

ALASKA

Giant Traveling Map Lesson

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Alaska ACADEMIC STANDARDS / SUITABLE DISCIPLINES:

OBJECTIVES:

Participants will:

- Learn about major cities in Alaska during three different historical periods
- Practice using grids and cardinal directions to locate cities in the state
- Practice using latitude and longitude lines (if appropriate for grade level)
- Analyze change over time
- Discuss topics such as the census (source of data), distribution of resources in the state, physical features associated with settlements, and implications of changes in population for political representation at various levels of government

RECOMMENDED GRADES: Fourth through adult

TIME NEEDED: 20 to 25 minutes, depending on whether discussion is held as part of the map visit or at a later time

MATERIALS:

- Compass rose
- 15 flat markers
- 15 tall cones
- 15 shorter, flexible cones
- 3 to 4 plastic chains for dividing the state
- List of Alaska cities by population for 1910/1970/2010

PREPARATION:

- Discuss reasons why people choose to live in different places
- Review historical settlement patterns in Alaska
- Review Alaska era info
- Develop predictions by participants about where they think people might live
- Consider push and pull factors in migration

RULES:

- Shoes are not allowed on the map. Please have participants remove shoes before walking on the map.
- No writing utensils on the map.
- No sliding on the map.

DIRECTIONS:

Using the list of cities and colored cones, participants will locate the fifteen most populous cities in Alaska for the years 1910, 1970, and 2010. They will then look for trends based on the east/west axis and north/south axis, waterways adjacent to and within Alaska, and defensive settlements from the 18th century. Encourage speculation about the factors that contributed to population development among the various regions of the state.

On the map:

1. Provide participants with an overview about exploring the top fifteen populated places in Alaska in 1910, 1970, and 2010 using U.S. Census data as a source of information.
2. Ask participants about the kinds of jobs they imagine people were doing in Alaska in 1910. Ask them to predict where people might be living. (If needed, ask the participants to consider where they live and why? What does a location need for people to live there?)
3. Take 15 of the round markers. Pass them out to 15 of the participants (usually just ask them to take one and pass the remainder along).
4. Read the 15 largest cities one at a time, going down the row of participants and asking the participants to place the marker on the dot identifying the town (star in the case of Juneau).
5. Remind the participants that they can provide assistance to their classmates or colleagues about the location of a city based on cardinal directions or the grid. They should avoid shouting “over there”, “this way”, “left/right”, etc. From the beginning of the lesson, model the use of cardinal directions or the grid. Students may use the compass. Place NSEW labels on the walls or around the map.
6. After the flat, round markers are all on the map, ask the participants to interpret the new information that has been added to the map. Remind them that this is similar to adding a layer to a geographic information systems map.
7. Move on to the 1970 census and ask participants what jobs people were doing then. Ask them to predict where people might be living.
8. Pass out the 15 larger cones. Assign individual participants to place their cones on the 15 cities. For cities in the top 15 list by population in both 1910 and 1970, have participants pick up the flat marker and place it on top of the cone.
9. After the larger cones are all on the map, repeat Item 6 above, asking participants to think about what has changed and why.
10. Repeat process with 2010 census data and smaller or flexible orange cones. Have participants put the orange cone on top of the flat, round marker creating a pyramid, or on top of the large cone if the city was previously in the top 15 only in 1970.
11. Discuss where most of the people live and why. What areas of the state have no large settlements? Why? This is also an opportunity to review the concentration of people in the state in terms of electoral districts.

NOTES:

Review the Major Eras in Alaskan History for contextual information for the time periods highlighted in this lesson.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:**Q. What factors influence where people settled?**

A. Water, safety, transportation routes, physical geography

Q. How many of the fifteen largest cities/communities are located along a river or coast in 1910? 1970? 2010?

A.

1910	1970	2010
10	12	12

Q. How many of the cities were in the various regions? Are they spread evenly or grouped together?

A.

1910	1970	2010
Spread out over the state	Began to group, but still spread out	More concentration

Q. For what reasons did this pattern exist?

A. Transportation and employment opportunities

Q. How did Alaska compare with the rest of the United States?

A. In 1910 the population of all of Alaska was 64,356, with the population of the United States at 92,228,496.

	1910	1970	2010
Alaska	64,356	302,583	708,862
United States	92,228,496	203,392,031	308,745,538

Q. How many cities in the new top fifteen in 1970 were also in the top fifteen in 1910? What percentage is that?

A. 7, 47%, just under half

Q. How many cities in the new top fifteen in 2010 were also in the top fifteen in 1910? In 1970?

A. 1910: 3 of 15; 1970: 7 (some cities were large in 1910 and 2010, but not 1970)

Q. Where are most of the large cities in Alaska located in 2010? Why?

A. On the water and coasts

Q. Are major cities and communities significantly more concentrated than they were in 1910?

A. Depending on which communities are counted as being part of major cities, the concentration of population in major cities is similar to what it was in 1970.

