

Sample Social Studies Learning Plan

Big Idea/ Topic

Rivers & Mountain Ranges of the U.S.

Connecting Theme/Enduring Understanding:

Location: The student will understand that location affects a society's economy, culture, and development.

Essential Question:

How do land and water features shape our lives?

Standard Alignment

SS3G1 Locate major topographical features on a physical map of the United States.

- Locate major rivers of the United States of America: Mississippi, Ohio, Rio Grande, Colorado, Hudson, and St. Lawrence.
- Locate major mountain ranges of the United States of America: Appalachian, Rocky.

Connection to Literacy Standards for Social Studies and Social Studies Matrices

ELAGSE3RI4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.

ELAGSE3SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.
- Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

ELAGSE3RI9: Compare and contrast the most important points and key details.

ELAGSE3W7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

ELAGSE3W8: Recall information from experience or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

Map and Globe skills – 4 (compare/contrast categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps)

Information Processing Skills –1 (compare similarities and differences) , 9 (construct charts and tables)

Instructional Design

***This lesson has a flexible timeline and will cross over several days.**

This lesson is intended to reach students in a virtual setting, whether plugged or unplugged. See bottom of lesson for list of unplugged supplies.

Part 1: Before starting the lesson, share a physical map of Georgia with your students.

<https://geology.com/topographic-physical-map/georgia.shtml> Ask students to share the land and water forms they see on the map live or in their notebooks. Share student responses making sure to tie responses to understandings you would want them to bring from second grade. (People settling near rivers, many uses for rivers, how mountains could be an obstacle and provide protection, etc.). Use their responses to decide how deeply you need to review basic map terms.

In a live or recorded session, read the book *Water Land: Land and Water Forms Around the World* by Christy Hale. You can do your own reading if you are live with students or select from among the following three YouTube versions:

- Christy Hale reading her own book and providing some ideas for follow up: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3n-IPOAbt64>)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-Uk2GNxl2c> a teacher reading the book and saying each word in English and Spanish - could be really good for English learners; does some simple hands on things at the end.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUtDUp6kqY> a school media specialist sharing the book in an engaging way.

Have students share what they see, what they think, and what they wonder about land and water forms after sharing the book. (Point out the cleverly illustrated, paired nature of some of these forms).

***Unplugged variation to read aloud** – see attached graphic organizer (Land and Water Forms Around the World document) which can capture what students remember about land/water forms in place of the read aloud if necessary. This could also be useful as an extra activity for some plugged students in need of review.

Part 2: Teacher's directions to students: Find rivers and mountains in Georgia. Find rivers and mountains in the United States. Discuss their findings. Which rivers did you find? Did you notice that some rivers are larger than others? Why are rivers and mountains important?

When students are ready, introduce students to the six rivers included in the standard: We are going to learn about six rivers that are important to our country. Why are these six rivers important? How are rivers different from other water forms? Did anyone find the Mississippi? Let's learn more about this river. As we learn about the Mississippi River, have students record what they learn on their graphic organizer (River Organizer).

NOTE: You have three variations on this graphic organizer: a blank one, one with all but the Mississippi River filled in, and one with all information filled in.

Use the PowerPoint included, or video or website information. [The websites or informational text you have your students explore for this segment will vary depending on district resources and may include informational texts in book form, online children's encyclopedias, or other kid-friendly reliable websites such as https://kids.kiddle.co/Mississippi_River] Have students research the other rivers and complete the graphic organizer.



***Unplugged variation to rivers activity** – Provide a print copy of the [Mississippi River ppt slides](#) (perhaps handout view) OR print the text from the sample website provided OR enclose an informational book on rivers in their kit as a substitute for live class discussion of the ppt. The graphic organizer that has all but Mississippi River filled in may be best for unplugged.

Teacher's directions for students: Can you find the two biggest mountain ranges in the United States on your map? Complete the Mountain Ranges organizer after researching the two major mountain ranges. NOTE: You have two variations on this graphic organizer: a blank one and one with all information filled in. See the Mountain Ranges informational text sheet or you can include weblinks for their exploration. Provide the U.S. map with state borders for this activity. Ask students: Why are the two mountain ranges in the standard important? What other mountain ranges would you include? Why wouldn't you find a river running along the top of a mountain range?

Have students draw and label the six rivers and two mountain ranges on an outline U.S. map. Color coding the rivers and mountains and providing a key to the code will help extend and reinforce good map skills. Direct students to trace the paths of each river with their finger from mouth to source to help reinforce location. Also trace the path of mountain ranges with their finger.

