



# We Are Explorers!

Students learn that explorers (e.g., Columbus, Leif Erickson) traveled to places in the world that were new to them.

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<b>Grade Level</b>	K
<b>Duration</b>	1-2 class periods

## National Geography Standards

### ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

## Arizona Geography Strand

### Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

**PO 4.** Identify land and water on maps, illustrations, images, and globes.

**PO 5.** Locate continents and oceans on a map or globe.

**PO 3.** Determine the relative location of objects using the terms near/far, behind/in front, over/under, left/right, up/down.

## Other Standards

### Strand 1: American History Concept 3: Exploration and Colonization

**PO 1.** Recognize that explorers (e.g., Columbus, Leif Erickson) traveled to places in the world that were new to them.

## Overview

Children often think that the world began when they were born and have a hard time understanding the concept of past time and people from long ago.

## Purpose

In this lesson students will gain a better understanding of explorers traveling to places in the world that were new to them through maps and a treasure hunt.

## Materials

- Were We First? map (colored and uncolored)
- Classroom Treasure Hunt List
- Classroom Map
- Bird's Eye View of a Classroom

- Different items that the students will find in a playground treasure hunt (play rings & jewelry, polished rocks, play money, play dishes, etc.) enough for 2 per student
- Map of Treasure Hunt area (must be created by the teacher)

## Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Recognize that explorers (e.g., Columbus, Leif Erickson) traveled to places in the world that were new to them.
2. Identify land and water on maps.

## Procedures

*Prerequisite Skills: Students should also be familiar with the relative location of objects using the terms near/far, behind/in front, over/under, left/right, up/down.*

## SESSION ONE

1. Set: Mention that an explorer is the first person to travel to, find, or take a close look at a place. Talk about exploring. Do they know some names of explorers? Have they ever explored a place?

2. Show the Were We First? map of the world to the students. Show then where the continents are. Explain that many of our great-great-great-great-grandparents came from other lands. Explain that people before them were curious what was outside their land and wanted to explore to find new things. These people were called explorers and would often use ships to explore the oceans to find new lands. They often picked new paths that others hadn't traveled before them.

Discuss what these explorers might have wanted to gain from these explorations (new knowledge, foods, medicines, things found in nature like wood and gold, to be famous, to have excitement, to take over other lands, etc.)

3. Give students a Were We First? map of the world and have them identify land and water by coloring the land green and the water blue like the colored map that is displayed. (You can half of the class doing this while the other half do #4 and then switch in 5-10 minutes.)

4. Divide students into groups of 2-3 and have them walk around the classroom being explorers. Remember to emphasize that explorers often pick a path that no one else has taken before them. Some explorers followed the same path but search for new things –Spanish explorers followed Columbus' path and then continued farther. The astronauts follow the same flight path but do new experiments in space, etc.

In 5 minutes, they are to find things from a list you have made. They should number the items as they find them (1 through 8).

5. Closure: Have students come back to the large group and discuss what they found and where they found it and what it was like to be an explorer.

## SESSION TWO

6. Before taking the class outside to an area for a Treasure Hunt, put some "treasures" for them to find as explorers. (If you have a Buddy Class, have them do it for you or have volunteer parents do it.) Gather the students together in the classroom and explain that today they are going to be explorers and will be finding things that could be treasures. Explain that explorers never

knew if they would find anything or if it would be a safe place for them. They should go carefully and quietly in their exploration. Remind them that explorers usually picked paths that no one else had taken before. Give them plastic bags to put their treasures in. Explain that they are to bring **only two treasures** back to the classroom to share with the whole class and be able to tell where they found them. Take the students out to the Exploration Sight and monitor them in their discoveries.

7. Back in the classroom, let each student take a turn in showing what they found in their exploration and where they found it.

8. Closure: Give the students a map of the Treasure area and have students draw a picture of their treasures on the map to show where they found it. There should be two treasures drawn on the map.

## SESSION THREE

1. Pass out the Bird's Eye View of the Classroom Map. Explain some of the locations that might be unfamiliar to the students (teacher's desk, computer, sink, the reading rug). Review relative location of objects using the terms near/far, behind/in front, over/under, left/right, up/down. On the Bird's Eye View of the Classroom Map, have the students draw their new route of exploration with a line. Have them number their 5 stops. The teacher will then ask them what do they find at each stop? The teacher will also ask 5 relative location questions.

Examples of relative location questions:

Is it near the door?

Is left or right of the sink?

Is the teddy bear above or below the desk?

Is your stop 4 in front of the teacher's desk?

## Assessment

- On a new map, students will color the land green and the water (oceans) blue. Mastery will be considered 6 of the 7 continents are green and most of the water is blue.
- The Classroom Treasure Hunt Check List will be numbered 1 to 8 in the order of finding the items. Group papers can be compared. Mastery will be an accuracy of 80% or higher.
- Students will draw their two treasures on the map provided near where they found it. Two treasures drawn in the correct location will be considered mastery.

- The Bird's Eye View of the Classroom Map should have a line with 5 stops. Individually the students can tell what they found at each of the 5 stops using the terms near/far, behind/in front, over/under, left/right, up/down. Mastery will be considered 80% accuracy or higher in identifying the objects at the numbered locations and using the correct relative location terms.

## Extensions

Show some photos of astronauts. Astronauts are modern day explorers. Ask students what

astronauts might find in space. Talk about where they might go in space. How would they get there? How are they like explorers of the past? How are they different?

## Sources

Were We First? map Arizona Geographic Alliance

Bird's Eye View of a Classroom map, Arizona Geographic Alliance,  
<http://alliance.la.asu.edu/azga/>