Q. Generally speaking, how would you describe the majority of population movement and growth in the Alaska over the past one hundred years?

A. It has been periods of expansion followed by periods of contraction. There was a period of growth following World War II due to the military build-up for the Korean Conflict. The oil pipeline construction in the mid-1970s also brought a period of growth.

Q. Why? What factors have encouraged people to move and live in cities?

A. Jobs.

MODIFICATIONS:

For younger participants, focus on the map key and compass rose. For older participants, invite them to have more autonomy in the lesson and incorporate additional mathematical concepts.

EXTENSIONS:

Consider using the census data in math lessons. How much larger is Anchorage today than in 1910? How much larger is Anchorage than the 15th largest city? How concentrated is the population in Anchorage over time? How did the population of your city change?

For use with the GeoCivics activities (<https://www.uccs.edu/geocivics/>), invite participants to think about the current configuration of United States Congressional Districts in the state. Ask them to remember the key characteristics of how districts are drawn (equal population and contiguous). Invite them to pretend that their state has just two Congressional Districts; ask two people to pick up one of the chains and divide the state generally in half by population; invite two more people to divide the state into four districts (they may choose to move the original chain, or not). Discuss why some districts would likely be smaller in area than others. If appropriate, determine how to divide the state into state senate districts.

Consider when a giant floor map is a good tool for understanding geographic phenomena and when other tools (paper maps, online maps) might be more appropriate.

NOTE:

Thanks to National Geographic's Giant Traveling Maps team for the inspiration for this lesson, which is based on "People on the Move", a lesson for the North America Giant Map.

RESOURCES:

STATE WEBSITES

<http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cen/index.cfm>

History of Alaska Population Settlement

<http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/estimates/pub/pophistory.pdf>

Population Growth and Migration in Alaska, by Greg Williams

laborstats.alaska.gov/trends/oct85art1.pdf

	City	1910	v		City	1970	v		City	2010	v
	Alaska	64,356			Alaska	302,583			Alaska	708,862	
1	Fairbanks	3,541		1	Anchorage	48,029		1	Anchorage	291,826	
2	Nome	2,600		2	Fairbanks	14,771		2	Fairbanks	31,535	
3	Douglas	1,722		3	Ketchikan	6,994		3	Juneau	31,275	
4	Juneau	1,644		4	Juneau	6,050		4	Sitka	8,881	
5	Ketchikan	1,613		5	Kodiak	3,798		5	Ketchikan	8,050	
6	Cordova	1,152		6	Kenai	3,533		6	Wasilla	7,831	
7	Treadwell (Ghost Town)	1,222		7	Sitka	3,370		7	Kenai	7,100	
8	Skagway	872		8	Nome	2,488		8	Kodiak	6,130	
9	Valdez	810		9	Bethel	2,416		9	Bethel	6,080	
10	Wrangell	743		10	Barrow (Utqiagvik)	2,104		10	Palmer	5,937	
11	Petersburg	585		11	Petersburg	2,042		11	Homer	5,003	
12	Haines	445		12	Wrangell	2,029		12	Unalaska	4,376	
13	Eagle	178		13	Kotzebue	1,696		13	Barrow (Utqiagvik)	4,212	
14	Chena	138		14	Seward	1,587		14	Soldotna	4,163	
15				15	Douglas	1,243		15	Valdez	3,976	

	City	2020*	v
	Alaska	733,391	
1	Anchorage	291,247	
2	Fairbanks	32,515	
3	Juneau	32,255	
4	Knik-Fairview	19,297	
5	Badger	19,031	
6	College	11,332	
7	North Lakes	9,450	
8	Meadow Lakes	9,197	
9	Wasilla	9,054	
10	Tanaina	8,817	
11	Kalifornsky	8,487	
12	Sitka	8,458	
13	Ketchikan	8,192	
14	Kenai	7,424	
15	Steele Creek	6,437	

*2020 Census data is from Redistricting Data Hub using the State and Place level PL 94-171 datasets.

<https://redistrictingdatahub.org/data/download-data/#state-menu>