Discuss with students: We learned about six rivers. What other rivers would you include? Which river would you add and why they would add it? Are there other mountain ranges you would have added to the standard? Why would you want them included?

Part 3: For a summative assessment: Have students answer the EQ for this lesson using information about the specific rivers and mountain ranges we have explored. The EQ is: How do land and water features shape our lives? You can write a paragraph to show your answer or respond in other ways suggested below.

Can you find another way to show what you know about mountains and rivers? (With playdoh, with paint, with sidewalk chalk, with cut outs like in the book, with a skit, by creating your own map)

Opportunities for Extension:

- Create a mountain range using something you have at home (play doh, sand, Legos, etc.). What happens when you pour water on top? Where did the water go? How is this like rivers?
- Create an advertisement, postcard, pamphlet, T-shirt, or bumper sticker for a river and/or mountain range. What are the features? Why would it be a good place to live?
- In an interactive session, play "Simon Says" with the map. Ask students to find rivers and mountain ranges in fun and engaging ways.
- Have students create rhymes or riddles to describe the rivers and mountain ranges.
- Have students create flip books to teach about the rivers and/or mountain ranges



Student Learning Supports

Ideas for Differentiation:

Our goal is for all students to be actively engaged using speaking, writing, illustrating, reading, and listening. Below are changes to the lesson to help achieve that goal for students who need additional support. Note: Be careful using these lessons for all students. If students are able to complete the activities on their own, it would be best to let them do this independently.

- Consider allowing students to record their thoughts in a variety of ways: using the talk to text/dictate feature, making an audio recording of their responses, drawing pictures, circling and/or labeling on their map, etc.
- Consider reading research materials to students or copying materials into a Word document to allow that students may use the “read aloud” feature.
- Some students will struggle to complete the organizers independently. These are a few suggestions: allow students to highlight the information, give students the organizer partially completed to lessen the amount of work, give students a “key” to copy.
- Consider giving students a labeled map with a color key. Have students color the rivers and mountain ranges to match the key.

Unplugged Supplies: Lesson checklist, physical map of Georgia, physical map of the U.S., political map of U.S. with state borders, blank paper, interactive notebook or something to take notes on, graphic organizers: Land and Water Forms Around the World, River Organizer (use version that fits your circumstance), Mountain Ranges organizer, information text on specific rivers and mountain ranges (use Mountain Range Information document or other resource available to you), play-doh to create land & water forms, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, colored pencils, etc., as available.

Evidence of Student Success

Information for diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are described within the Instructional Design.

Engaging Families

Materials included to support unplugged learners: Lesson checklist, physical map of Georgia, physical map of the U.S., political map of U.S. with state borders, graphic organizers: Land and Water Forms Around the World, River Organizer (use version that fits your circumstance), Mountain Ranges organizer, information text on specific rivers and mountain ranges (use Mountain Range Information document or other resource available to you),

Optional materials to support learning not included: blank paper, interactive notebook or something to take notes on, play-doh to create land & water forms, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, colored pencils, etc., as available.



S3G1 Locate major topographical features on a physical map of the United States.

- a. Locate major rivers of the United States of America: Mississippi, Ohio, Rio Grande, Colorado, Hudson, and St. Lawrence.
- b. Locate major mountain ranges of the United States of America: Appalachian, Rocky

Part 1:

- ☐ 1. Examine the physical map of Georgia and jot down land and water forms you see on the map in your interactive notebook.
- ☐ 2. Explain in your notebook why rivers and mountains are important and how they might shape our lives.
- ☐ 3. Listen to the book *Water Land* by Christy Hale by going to the YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3n-IPOAbt64> : OR complete the graphic organizer with information you already know about water and land forms.

Part 2: Answer questions in your interactive notebook.

