Introducing Mapping Concepts with Maps of the American Civil War
Merx Lavine
Oregon Center for Geography Education,
2014 Summer Session

Overview:
This lesson introduces fundamental mapping concepts of types of maps, components of maps, and critical thinking about maps in the context of historical Civil War maps compared with modern maps and mapping tools.

National Geography Standards:
• National Geography Standard 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communication information

Oregon Geography Content Standards:
• HS.14. Create and use maps, technology, imagery and other geographical representations to extrapolate and interpret geographic data.

Connections to Common Core:
• Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Objectives:
• In completing this exercise, students will be able to:
  o Identify key features of maps
  o Identify different types of maps
  o Analyze the decision making of cartographers

Grade Levels: 6-10

Materials:
• Attached PowerPoint, “introducing mapping concepts with the American Civil War.pptx” and projector
• Attached Handout, 1 copy/student
• Optional: cell phone and document camera, or computer with internet access to maps.google.com. Alternatively, you may have students use their cell phones.

Background:
This lesson serves as an introduction to the basic components and types of maps, or a review of that material, as well as introducing the critical thinking involved in cartography. It uses a battle of the Civil War as a context for the latter analysis, and assumes some mild familiarity with the context of that war on the part of students. It would be possible to provide that context in lesson if necessary.

Procedures:
Lesson Set (warm-up):
1. Display 2nd slide of PowerPoint, or write on the board, the question: “What sorts of things can you learn from a map?”
   a. Ask students to think silently about the question for a few seconds. Then have them individually write an answer. Finally, take hands or call on students (at your discretion) to share answers with the class.
   b. Prompting questions: Are all maps about where countries and cities are? Is the only thing on a map country or city names? How big an area can a map cover? How small an area?
2. Introduce lesson objectives. Either record them in a visible place in the classroom or use the 3rd slide of the PowerPoint.

Body:
3. Distribute worksheet to students, 1 copy per student.
   a. Introduce the worksheet
4. Students work individually to complete section I, reading and completing the graphic organizer, then labeling the components on page 1 of the worksheet. Expect approximately 10 minutes of work.
   a. Monitor student work. Check for comprehension and progress. Reorient as needed. Once students have completed section I…
5. Gather student attention for section II. Resume the PowerPoint presentation.
6. Advance to slide 5, with a copy of map 1 from the handout, “States Choose Sides.”
   a. Call on/take a volunteer student to show where the 4 components are
7. Check how many students have cell phones with a map service on it of some sort (Google maps, Apple maps, Bing maps…) Break students into small groups (ideally no more than three students) and have them see how many of the components they can find on the maps on their phones.
   a. Alternatively, use your own and a document camera, or just the screenshot on slide 6.
8. With your students cell phones still out continue to slide 7: Map Scale. Follow the directions there.
   a. Make certain to clearly ask students to turn off their cell phones after they have completed this activity!
9. Complete the rest of the section II lecture following the PowerPoint. Students will complete CLOZE notes over different types of maps, following the PowerPoint, on page 3 of their handout.
   a. Have them complete these CLOZE notes in the left column now, and instruct them to hold off on the right column until you are finished.
10. Now students will generate 2 examples of each map, and get 2 examples from a peer, in the right hand column on page 3 of their handout. Give them 5-10 minutes to do so with who ever they are sitting next to. Monitor classroom and provide assistance as necessary during this time.
11. Orient students to Section III: application on page 4 of their handouts. Have a student read the introductory text and the question 4 background aloud.
   a. Introduce the maps. Ask students: “Can you see any of the 4 components of a map on these images? Look carefully.”
   b. Direct student’s attention to the copies at the end of the packet.
      i. Point out the compass and key (“Explanation” as it is labeled on the map) if needed due to low resolution projector or copies.
      ii. Larger versions of these maps can be located at http://www.loc.gov/item/80691154/ and http://www.loc.gov/item/77696125 if necessary.

12. Have students form groups of no more than 4. Provide ~20 minutes work time for them to complete questions 4-12

13. Return students to their original seats. Debrief with a discussion of the question 4 materials. Focus on:
   a. #8. In what ways would the military use maps?
   b. #9-12 – the decision-making of cartography. What was included? Why? What do you think was excluded in these maps?
      i. Emphasize importance of roads and rivers. The students may also have missed the telegraph line. In the actual battle, Grant’s troops disembarked just north of the Buckwater River, marched east to the road, and followed it to the fort.

14. Direct students to finish the class period with the Summary Questions on page 6. Complete any unfinished work in the handout as homework.

Assessment:
Individual work on the handout, particularly section III and IV, is a formative assessment tool. Collect it at the start of next class.

Extensions and/or adaptations:
Possible extensions include creating a map of the area in which the students live. This could be a simple area map, or created with a battlefield focus (“what would General Grant need to know to lay siege to the city?”). If time permitted, another interesting activity would be to compare the provided civil war era maps with more modern military ones.

Discussion of the section IV summary questions makes a natural lesson set for additional work with mapping in the next class.

References:
Text modified from:

Maps:


