

Exploring an Atlas

Purpose

Students will use the features of informational texts to find information and support understanding. Student atlases will be used with this activity.

Materials

For each group of 2 students: student atlas with the following features: legend for physical and political maps, world facts and comparisons, geography terms, world physical map, world population chart, index, map sections for North America, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia; copies of Black Line Masters (BLMs) *Atlas Hunt I* and *Atlas Hunt II*; pencil; paper

Activity

A. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Ask students if they know what kind of information can be found in an atlas.
2. Tell students that atlases contain interesting information in addition to maps.
3. Review the basic features of an atlas, including the table of contents, index, charts, graphs, and lists. Model how to find and use several features.
4. Tell students that they will be exploring the features of an atlas as they hunt for specific answers to the questions on the BLMs *Atlas Hunt I* and *Atlas Hunt II*.

B. Activity

1. Divide students into groups of two.
2. Provide one atlas and BLMs to each pair of students.
3. Allow students a set amount of minutes to explore the atlas and to complete the BLMs in class. (This can be a timed scavenger hunt to see how many correct answers each group can find in 30 minutes.)

C. Close the Activity

1. Reveal and discuss all of the answers, showing how and where in the atlas the answers can be found.
2. Have students correct their own papers.

EXTENDING THE ACTIVITY



Have students create their own Atlas Hunt and answer key. Have students complete the activity a second time, exchanging their Atlas Hunts with each other.

INCORPORATING TECHNOLOGY






Adapt the *Atlas Hunt* activity to fit the Web site www.worldatlas.com. This activity could be a classroom station or lab activity.

Standards Links
5.2.2, 5.4.4

Questions for Review

Basic Concepts and Processes

Upon completion of this activity ask students the following questions:

-  What types of information can be found in an atlas?
 -  What features of an atlas help you to find information quickly?
 -  Where would you look for information about North America?
-

Name: _____



Atlas Hunt I



Directions: Read the following geography questions. Hunt down as many answers as you can in the time given. Write down your answers in the spaces provided, and be sure to list the page number where each answer is located.

World Facts and Comparisons:

Page _____

1. Name two types of charts listed in this section.
2. Which sea is listed as the largest lake in the world?

Geography Terms:

Page _____

1. Define isthmus.
2. What country in Central America is an isthmus?

Legend for Physical and Political Maps:

Page _____

1. List and explain three map symbols.
2. What does the color dark green refer to on a land elevation chart?

Table of Contents:

On which pages can you find information about Antarctica?

World Physical Map:

Page _____

1. Where in the world is the largest landmass with an elevation over 9,840 feet?
2. What color is the high area always colored on a physical map?



North America Map Section:

Page _____

1. What two countries are the Rocky Mountains in?
2. Which Great Lake does not share a coastline with Canada?

Europe Map Section:

Page _____

1. Which four European countries fall partially in the Arctic Circle?
2. In Greece, what is the population per square mile?

Africa Map Section: Page _____

1. What river flows into Victoria Falls?
2. What small chain of islands off the NW coast of Africa has a bird name?
3. What type of land is present in more than one-third of Africa?

South America Map Section:

Page _____

1. What capital city in South America can you visit and go to the beach?
2. How many countries are in South America? Which is the largest?

Asia Map Section:

Page _____

What direction is Japan from Korea?

Index: Page _____

What information does the index give for Indianapolis?