- ☐ 4. Use the physical map of Georgia to find rivers and mountains. *Which rivers and mountains did you find? Why are these rivers and mountains important? Record this in your notebook.*
- ☐ 5. Use the physical map of the United States to find rivers and mountains. *Which rivers and mountains did you find? Why are these rivers and mountains important? Record this in your notebook.*
- ☐ 6. Look at the standard near the top of this page. We are going to learn about the six rivers listed in element a. *Write these six river names in your notebook.*
- ☐ 7. Notice that these rivers are listed on your Rivers Graphic Organizer. Notice that the Mississippi River line is blank. You are going to read through the printed PowerPoint and find the information that you need for the organizer, along with other facts and images about the Mississippi River.
- ☐ 8. Now that the entire graphic organizer is complete, compare and contrast the six rivers. *What are some conclusions you can make from the information on this chart? Write them in your interactive notebook.*
- ☐ 9. Look at the physical map of the United States and find the two main mountain ranges listed in element b in the standard near the top of this page.
- ☐ 10. Read about the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachian Mountains and fill out the graphic organizer with information you have discovered about each range.
- ☐ 11. *If you were going to add a mountain range to the standard, which one would it be? Explain why in your interactive notebook.*
- ☐ 12. Use a blank map of the United States and draw and label each of the six rivers and two mountain ranges in our standards. Do this in pencil first and then you can go over it with crayon or colored pencil to color code each land and water form. Provide a key for your color coding. As you work, trace the path of each river with your finger from mouth to source. Also trace the path of mountain ranges with your finger. Check yourself with the labeled map provided.

Part 3:

- ☐ 13. Answer the Essential Question: How do land and water features shape our lives?
- ☐ 14. Write a paragraph or respond in another creative way to show what you know about rivers and mountains by:
 - creating a U.S. map completely on your own with all 8 features
 - write a script for a kid's TV show that would help teach these 8 features
 - use play doh to form mountains and rivers and explain what makes them different
 - come up with an idea of your own to show what you know



Name: _____

Land and Water Forms Around the World

1. Look at these land and water forms.
2. What do you ***see, think, wonder?***
3. Share your thinking under each land or water form.



Lake



Island



Cape



Bay



Strait



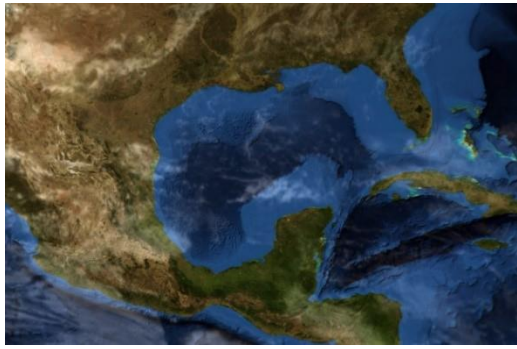
Isthmus



System of Lakes



Archipelago



Gulf



Peninsula

Name: _____

River	Length (in miles)	Source Where a river begins	Mouth Where a river joins a larger body of water	Region(s) of U.S.	Fun/interesting facts
Mississippi	2000	Minnesota	Gulf of Mexico	Midwest and Southeast	
Ohio	900	Pennsylvania	Mississippi River	Northeast and Midwest	
Rio Grande	1800	Colorado	Gulf of Mexico	Southwest	
Colorado	1500	Colorado	Gulf of Baja	Southwest	
Hudson	300	New York	Atlantic Ocean	Northeast	
St. Lawrence	743	Great Lakes	Gulf of St. Lawrence	Northeast	

Name: _____

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Ohio	900	Pennsylvania	Mississippi River	Northeast and Midwest	
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Colorado	1500	Colorado	Gulf of Baja	Southwest	
Hudson	300	New York	Atlantic Ocean	Northeast	
St. Lawrence	743	Great Lakes	Gulf of St. Lawrence	Northeast	

Appalachian Mountains:



The Appalachian Mountains are located in the eastern half of the United States between the Mississippi River and the Atlantic Ocean. In the United States, they run from the tip of Maine all the way down into Georgia and Alabama. They are much older than the Rocky Mountains and were “born” about 470 million years ago. We can tell this because they have rounded peaks due to hundreds of years of erosion. (Erosion is wearing away of the soil over time from water, wind, and ice.)

The Appalachian Mountains are 1500 miles long from north to south. The highest elevation (height) is 6684 feet and the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains and the Appalachian Trail are all part of this mountain range.

Rocky Mountains:



Located in the western half of the United States, the Rocky Mountains run from Idaho and Montana in the north, down to the Arizona and New Mexico borders with Mexico. The Rocky Mountains are much higher and more rugged and have sharper peaks than the Appalachian Mountains, due to the fact that they much younger mountains. They were formed between 55 and 80 million years ago.

The Rocky Mountains are about 3000 miles long from north to south. The highest elevation is 14,400 feet and the highest point is Mount Elbert. The Continental Divide is an imaginary border along the top of the Rocky Mountains where all water falling on one side of the line flows east to

the Atlantic Ocean and water falling on the other flows west to the Pacific Ocean. Bighorn sheep are the symbol of the Rocky Mountain National Park.



