Google Earth — Lesson Plan

Activity/Project Title

Ambulare in vestigiis Romanorum
Walking in the footsteps of the Romans
Benjamin Johnson

Subject Area

Social Studies

Grade Level

9-12

Content (Concept/Understanding or Skill/Ability)

With this lesson, students will combine history with technology, as they relate the life of a famous Roman by creating a tour of several buildings in ancient Rome in Google Earth. The presentation should make use of the tools that Google Earth can provide to convey information to an average, non-Classicist, viewer.

View a video introduction to the assignment here.

Prerequisites

Students should have a general familiarity with the history of ancient Rome, either from a world or ancient history class, or from cultural exposure in a Latin class.

Contents

Instructional Goals and Objectives

Students will:

1. Learn part of the history of Rome by looking at the lives of famous Romans.

2. Perform research with a variety of primary and secondary sources.

3. Master the tools of Google Earth and create a product that reflects their learning in a non-traditional format.

4. Collaborate and work with other students using technology.

Description of Activity/Procedure

This activity will introduce students to famous Romans and the layout of Rome during the time of Constantine the Great. Technologically, students will master many of the tools in Google Earth, researching online, and collaborating within a group.

Step 1: Familiarizing with Google Earth

Students will learn how to use the tools of Google Earth by finding their house, exploring our town, adding placemarks and information at each place (including embedding movies and pictures).

Step 2: Exploring the Ancient Rome Layer

Augustus said of Rome, *urbem latericiam accepi, marmoream reliqui,* I found this city built of bricks, and left it made of marble. Students, working in groups of 3 or 4, each find 5 buildings constructed by Augustus (different from other members in their groups), and summarize the information given about the building, including the years it was built, and one other bit of information. Each group will have a wiki available for use on the classroom moodle page to fill in this information. (Google Docs can also be used for this online collaboration)

Step 3: Choosing and Researching

Students, working in the same groups, pick an ancient Roman to research. Each of these Romans should have had a profound impact on the city and Empire of Rome. The job of the group is to tell the story of the life of their Roman using the tools in Google Earth, online research, and the buildings and information in the Ancient Rome layer.

A non-exhaustive list of Romans:

- Augustus
- Caligula
- Trajan
- Hadrian
- Marcus Aurelius
- Romulus (or any of the other kings of Rome)
- Tiberius or Gaius Gracchus
- Pompey the Great
- Vespasian
- Domitian
- Lucius Junius Brutus
- Agrippina
- Livia

Step 4: Creating the Tour

In their groups, students are to create a tour history of their Roman, incorporating as much of their life as possible. The challenging part of this project is finding creative ways to tell of the events that took place outside Rome. Students may wish to use metaphorical representations (i.e., the Campus Martius is used as the placemark for Caesar's conquests of Gaul). And in each placemark, students relay the story using as many different types of media as possible (YouTube embedded videos, images, text, quotes from ancient biographers).

Each group will have a wiki available to them on the moodle site, which will help them collaborate and plan their sites. On the wiki, there will be places to fill in site names, locations, possible media to use, and the informational content.

Step 5: The Finished Product

The end goal of this project is to provide accessible .kml/.kmz files for those wishing to learn about Roman history.

The students are graded not only on their finished product, but on how well they work together to collaborate using the wiki. By downloading the 3D Building models and Terrain, the viewer will get an amazing experience of Rome.

Materials/Equipment Needed

- Computers with the required hardware to run the 3D Ancient Rome layer

- Access to the Internet

- Classroom moodle site for group collaboration, posting of assignment, grading rubrics, and example projects

Additional Resources

Links

- Moodle.org: http://www.moodle.org/

- Online resource for Histories of Tacitus, Livy, Suetonius, and other primary sources:

  http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/home.html

- Articles on ancient history: http://www.livius.org/

- Google Earth: http://earth.google.com/

- Citation Help: http://citationmachine.net/

- Video introduction to this assignment: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bzpgMCtdp8

Standards Addressed

Maine Learning Results (State Standards)

For World Languages:

B2: Products and Perspectives

• By using primary historical sources, the students will explore the political and historical structures of Roman Society.

C1: Knowledge of Other Learning Results Content Areas

• This project has connections to the History section of the Social Studies content area.

C2: Distinctive Viewpoints

• By using primary sources, the students will learn about ideas associated with ancient Rome.

For Social Studies:

E1: Historical Knowledge, Concepts, Themes, and Patterns

• Ancient Rome is the foundation for Western Civilization. By looking at ancient primary sources, students will gain an understanding of our own culture.

NET Standards for Students

1. Creativity and Innovation

2. Communication and Collaboration

3. Research and Information Fluency

4. Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Decision Making

5. Digital Citizenship

6. Technology Operations and Concepts

NET Standards for Teachers

1. Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity

2. Design and Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments

3. Model Digital-Age Work and Learning

4. Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility

Assessment/Evaluation

Each student will be graded based on their completion of the familiarizing assignments and contribution to the research wiki and the planning wiki.

The final product will be graded using a 4 point rubric in the following areas:

- Creativity
- Quality of research
- Quality of writing
- Quality of final product
- Proper citation of sources

What's Next

Follow-up Activities

Once the files have been graded, students could explore and learn from their classmates projects. Then this learning can be assessed traditionally with a quiz or a test.

The files could also be posted on the school website as an example of student work using technology. If this project is done in a Latin class, the students should be encouraged to share their projects with their social studies classes.

This sharing is designed to increase the awareness of how to use Google Earth in the classroom, as well as introduce students, teachers, and community members to Ancient Rome.

With the greater understanding of Rome, its buildings and history, students will be able to do more projects outside of the city of Rome, including designing tours of historical importance (e.g., Hannibal's path across the Alps into Italy or Alexander's conquests of Asia), creating maps using the polygon tool, and designing Roman buildings not in Rome itself (aqueducts, amphitheaters, villas, etc.) using SketchUp.

Contributor

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