

# Connecticut

## Alliance Created State Giant Traveling Map Lesson

**Title:** *Tracing the Connecticut River*

**Recommended Grades:** 3,4, 5

**Time Needed:** 2 lessons

### **Objectives:**

#### **Students will:**

- Explore the physical features on the map of Connecticut
- Demonstrate an understanding of river vocabulary: source, mouth, tributary

### **Materials:**

- Giant CT Map
- [CT State Map](#) & blue marker for each student
- Smartboard or Whiteboard to introduce vocabulary
- A blue cup (or blue item of some kind) for each student

### **Preparation:**

- Prepare a visual to introduce vocabulary (plan to show the source, mouth, tributary)

### **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:**

#### **Lesson One: Tracing the Connecticut River (with a marker!)**

1. Teacher displays visual to teach three vocabulary words: 'source', 'mouth', and 'tributary'
2. Pass out, examine and analyze the 1-page CT State Maps (Notice the location of their town, their capitol, the physical features near to them, etc.). 'Turn and Talk' to share what's observed.
3. Search for the source of the Connecticut River, have students notice that it begins North of Connecticut and that the source is not actually in our state. Trace the river with a finger down to the mouth. Have students use blue markers to trace down the Connecticut River, ending at the mouth.  
\*Optionally, use Google Maps to see where the source actually is, (a small lake at the Canadian border), and notice that the Connecticut River flows

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through Massachusetts and even forms the border between Vermont and New Hampshire (as set by King George II in 1764!).

### Lesson Two: Tracing the Connecticut River (with our feet!)

1. Depending on prior experience with the map, review past learning & behavior expectations.
2. Have all students in a line walk the Connecticut River, noticing the twists and turns and how the mouth empties into the Long Island Sound.
3. Solicit student to remind classmates of why we can't label the source of the Connecticut River on this state map. Have a couple volunteers place their blue cup upside down on the part of the Connecticut River that we can see in Massachusetts.
4. Have students notice that our capitol, Hartford, is on the Connecticut River. Guide discussion about the advantages of having a major city on the river.
5. Have 11 more volunteers place their blue cup on a town on the Connecticut River. 'Turn and Talk' to share observations about how many towns are on the river, and why that was a desirable place to settle a town (Towns on the river on the Giant Connecticut Map are Enfield, Windsor Locks, Windsor, East Hartford, Glastonbury, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Middletown, Haddam, Essex, & Old Saybrook).
6. Have any remaining students place their blue cup in another spot along the River. Have all students stand in Long Island Sound, and share observations & reflections about what they've learned.

### 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:** trade and commerce along the river
  - **Social Studies:** Native American settlements along the river
  - **Social Studies:** water powered mills in the industrial age

### Vocabulary:

- River
- Mouth
- Tributary
- Source
- Watershed
- Town
- City

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- Capitol
- State