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Name: _____

Feature	Appalachian Mountains	Rocky Mountains
Miles long		
Highest elevation		
States in which it is located		
Age of mountains		
Fun facts		
Images		

Feature	Appalachian Mountains	Rocky Mountains
Miles long	1500	3000
Highest elevation	6684 feet	14,400
States in which it is located	Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia	Colorado, Nevada, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, New Mexico
Age of mountains	470 million years	55-80 million years ago
Fun facts		
Images		



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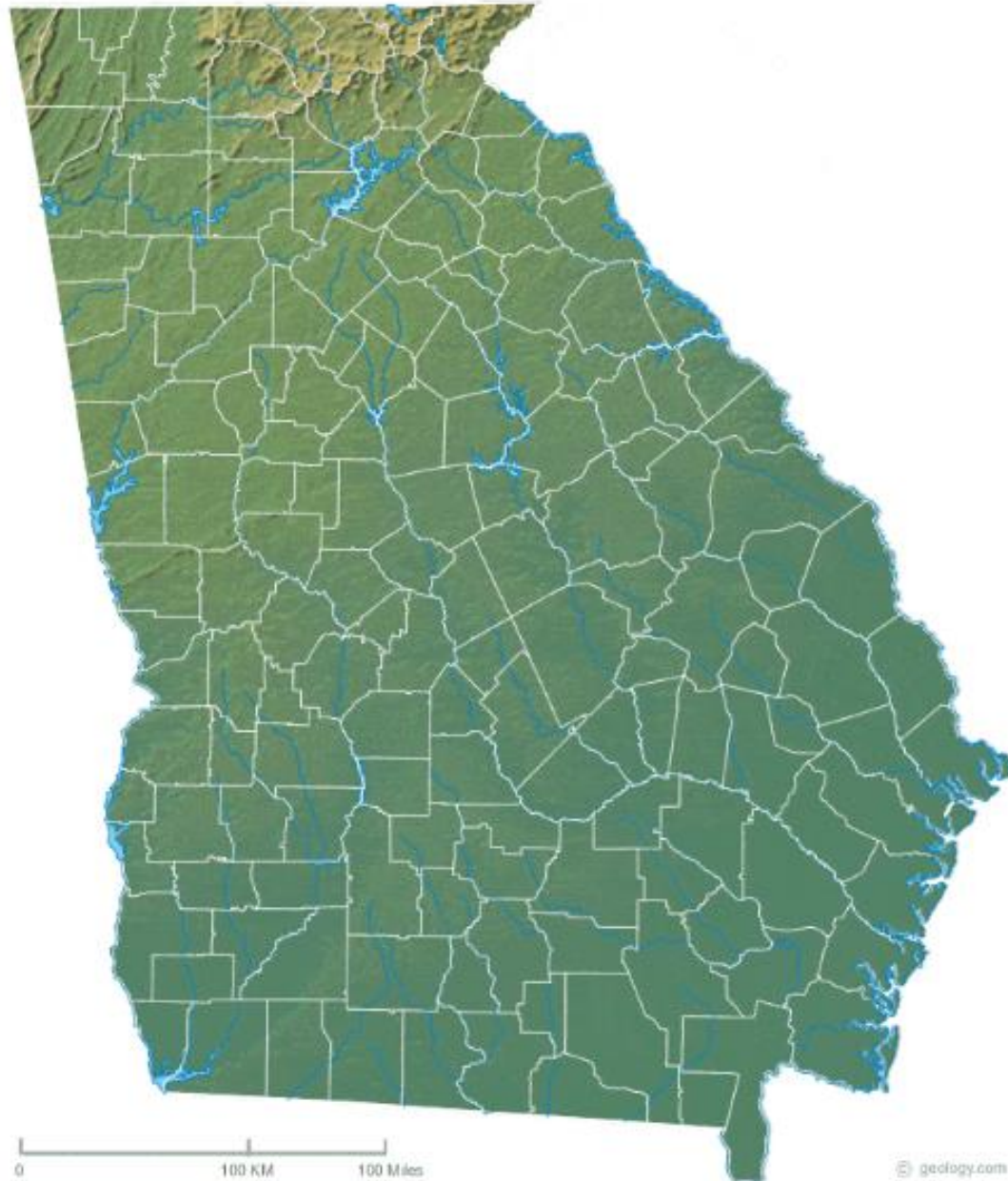


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Georgia Physical Map



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