

Passport to Nicaragua

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- identify the major geographic features of Nicaragua.
 - utilize a map scale to measure distance.
 - analyze clues to develop critical thinking skills.
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Materials

- Teacher Map of Nicaragua
 - Available library or Internet resources.
 - Student Handout: **Blank Map of Nicaragua**
 - Student Handout: **Clue Sheet**
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Note to the Teacher

This geography activity is a discovery scenario that requires students to utilize research skills to identify significant features of Nicaraguan geography. Depending upon the resources available in your school, you may wish to conduct this exercise in the school library or computer lab.

Activity

1. Divide students into pairs or in groups, depending on size of class, grade level, and the nature of available resources.
 - a. Distribute the student handout entitled **Clue Sheet** and a **Blank Map of Nicaragua** to each student.
 - b. Read the directions for the activity aloud while the students read it to themselves.
 - c. Direct students to utilize identified resources to complete their maps.
 2. When students have completed their maps of Nicaragua, gather the students together as a group and ask them to share their findings as you review each of the 10 clues. (You may wish to display the Teacher Map on an overhead projector.)
 3. Once the map is completed, ask students to analyze the terrain features and answer the following questions:
 - a. Where are most of the major cities located? (**west coast**)
 - b. What appears to separate the west coast from the east coast? (**mountains and tropical rain forest**)?
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4. Concluding Activity

Based on their discoveries, ask students to hypothesize as to what impact geography may have had on the relationship between the people of the east and west coasts of Nicaragua.

Clue Sheet

Name _____

Period _____

Directions

You have been commissioned by the National Cartography Association (The Mapmakers of the World) to travel to the previously uncharted country of Nicaragua. Your mission is to delve into the terrain and come back armed with a detailed map of the cities, oceans, lakes, terrain, and infrastructure(roads) of this small but vastly intricate country!!! We have some clues and pictures, but the last people there did not take good enough notes. It is all a puzzle that needs to be put back together! Read each clue below and using the clue and picture, figure out where it is and chart it on the blank map. You will be given a basic map of what we know about the country and your mission will be to find out the answers to the questions that have boggled the minds of geographers, oceanographers, mapmakers and geologists everywhere!! Tread lightly and good luck!!!

Known Evidence

- **Clue #1:** We know there are two oceans, the **Atlantic** and **Pacific** that border Nicaragua, Find these and label them first to help you find your way.
 - **Clue #2:** There are two cities along the Pacific Coast. We know **Poneloya** is very rocky and that **San Juan Del Sur** is shaped more like a bay or horseshoe. Use the pictures we have of both to determine which town/beach is which. Poneloya is located about 20 miles from **Leon**.
 - **Clue #3:** The Capital of Nicaragua is **Managua**. It is the largest city in Nicaragua. You will know it is Nicaragua when you find a large city that was recently destroyed by Hurricane Mitch. It is located on **Lake Managua**.
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- **Clue #4:** We know there exists a land that is located in an area where there could have been influence from English explorers and Africans that may have stayed after slavery was banned in Nicaragua. They have an amazing culture that has Creole and African infused elements mixed in with the native culture. We believe it is called the **Bluefields**.
 - **Clue #5: San Juan Del Norte** a small town that is very sparsely populated that serves as a connection city if you wanted to go into Costa Rica.
 - **Clue #6: Granada** is a grand city that was destroyed by William Walker many years ago but rebuilt into a beautiful colonial splendor. It served as a port sometimes when the pirates used to travel up the **Rio San Juan River** into **Lake Nicaragua**. We know that when you find Granada you will be able to label both of these water bodies. But we careful, Lake Nicaragua is known to be one of the only freshwater lakes to have **sharks!!** It houses the bullshark which is known to be the most aggressive shark on earth! Beware when swimming these waters!
 - **Clue #7: Matagalpa** and **Esteli** are two of the most Northern cities that are right in the midst of coffee plantation land. Esteli is reportedly further East than Matagalpa. They are located in a rather hilly region as well.
 - **Clue #8:** We are pretty sure that the chocolate capital of Nicaragua, **Rivas**, is located approximately 25 miles from Granada.
 - **Clue #9: Masaya** is a town where everybody goes to sell their crafts. Look for the markets at every corner or hand made craft goods like pottery, hammocks and woven baskets. Masaya is very close to Granada.
 - **Clue #10: Leon** is an Eastern city known for its grand cathedrals. It is beautiful and everybody walks around at all hours and sometimes they gather in the city square for political demonstrations. It is located approximately 60 miles from Managua.

Note: Make sure you draw the roads between the cities. We know that most major roads run out of Managua. These go from Managua and on to the following cities like a spider--- to Granada passing through Masaya; to Leon passing to Poneloya; to Rivas and on to San Juan Del Sur; to the Bluefields; to Esteli and to Matagalpa.

Teacher Map



Name _____

Period _____

