

Lesson Plan

ROMAN EMPIRE: PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK--LOCATION, BORDERS, DIMENSIONS

Narrative--This lesson plan addresses the location, dimensions, and geographic features of the Roman Empire. It is designed for my 9th-grade World Geography course, in which I teach approximately 225 students each year. The lesson requires the use of a blank map and atlas containing maps of the regions that were part of the Roman Empire, i.e. Europe, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean region. Besides understanding the location of the Empire, it will help students to learn geographic features and names and locations of present-day countries.

Grade levels--8th-10th grades

Content areas--Geography and World History

Time allotment--two (or more) class periods

Materials--access to a reference map of the Roman world; blank map with current outlines of countries of Europe, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean region; colored pens or pencils; rulers. (Alternatively, provide a large sheet of blank paper and have students draw a freehand map.)

National Geography Standards--1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective;
3. How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface;
5. That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity;
17. How to apply geography to interpret the past.

Abstract--It is important that students understand the location of the classical world in relation to countries existing today and in relation to geographic features such as the Mediterranean Sea. Maps and atlases are important geography tools, thus it is critical that students learn to use them. In addition, working with maps and atlases is a

hands-on, kinesthetic, direct mode of learning.

Goals--Students will be able to

- learn to create a map with all its features
- use an atlas to extract geographic information
- gain knowledge of the geographic features of the Roman Empire, including water bodies and cities
- gain an understanding of the location and great extent of the Roman Empire
- gain an understanding of the primary avenue of transportation: the Mediterranean Sea
- learn locations of present-day countries

Performance indicators--Final map includes all the map features (i.e., title, north arrow, key, scale) and locations given in the directions.

Assessment--Map will be submitted and graded on completion of the directions.

Connection to other content areas--Art: The map can include artistic features.

Note: The “classical world” (*classical*=ancient Greek and Rome civilizations) indicates the region surrounding the Mediterranean Sea during the age of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, ca. 4th century BCE to 5th century CE. (BCE=before common era; CE=common era, i.e. beginning year AD 1.)

DIRECTIONS

Note: The map must be colored, including the map KEY.

1. Place a map title at the top middle of the blank map.
2. Draw a north arrow.
3. Draw a rectangle for a KEY (or LEGEND) (best placed in a lower corner); later, decide which map symbols to use; e.g., a dot for a city, blue lines for a water body; red lines for country borders, etc.

4. Draw a bar scale (it will be an estimate) and label it with a unit of measurement, e.g. "miles." Label it "SCALE." Write underneath the bar scale, "1 inch equals..." (your estimate of what an inch on you map equals on the Earth's surface).
5. Locate and label Italy.
6. Locate and label Rome, the imperial capital.
7. Draw the entire border of the Roman Empire at its greatest extent (ca. A.D. 200).
8. Locate and label each present-day country which the border of the Empire included within it (in which any or all of the territory of present-day countries were included).
9. Locate and label all the major water bodies of the region:
Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, Black Sea, Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Sea of Crete, Aegean Sea, Ionian Sea, Adriatic Sea, Tyrrhenian Sea, Gulf of Sidra, Strait of Sicily, Strait of Gibraltar, Bay of Biscay, Celtic Sea, English Channel, North Sea.
10. Locate and label these islands: Cyprus, Crete, Sicily, Malta, Corsica, Sardinia.
11. Locate and label these major cities of Empire: Alexandria, Antioch, Athens, Carthage, Cologne, Byzantium (Constantinople; today Istanbul), Corinth, Damascus, Jerusalem, Londinium (London), Lyons, Massilia (Marseille), Memphis, Milan, Syracuse.
12. Locate and label these major regions of Empire: Achaea, Belgium, Britain, Cappadocia, Dalmatia, Egypt, Gaul, Italy, Judaea, Libya, Macedonia, Mesopotamia, Numidia, Spain, Syria, Thrace.
13. Use a map scale to measure the approximate distance of the greatest east-west extent of Empire (ca. A.D. 200), from the Tigris River to west coast of Spain.
14. Use a map scale to measure the approximate distance of the greatest north-south extent from Hadrian's Wall to the coast of North

Africa.

15. Roughly estimate the total area of Empire (including the Mediterranean Sea) by multiplying length by breadth of the Empire (as determined above).
16. Use a map scale to measure the length of the Mediterranean Sea from the coast of Judaea to the Pillars of Heracles at the Strait of Gibraltar.
17. Measure a journey by ship from Rome to Arbeia Fort on Tyne (now in South Shields, on the North Sea coast of England, near Newcastle, England).
18. Label Hadrian's Wall and use a map scale to measure its length.