

Student directions: Mapping - Follow the Rivers

Student directions:

Your teacher is going to project a few maps on the white board. Take some time to look at each map's details. You are looking for the differences between mountains and plains, and water and land. Remember, the right side of your page is east and the left side is west. The top is north and the bottom is south. You are going to do a warm up with the United States mainland borders before you begin the lesson.

A. Look at the map. Can you guess where the border between the United States and Canada is?

B. Look at the map. Can you guess where the border between the United States and Mexico is?

C. Can you name the large bodies of water around the United States?

1. Guess and draw where major waterways are between the Mississippi River and the Continental Divide on the slide projected on the white board using a dry erase marker.
 - a. Mississippi River
 - b. Missouri River
 - c. North and South Forks of the South Platte River
 - d. Arkansas River
 - e. Rio Grande River
 - f. The Colorado River is an important river in our state. It does not drain into the Mississippi River, but drains into the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, it drains much of the southwestern United States and a small part of Mexico.
 - g. North Platte River

2. This slide highlights the Great Lakes, the Great Salt Lake, Lake of the Woods, and three dams on the Missouri River. The dams are shown but not labeled, and will help you trace the Missouri River.
 - a. Does having this information change any of your guesses?

3. Use the information on the slide to draw the correct water course on your United States map.
 - a. Trace the rivers using a blue marker
 - b. Label the following rivers in pencil
 - i. Mississippi
 - ii. Missouri
 - iii. North and South Platte Rivers
 - iv. Arkansas
 - v. Rio Grande
 - vi. The Colorado River does not drain into the Mississippi River, but drains into the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, it drains much of the southwestern United States and a small part of Mexico.
 - vii. North Platte

4. Draw the Continental Divide on the white board. This is not very easy, but give it a good try. Remember that someone drew a fairly accurate Continental Divide when there were only mules and horses for transportation.
 - c. Trace the Continental Divide in a different color
 - d. Label the Continental Divide in pencil

5. Compare the lines the class drew with the correct lines on the map

6. On your map:
 - a. Draw the correct Continental Divide
 - b. Outline the borders of Colorado in a bold color

Colorado and Her Rivers

Your teacher is going to show you some slides of Colorado to help you get oriented. You will also have your own map of Colorado.

1. Use a dry erase marker to draw the Continental Divide through Colorado on the white board. You may use your United States map for a reference. This is a group project and not everyone will agree. Keep notes of your thoughts.

2. Compare what your class drew with the map showing the Continental Divide.
 - a. How far off was your class? How far off was your idea?
3. Here is another way to look at the Continental Divide.
 - a. This is a map with just the rivers and no topography. It is easy to find the Continental Divide by looking for where the rivers begin.
4. Two types of maps side by side.
 - a. Compare the two types of maps. How is each map's information useful?
 - b. What did you learn?
 - c. Action: Draw the Continental Divide on your handout map.
5. Informational: Colorado had been divided into several basins. The added GIS layer shows the basins.
 - a. How many basins are there?
 - i. Did you count the Continental Divide as part of the lines in addition to the yellow lines?

6. Find the rivers leading out of Colorado on the white board.

- South, Middle and North Forks of the South Platte River (it has three branches)
- Arkansas River
- Rio Grande River
- Colorado River
- North Platte River

7. Draw and label the rivers on your map.

- South, Middle and North Forks of the South Platte River (it has three branches)
- Arkansas River
- Rio Grande River
- Colorado River
- North Platte River

Look at your United States map and the last few slides. Look at where each river flows into the ocean. The area that drains into the rivers is the watershed.