

Third Grade Social Science, Orrington School, Evanston

The techniques students learn in the Reading block are employed when teaching Social Studies; for example, when learning about regions of the country, students use leveled readers on geography during Guided Reading time. They use non-fiction texts to take notes that will eventually help them to write research papers; guiding questions help them to draw out important facts and details from the texts. Students learn to react to and engage with texts to become more active readers. They might use strategies such as FQRs (Fact/Question/Response), in which they note a fact they have learned, ask a question relating to it, and offer a personal response (even “wow!”). When appropriate, current events are pulled into the curriculum and tied into Social Science goals. Following is an example of a timely lesson on that week’s IOC vote for the 2016 Olympic games host city.

The International Olympic Committee Vote

Objective: Students will use maps to define a point on a map. Students will practice using cardinal directions and a compass rose in the context of the IOC vote for the 2016 Olympics host city.

Materials: Google Earth and other internet-based maps; student copy of world map without lines; student copy of world map with equator and Prime Meridian; word bank with vocabulary (cardinal directions, compass rose, equator, Prime Meridian).

Activities: Pass out world map with no lines and put a copy on document camera. Ask students what they know about the map. Where is Evanston on this map? Label Evanston, Illinois and Beijing, China. Ask: how would you explain to my friend in China where Evanston is? Turn and talk; record thinking.

Pass out world map with equator and Prime Meridian and put a copy on document camera. Reference vocabulary from word bank. Introduce “hemisphere” and “quadrant” vocabulary. Ask class questions relating to hemispheres and quadrants.

Introduce the IOC vote; discuss.

Look at map with equator and Prime Meridian. Locate Madrid, Spain. Discuss cloze booklet activity. Why look at both new and old Olympic host cities?

Do first page of booklet as a class, then students work in partnerships to locate cities, countries, continents, hemispheres, and directions. They will use locations in relation to the equator and Prime Meridian. Early finishers can do “Leaving On a Jet Plane” activity.

Outcome: Children will have the vocabulary and tools to define a point on a map and describe relative location (the location of something in relation to another place).