

Weather Maps

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will understand the collection of weather data as presented in different formats (newspaper, TV, Internet).
2. Students will use appropriate terminology related to weather maps.
3. Students will use the internet to capture weather data from a city of choice and present a TV style weather report to the class.

AGE: Grade 3 - 5

TIME:

- Three 45-minute periods of instruction; a week or so to collect data (can be done for homework or homeroom time); plus time for presentations.

MATERIALS

- Videotaped TV weather report.
- Copies of a recent weather map from a local newspaper.
- Copies (or an overhead) of a weather map from a national newspaper (USA Today has an excellent one which can be found on the internet.)
- Access to Internet (or previously downloaded weather maps from various cities and locations around the world.)
- Poster board and markers

INSTRUCTION:

- Begin a discussion of weather reporting by asking children what today's weather will be like. How did they know not to bring an umbrella or wear boots today? Have them tell about weather reports they may have seen on TV. Do any of their parents watch the weather on TV or read it in the paper everyday? These are common events in citizens' daily lives. Discuss the advantages of knowing with some certainty what the weather will be like for today and the rest of the week. What other people in your community would benefit from this knowledge? (Grocery stores, school buses) What about people in other parts of the country (farmers, fishers, pilots)?

- Ask students which direction they think the weather moves. (Generally west to east in the US.) Does knowing what the weather was yesterday in a city west of you help to predict the local weather? What are some things that affect the weather in your locality? (Mountains, lake, coastline)
- Have students watch a taped broadcast of a local weather report. You might want to show it once through completely and then rewind it and watch it again in segments. Pay particular attention to the meteorologist's presentation of the weather pattern and the colors used to show temperature. Make a list on the board of any words that are unfamiliar.
- Distribute a recent copy of your local newspaper's weather map. Have students orient themselves by identifying major cities or landmarks with a highlighter. Make observations about the map with regard to temperature, precipitation, and cloudiness. What symbols are used to illustrate wind, snow, rain, and ice? Etc. Discuss the elements of the map: the colors used, the keys denoting temperatures, additional symbols.
- Display an overhead transparency (or distribute copies) of a national weather map. Have students make observations about similarities and differences in the maps. (Children should recognize consistencies in symbols and terminology.)
- Have each student choose a city or location from around the world. Assign them to keep a log of the average daily high and low temperatures, precipitation, etc. for a one or two week period.
- At the end of the time period, students should create a poster map of their chosen location and prepare a written summary of the weather for that time.
- Students are to present a TV style weather report to the class.

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT:

1. Daily log of weather conditions in the location of choice.
2. Poster map and written report on weather in location of choice.
3. Presentation to class of TV style weather report.