colonization. If you are studying Saxon and Viking invasions as part of World History, the parallel to those settlements a thousand years earlier is more or less exact. (Curriculum Visions has books on Saxons and Vikings, and explains placenames from those times, so you can use it to talk about place names in colonial times, too. Saxons and Vikings named places after their leaders or the landscape. Is that what you can see for colonial times, too?

5. Now find out how much they can spot about settlement. Where are the cities?: of course, there aren't any, as this is too early, AND the map-makers did not think showing the size of a place was important. Discuss that with your students.

Plenary

- Old maps tell a lot about the early history of a place. Ask students to say something about colonial times that they have learned from studying this map.

STATE STUDIES

Example lesson plan 3 modern maps

1. Look at the format. This is a modern state map. Ask students why it is colored, but the other neighboring states are not?:emphasis. Talk about how color shading helps to differentiate items on maps (and elsewhere, for example, advertising).

2. Get them to look away from the map and then look quickly back at it for a second, and then look away again. What do they remember of that map?: color, roads. Talk about first impressions, and how the map-maker designs a map with priorities in mind.

3. Look to see that cities and other settlements are shown. Ask students what is missing?: topography, parks, forests and so on.

4. Discuss why these have been left off, and thus what the purpose of the map is. You will find this map in our U.S. Cities book, and also within the book on your state. Find those locations and ask students if, in their context, they think that map is appropriate. Discuss the word context for other examples.

5. Discuss with students how we might know or guess which is the capital: use of upper-case letters, and also use of differing type sizes. Discuss what symbol might be useful to distinguish the biggest city from the capital, if these are not the same place.

6. St. Louis is not in Illinois, but is shown on the map. Discuss with students whey neighboring information is sometimes helpful (for example in explaining road patterns).

7. Why are some roads in red and others in gray?: state roads/interstate highways? Check if this is true.

8. Are there any other important state features students think should have been included (reminding them of the purpose of the map).

Plenary

- Students should discuss the importance of putting relevant information on a map in relation to its purpose, and not putting a whole load of confusing junk on there just because they happen to know about it.

STATE STUDIES

Example lesson plan 4 modern maps

1. Look at the format. This is a modern city map. Ask students why some of it is colored, but other parts are not?: urban areas, yellow; parks, green, federal and other government areas, pink. Talk about how color shading helps to differentiate items on maps (and elsewhere, for example, advertising).

2. Get them to look away from the map, and then look quickly back at it for a second, and then look away again. What do they remember of that map?: color, roads. Talk about first impressions, and how the map-maker designs a map with priorities in mind.

3. Look to see that the emphasis is on roads. Students should be aware of the interstates being in blue. Ask students how else they might know those roads are interstates (shield with number). Then ask students to see if all blue roads are interstates (no, 1604 is not an interstate, but it is a restricted access road). Discuss with students why both interstate and state roads might sometimes share the same color(purpose of map is to show thruways). Finally see if students spot that intestate junctions have blue numbers, while state roads in blue do not. This is all designed to get students to look in detail and make comparisons. Then ask students what is missing?: topography, neighborhood roads, for example.

4. What are the bold black names (districts). Why might they be on the map?; discuss map function.

5. Discuss with students the difference between what is shown on a city map and a state map. Why should they be different?: the scale determines what can be shown, so discuss map scale and legends as useful features of cartography.

6. What is shown in red lettering?: points of interest.

7. Are there any other important city features students think should have been included (reminding them of the purpose of the map).

Plenary

- Students should discuss the importance of putting relevant information on a map in relation to its scale and purpose. They will understand that maps of differing scales have different kinds of information on them. Finally, compare the way a map and a satnav are used. Discuss why maps still have an important role.