Great Lakes Geography

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Target Grade: Kindergarten

Subjects: Social Studies and Language Arts

Lesson Overview

The lesson is intended to introduce kindergarten students to the location of the Great Lakes in context to where they live. Most live only miles away from the Detroit River. I want to use these lessons to build background knowledge of the many resources the Great Lakes offer.

Sources Consulted

Cliffs Natural Resources Michigan Tour  July, 2012
Soo Locks Tour/ Army Corp. of Engineers/Kevin Sprague July, 2012

Learning Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Name and locate the Great Lakes on a map.
2. Use “The Great Lakes Song” and the acronym HOMES to recall the names of the Great Lakes and other landmarks within the song that are located on the map.
3. Use directional words to locate Lake Erie. (top-North, bottom-South, left-West, right-East)

Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations Addressed

Social Studies

Geography

G1 The World in Spatial Terms
K-G1.0.1 Recognize that maps and globes represent places.
K-G1.0.2 Use environmental directions or positional words to identify locations

G5 Environment and Society

K-G5.0.1 Describe ways people use the environment to meet human needs and wants.
Reading

Word Recognition and Word Study
Vocabulary

R.WS.00.10 Students will in context, determine the meaning of a few words, familiar and repeated phrases including objects, actions, content vocabulary, and literary terms, using strategies and resources including pictures clues, prediction, and other people.

Informational Text

R.IT.00.02 Students will with teacher guidance, discuss informational text pattern including descriptive and sequential.

R.IT.00.03 Students will explain how authors use text features including pictures, illustrations, and icons to enhance the understanding of key ideas presented in descriptive (definitions, enumeration) and sequential (directions, steps, procedure) organizational patterns.

R.IT.00.04 Students will respond to individual and multiple texts by finding evidence, discussing, illustrating, and/or writing to reflect, make meaning, and make connections.

Materials Needed

Lesson 1
Large United States map
Large Great Lakes Map
Individual laminated student maps of the Great Lakes and dry erase markers
CD – Track 8 “The Great Lakes Song” from Lake Rhymes: Folk Songs of the Great Lakes Region

New Vocabulary

Lesson 1

• Great Lakes – 5 freshwater lakes consisting of Lake Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior
• Lake Huron- the third largest of the Great Lakes which is joined to Lake Michigan at the Straits of Mackinac.
• Lake Ontario- the fourth largest of the Great Lakes and the only one that does not border the state of Michigan.
• Lake Michigan- the second largest of the Great Lakes and the only one that is entirely within the United States.
• Lake Erie- the smallest of the Great Lakes and the closest to where we live
• Lake Superior- the largest of the Great Lakes and the largest surface area freshwater lake in the world.
• North- ordinal direction located at the top of the map.
• South- ordinal direction located at the bottom of the map.
• West- ordinal direction located on the left of the map.
• East- ordinal direction located on the right of the map.
• Folk song—a song made and handed down among a group of people who shared a common bond.

Focus Questions

Lesson 1

❖ Have you ever gone swimming other than in a pool? Where was it?
❖ Do you know the name of our state?
❖ Do you know what surrounds Michigan?

Procedure

Lesson 1 (Day 1, 30 minutes)

Introduce the lesson by asking if they have ever gone swimming other than a pool. Discuss where they may have swam before. Most likely they will say a beach. Use this response to ask what beaches are attached to (river and lakes).

Using the large United States Map point to students where Michigan is. Ask them what they notice about Michigan (shape, two parts, surrounded by water). If they don’t respond to all of them lead them to those points.

Next place the large Great Lakes map next to the U.S. map. Pass out the individual Great Lakes map and let the students once again take a few minutes to look at it. Have them locate the words, North, South, West, and East.

Starting with North, have students point to Lake Superior. Continue identifying the rest of the lakes using directional words. Make sure students are using their individual maps to also locate the 5 Great Lakes. Ask questions like which lake is the biggest? Which lake is the smallest?

Introduce what a folk song is. Tell students why folk songs were written. Explain that the song we are going to listen to was written to capture the spirit of the people who live in the Great Lakes region. It is a tribute to the beauty, mystery, danger, and awesome power of these great waters.

Listen to “The Great Lake Song” first all the way through with no interruptions. As we listen to the song again, have the students use the thumbs up signal every time they hear one of the names of the Great Lakes. On the third listen, the students use their map to point to the lake as it is being sung in the song. Model for students.

Introduce the students to the acronym of H.O.M.E.S. to remember the names of the Great Lakes. Use the worksheet for students to copy each of the lakes names in order of the acronym.
Wrap up by gathering around the large Great Lakes map. Point out where Detroit is on the map. Have students point to the Great Lake that is closest to us. (Lake Erie). Sing song one more time having alternating students come up and point to the lake being mentioned during the chorus.

Assessments

Most assessments in the lesson will be based on teacher’s observation. Listed below are some activities that I will focus my observations on:

✓ Following directions especially during the lesson on maps and directions.
✓ Learning and participating in sing “The Great Lakes Song”.
✓ Completing HOMES activity sheet.
✓ List four cardinal directions: East, West, South, North
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