The Route of the Edmund Fitzgerald

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Grade 4
Time: Approximately 70 min.

Sources Consulted/References


Teaching and Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to draw upon stories, photos, artifacts, and other primary sources to compare the life of people in towns and cities in Michigan and in the Great Lakes region during the time period of 1975-2011 by listening to and viewing a true story about the Edmund Fitzgerald, and participating in a class discussion, comparing peoples’ lives from the time the Fitz sank in 1975 to present.

2. Students will be able to use geographic tools and technologies, stories, songs, and pictures to answer geography questions about the U.S. by listening to, viewing, and discussing a story and song about the Edmund Fitzgerald, a map of Lake Superior, and studying latitude and longitude with dividers and roller plotters.

3. Students will be able to measure using common tools and select appropriate units of measure by using dividers and roller plotters to map the points of latitude and longitude of the actual route of the Fitzgerald, and alternative route points, which may have been safer choices.

Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations

Social Studies

History: History of Michigan (Beyond Statehood) 4-H3.0.4: Draw upon stories, photos, artifacts, and other primary sources to compare the life of people in towns and cities in Michigan and in the Great Lakes region during a variety of time periods from 1837 to the present (e.g., 1837-1900, 1900-1950, 1950-2000).

Geography: The World in Spatial Terms 4-G1.0.4: Use geographic tools and technologies, stories, songs, and pictures to answer geographic questions about the United States.

Mathematics
Measurement: Measure using common tools and appropriate units M.UN.04.01: Measure using common tools and select appropriate units of measure.

Materials

Gordon Lightfoot’s version of song about the sinking of Edmund Fitzgerald
Lake Superior Map, including lines of latitude/longitude
12 Copies of Lake Superior Map (1/pair students)
12 Dividers (1/pair)
12 Roller Plotters (1/pair)
Notebooks
Pencils

Learning Plan

1. Teacher checks students’ prior knowledge of Edmund Fitzgerald through discussion.
2. Teacher reads The Big Fitz aloud.
3. Class discussion on life of Michigan residents, in 1975 (explained in book and through teacher) and life of Michigan residents, in present day (use Venn Diagram if desired).
4. Teacher traces route of Edmund Fitzgerald on Lake Superior map, in front of classroom, and discusses alternative, safer routes the ship could have taken.
5. Teacher shows lines of latitude and longitude on map & briefly reviews.
6. Teacher demonstrates use of tools (divider and roller plotter) by measuring the latitude and longitude of beginning point of actual route of Edmund Fitzgerald and the end point of actual route.
7. Question time.
8. Play Edmund Fitzgerald song while students work with selected or choice partner at desks with dividers and roller plotters to measure latitude and longitude of beginning points of an alternative route and end point of an alternative route (record in notebooks).
9. Wrap-up discussion/questions on lat/long measurements.

Lesson Assessment

1. Teacher checks prior knowledge of Fitzgerald and latitude/longitude by hand raising and discussion.
2. Classroom participation check on measurements/discussion.