

LESSON PLAN

Title

Exploring Maps of Africa in Study of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Overview

In this lesson high school students (Grade 12) will examine maps of Africa produced over time, through the Colonial Period 1600s to early 1900s, including the "Scramble for Africa" of the late 1800s. The students will compare and contrast the maps. Then they will consider the details of these maps in light of the mention of maps in Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* and with the history of European Imperialism / African Colonialism.

Goal

Students will gain an overview of European Imperialism / African Colonialism and historical, geographical context for the novella.

Objectives

Students will be able to identify key landmarks: Congo River, Belgian Free State, Democratic Republic of Congo; and describe general features: equator, rain forest, peoples.

Students will be able to make textual connections from the novella to the maps, such as comparing descriptions to visual details.

Students will look for patterns, ironies, and paradoxes in the "Scramble for Africa" as indicated on the maps and readings.

Investigative Question – *On the completion of the lesson students will be able to answer this question:*

What stories of European Imperialism and its effect on Africa do the maps tell?

Time Required (0-10)

- Number of class periods: 1-3
- Number of minutes in each class period: 40

Recommended Grade Range

This lesson is for 12th Grade or above.

Subject / Sub-Subject

English Language Arts and History/Social Studies // Historical Literary Criticism

Standards

- Common Core Reading RI. 11-12. 7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- Common Core Reading RL.11-12.7 Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.
- Common Core Reading RI 11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn.
- Common Core Reading RI. 11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
- Common Core Writing W. 11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- Common Core Speaking & Listening SL.11-12.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Credits

Charles Youngs, Bethel Park High School, PA

PREPARATION

Materials Used

- Maps from Library of Congress (see below)
- Magnifying glasses (optional)
- Note paper
- Handout: Questions for “Inquiry on Maps of Africa”

Resources Used

Literary text:

Excerpt, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, Chapter 1 beginning with 17th paragraph, “Now when I was a little chap...” and continuing through the 18th paragraph ending, “The snake had charmed me.” Also, Chapter 1, paragraph 23. (Excerpt 2,325 words.)

Digital texts:

- “What Caused the Scramble for Africa?” *About.com*
<http://africanhistory.about.com/od/eracolonialism/a/ScrambleWhy.htm> OR
- “Scramble for Africa” *St. John’s College, U of Cambridge*.
http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/library_exhibitions/schoolresources/exploration/scramble_for_africa

Library of Congress digitized primary sources (printed poster-size):

Title: Map of [Africa]
URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g8200.ct003086>
Author/Creator: Wells Missionary Map Co.
Date: 1908

Title: Carte de l’Afrique / par A. H. Bruei
URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g8200.ct001194>
Author/Creator: Chez Chles. Simonneau
Date: 1820

Title: Africae Nova Descriptio
URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g8200.ct001455>
Author/Creator: Willem Janszoon Blaeu Published: Amstelodami? 166-?, n.p. 1960
Date: 166-?, reprinted n.p. 1960

Title: Carte Du Congo Belge
URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g8651f.ct001277>
Author/Creator: J.LebeGue & Cle, Bruxelles
Date: 1896

Title: Africa: Corrected From The Observations Of The Royal Society At London

And Paris
URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g8200.ct001445>
Author/Creator: John Senex, London
Date: 1725?

Title: The Map of Africa by Treaty
URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g8200m.gct00004>
Author/Creator: Edward Hertslet, London, printed for H.M. Stationery off, by Harrison & Sons
Date: 1909

Title: Africae Nova Tabula
URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g8200.ct002076>
Author/Creator: Jodocus Hondius, Paris; published by Chez lean Boisseau
Date: 1640

Title: Democratic Republic of The Congo
URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g8650.ct001026>
Author/Creator: CIA, Washington, DC
Date: 1998

PROCEDURE

Description of Procedure - Including the framework of The Inquiry Cycle:

1. Arrange students in groups seated at tables or desks pulled together as such.
2. Explain that you will provide maps of Africa that depict the continent at various points in history for students to examine.

Maps from Library of Congress:

- Africae Nova Descriptio, 166?, or Africae Nova Tabula, 1640
- Africa : Corrected From The Observations Of The Royal Society At London And Paris, 1725
- Carte de l'Afrique / par A. H. Bruei, 1820
- Carte Du Congo Belge, J.LebeGue & Cle, Bruxelles, 1896
- Map of [Africa] Wells Missionary Map Co., 1908
- The Map of Africa by Treaty, 1909

Investigate - Find and evaluate information to answer questions; test hypotheses; think about information to illuminate new questions and hypotheses

3. Distribute a data sheet handout that asks students to locate specific information from the maps, such as title, date, language, significant landmarks, remarkable details, and comments, based on inferences on subject matter, materials, technique, context, maker, and purpose signifiers. Allow about 4 minutes time.

