



The Middle East: Land of Contrasts

The focus of this lesson plan is the ancient city of Petra in Jordan.

Subject

Geography

Grade level

6-8

Duration

Three class periods

Objectives

Students will

- review Jordan's location and geography;
- work with partners to learn about a monument in Petra, Jordan's ancient city; and
- create a class "slide" show about ancient Petra.

Materials

- Computer with Internet access
- Print resources about Petra
- Construction paper (five pieces for each site)
- Materials to create "slides" (plain paper, markers, glue, scissors)
- *The Middle East: Land of Contrasts* video and VCR (or DVD and DVD player)

Procedures

1. After watching the segment called "The Royal Tour of Jordan", ask students to find Jordan on a classroom map. What part of the world is Jordan found? (*the Middle East*) What countries border Jordan? (*Israel, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia*) How much of the country is bordered by the sea? (*very short coastline along Gulf of Aqaba, Red Sea*) Ask students to use the map and what they learned in the video to describe Jordan's geography. (*There are deserts to the east and mountains to the north and south.*)
2. Show the class Petra on the classroom map. (*Petra is in southeast Jordan.*) Ask students what they remember about Petra, the ancient city featured in the program. Give students some background: Petra is an ancient city carved in the cliffs and rocks in the middle of Jordan's desert. The Nabataeans, a group of Arabian nomads founded the city in about 50 B.C. Located along ancient caravan routes between Arabia, Egypt, and the Mediterranean Sea,

Petra was a center for trade. But it was also a political center, serving as the capital of the wealthy and powerful Nabataean kingdom. In A.D. 106, the city was taken over by the Roman empire. Over time, the trade routes shifted, and Petra slowly lost its importance until it was eventually abandoned. The city was virtually lost until it western explorers rediscovered it in the 1800s. Since then, archaeologists have excavated some of Petra's spectacular monuments that were carved into the city's cliffs and learned about life in this ancient city. (For more about Petra, visit this site: <http://ology.amnh.org/archaeology/petra/index.html>)

3. Tell students that will explore Petra's monuments and landmarks. Their task is to imagine that they're archaeologists working on one of these sites. They are going to learn about the site, collect at least five images of the site and artifacts found there. With these images, they will create small posters, or "slides," to put together a slideshow for archaeologists back in the United States who are interested in Petra.
4. Assign students one of the following sites at Petra:
 - Al Khazneh (The Treasury)
 - The Great Temple
 - The Siq
 - Temple of the Winged Lions
 - Qasr al-Bint
 - Royal Tombs
 - Petra Church
 - Theater
5. Tell students that as they research their site, they should gather at least five images. These images can reflect the site itself, an artifact that was found there, or a map of its location. Students may print out or sketch these images and make sure that each one is clearly labeled. They should also collect the following information about their site:
 - Name
 - Purpose
 - Description of location
 - Details of how it was built (materials, etc.)
 - What it teaches us about the Nabataeans
 - Cool fact
6. Have students use print and online resources in their research. The following Web sites may be helpful:

American Museum of Natural History: Ancient City of Petra
<http://ology.amnh.org/archaeology/petra/index.html>

Petra: Photo Essay
<http://www.archaeology.org/magazine.php?page=online/features/jordan/petra>

Petra
<http://www.raingod.com/angus/Gallery/Photos/MiddleEast/Jordan/Petra/index.html>

Pool Complex at Petra
<http://www.homestead.com/petragarden/poolcomplex.html>

Great Temple Tour

<http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Anthropology/Petra/temple/temple.html>

Temple of the Winged Lions (See "About Petra")

<http://todacosa.com/petra/aep.htm>

The Complete Petra

<http://www.isidore-of-seville.com/petra/>

World's Monuments: Petra (article and 3 pictures)

<http://wmf.org/2000list.html?sid=2357&year=2002>

Petra: Jordan's City in the Rock

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/explorer/petra/more.html>

Tour of Petra

http://www.panoramaproductions.net/tr_petra.htm

Petra: The Great Temple Excavation

<http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Anthropology/Petra/>

Google: Petra Links

http://directory.google.com/Top/Regional/Middle_East/Jordan/Localities/Petra/?il=1

7. Once students have completed their research, give them one class period to write up their findings and create "slides." To do this, they should glue a picture onto each piece of construction paper and label the image.
8. Have students present their slides, letting them pass each image around the class. Their presentations should include the background information collected in their research.

Extensions

For the "Crossroads of Commerce" segment: Divide the class into three groups. Have one group design a game, song, or rap to learn the names and locations of countries in the Middle East. Have a second group design an activity to learn the names and locations of the major cities in these countries. The third group should design an activity to learn the main geographic features of the Middle East, such as the mountains and bodies of water.

For the "Jerusalem's History" segment: Jerusalem is a holy place for Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Have students choose one group to research and describe the importance of the city to that group.

For "The Call to Mecca" segment: Encourage students to explore the history and religious importance behind Mecca. Where is it located? Who makes the pilgrimage to Mecca? What is the pilgrimage called? Why do they believe Mecca is a sacred place? Describe what happens at Mecca.

Evaluation

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions, showed thorough research on their Petra site, labeled at least five appropriate images, created a complete presentation, including all of the assigned information.

2 points: Students participated in class discussions, showed satisfactory research on their Petra site, labeled fewer than five appropriate images, created an adequate presentation, including most of the assigned information.

1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions, showed minimal research on their Petra site, labeled at three or less appropriate images, created an incomplete presentation with little or none of the assigned information.

Vocabulary

archaeologist

Definition: A scientist who studies the life and culture of ancient peoples by studying their material remains (such as ruins and artifacts)

Context: Archeologists have uncovered only a small part of the original city of Petra.

artifact

Definition: An object made by humans, such as a primitive tool; an object remaining from a particular period

Context: Many artifacts have been found in Petra, from water pipes to religious statues.

Nabataeans

Definition: a group of nomadic people who settled in Petra and ruled over a powerful kingdom from 170 B.C. to A.D. 106

Context: Petra was the capitol of the Nabataean kingdom.

nomad

Definition: a wanderer; someone who moves from place to place

Context: Like other desert nomads, the Nabataeans had a keen knowledge of how to survive in their environment.

Academic Standards

The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) provides 18 national geography standards that the geographically informed person knows and understands. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.ncge.org>.

This lesson plan addresses the following NCGE standards:

- Places and Regions
- Human Systems
- Environment and Society

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of the NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environments
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Credit

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