

Connecticut

Alliance Created State Giant Traveling Map Lesson

Title: *Plotting Connecticut Physical Features*

Recommended Grades: 2-4

Time Needed: 1 lesson

Objectives:

Students will:

- Explore the physical features on the map of Connecticut
- Demonstrate an understanding of physical feature vocabulary

Materials:

- Giant CT Map
- 3-5 colors of cups, about 12 each
- Smartboard or Whiteboard to introduce vocabulary

Preparation:

- Prepare a visual to introduce vocabulary (plan to show rivers, mountains, ocean, and possibly expand to lakes, desert, etc.)

Rules:

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

Directions:

1. *(Before working on the map, teach desired physical feature vocabulary)*
2. Start out by splitting students into 1 group for every physical feature they will be mapping
3. Split the first color cup among the first group, tell them to put the cup down on any river on the map. Tell them to sit back down in their spot when all of their cups are passed out. Ask whole class to observe how the cups are placed and guide them to realize that there are rivers all over the state, that there are very many, of different sizes, and spread out everywhere north south east and west! Higher grades might notice that the rivers empty into the sound, that some are bigger and some are smaller, that the Connecticut River is a very big and one and goes mostly through the middle of the state.
4. Split the second color cup among the next group, tell them to put the cups everywhere they see mountains. Tell them to sit back down in their spot

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- when all of their cups are passed out. Ask whole class to observe how the cups are placed and guide them to realize that there are far fewer places with mountains than rivers, and that they are mostly in the western part of the state with very few in the east. There are no mountains in the center, tell them about the Connecticut River Valley and how 'valley' equates to lower elevation. Find the highest mountain in the northeast corner. For higher grades, explain that fossils can only be found in the center of the state as no mountains have pushed up and disturbed the layers of sedimentary rock where they are found.
5. Split the third color cup among the third group, tell them to place their cup everywhere there is salt water or ocean. . Tell them to sit back down in their spot when all of their cups are passed out. Ask whole class to observe how the cups are placed and guide them to realize that there is only ocean in Connecticut in Long Island Sound, which is south of the state. Have them reflect on what that means for boating, fishing, going to the beach, or more historical endeavors like whaling. Have them notice the names of towns along the coast, and invite them to make connections, for example, if they've been to Mystic Seaport or to the Groton Sub Base before.
 6. Optionally for any additional colors you want them to use, have them repeat the process for lakes (fewer than rivers but still all over the state), deserts, (none at all, connect to a climate conversation) etc.

Tips:

- Very natural precursor to a study of the Connecticut River watershed
- **Extension opportunities:**
 - **Science:** estuary ecology with fresh water emptying into saltwater sound
 - **Social Studies:** where Native Americans settled and why
 - **Social Studies:** water powered mills in the industrial age with plentiful rivers
 - **Science:** Dinosaur State Park, where sedimentary rock is found in our state

Vocabulary:

- River
- Lake
- Ocean
- Mountain
- Desert
- Physical Feature