Wonder - Students develop questions and create hypotheses or predictions

4. Rotate groups/maps and response sheets, keeping the maps and response sheets paired. Ask students to first examine the map now before them, thinking of the questions previously completed for the first map. Now students are to add to, and revise if necessary, the data sheet, and develop questions, create hypotheses, or make predictions about this map. Allow about 4 minutes time.
5. Repeat Step#4 once more. Allow about 4 minutes time.

Connect - Students connect new insights to self or previous knowledge; gain background and context; observe, experience

6. Rotate groups/maps and response sheets, keeping the maps and response sheets paired. Have students consider the map and response sheet before them. Ask them to compare and contrast this map with the

ones they have examined previously, and focus in on dates. Ask them to report on the response sheet what they notice about the maps through time. Allow about 4 minutes time.

Construct - Construct new understandings connected to previous knowledge; draw conclusions about questions and hypotheses

7. Rotate groups/maps and response sheets, keeping the maps and response sheets pairs. Have students read an excerpt from *Heart of Darkness*, Chapter 1 (Marlowe explaining his boyhood fascination with African maps). And ask how this map compares in time, place, and content with the one described in Conrad's text. Allow about 8 minutes time.

Express - Apply understandings to a new context, new situation; express new ideas to share learning with others

8. Rotate groups/maps and response sheets, keeping the maps and response sheets pairs. Have student refer to the information (read as homework previously) on the Scramble for Africa. Check for understanding: What does this phrase mean? Ask them to discuss and jot notes of what the maps tell them, first in small groups and then whole class. Allow about 4 minutes time.

Reflect - Reflect on own learning; ask new questions

9. Ask students to discuss findings. Review the questions on the handout in discussion. Note the 1998 *Map of the Democratic Republic of Congo*, (and Republic of Congo), and the current status as a nation, no longer a Belgian colony.
10. Assign students to summarize in writing their findings, connections, and understanding of the primary text's mention of African maps (c. 1870) and c. 1889 (when Conrad himself experienced The Congo) to inform their knowledge of the Scramble for Africa and the novella *Heart of Darkness*.

Extensions

Further research and reading on the colonization of Africa.

Refer to maps as students continue reading the novella, plotting possible points of text geographically.

EVALUATION

- Teachers will check for understanding through observation of speaking and listening skills, check of reading comprehension through questioning, and evaluation of students' written responses.
- Teachers will note accurate answers, good reasoning based on available evidence and textual support.
- Teachers will note students' ability to make reasonable and accurate inferences based on evidence from primary sources, including Library of Congress materials, literary text, and informational text.
- Teachers will evaluate student writing to sources, incorporating specific evidence, comparison and contrast, and summary.

Data Sheet on Maps of Africa Over Time

Scramble of Africa and *Heart of Darkness*

Title of Map: _____

What stories of European Imperialism and its effect on Africa do the maps tell?

In this lesson you will examine maps of Africa produced over time, particularly through the “Scramble for Africa” Colonial Period 1600s to early 1900s. Then you’ll note similarities and differences and compare with the mention of maps in *Heart of Darkness* and with the history of European Imperialism / African Colonialism. This will help give you a context for understanding the Conrad’s novella.

Goal: To gain an overview of European Imperialism / African Colonialism and historical, geographical context for the novella.

Objectives: Identify key landmarks: Congo River, Belgian Free State, Democratic Republic of Congo; and describe general features: Equator, rain forest, peoples. Make textual connections from the novella to the maps, such as comparing descriptions to visual details. Discover patterns, ironies, and paradoxes in the “Scramble for Africa” as indicated on the maps and readings.

GROUP 1

What do you see? Note these and any other remarkable details.

Does the map have a title? If yes, what?

In what language is the map written?

Date? Who made this map?

Can you see the Congo?

What do you see? Topography, boundaries, features . . .

What can you infer from the details on this map?

GROUP 2

Do you agree with the information from group #1? If not, please note your findings and inferences.

What else do you see?

GROUP 3

Do you agree with the information from group #1? If not, please note your findings and inferences.

What else do you see?

GROUP 4

Review the previous groups' observations, then develop questions, create hypotheses, or make predictions about this map. Write them here.

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GROUP 5

Read an excerpt from *Heart of Darkness*, Chapter 1 (Marlowe explaining his boyhood fascination with African maps). How does this map compare in time, place, and content with the one described in Conrad's text, that is, did come before, after, or about the same time as the map described ?

Have you seen a better match yet? Which of the ones you have seen connects in some way to the description in the novella?

GROUP 6

Define the phrase "Scramble for Africa"? How does this map connect with the "Scramble for Africa" idea?

WRITING ASSIGNMENT—REFLECTION ON AFRICAN MAPS OVER TIME

Summarize in writing your notes, findings, connections, and understanding of the mention of African maps *Heart of Darkness* and the Scramble for Africa in light of your having examined several African maps.