Landforms and Bodies of Water
Grades 3-5

Introduction

Students will create fictitious continents depicting landforms and bodies of water that they find in the Maps101 Reference Atlases. They'll consider the ways in which landforms and bodies of water can facilitate human settlement and will incorporate these ideas into their continents.

Time Frame: 2-3 class periods

Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Use the Reference Atlases on Maps101 to locate specific landforms and bodies of water.
- Sketch and describe each landform and body of water.
- Discuss the ways in which people make use of these landforms and bodies of water.
- Create continents that contain some of the landforms and bodies of water they've learned about.

National Social Studies Standards:

- 3: People, Places, and Environments: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.

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.
- 7: The physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth's surface.
- 12: The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Maps and Materials Needed

Materials Needed:

- White construction paper
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons

Additional Map Resources Used:

Procedure

1. Divide the class into small groups.

2. Have students look at the U.S. Reference Atlas and the World Reference Atlas and locate the following places:
   - Gulf of Mexico
   - Cape Cod, Massachusetts
   - San Francisco Bay, California
   - Chesapeake Bay, Maryland
   - Strait of Gibraltar, Southern Spain (Europe)
   - Indonesian Archipelago (the entire country of Indonesia is an archipelago), Asia
   - Isthmus of Panama (the entire country of Panama is an isthmus), Central America

3. As they look at these landforms and bodies of water, have them draw small sketches of each one on their own papers. Below each sketch, they should write a few words that describe what the landform or body of water looks like. Students can do this in a group, taking turns sketching and writing.

4. Discuss as a class how people could make use of these landforms and bodies of water. Where would people be likely to build cities? Where would they build seaports? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of living on or near one of these landforms or bodies of water? List on the board as many ideas as students can think of.

5. Have groups create their own continents by following these steps:
   a) They should draw the continent on a large piece of white construction paper and make sure to draw the water (oceans) surrounding the continent.
   b) After they've drawn the continent’s outline, they should label the landforms and bodies of water.
   c) After they've drawn and labeled their continent, they should decide how people could use the landforms and bodies of water that they have drawn. Have them draw pictures of cities and towns, seaports, farms, and other features to show these human uses.

Assessment Suggestions

Check to make sure that students have:

- Participated cooperatively in their groups.
• Accurately sketched all landforms and bodies of water and written captions below the sketches.
• Followed directions to create the continents and label the landforms and bodies of water.

Extension

Find out which landforms and bodies of water described in this lesson students have visited. Has anyone been to San Francisco Bay or the Gulf of Mexico? What did it look like in these places? When they were there, could they easily see the shape of the landform or body of water? What types of human settlements are in these places? How do people take advantage of being in these locations?