



GeoCivics Lesson Title: *Inquiry-Based Research - North American Colonial Forts*

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Teacher: Myla S. Liljemark	Lesson title: Inquiry-Based Research: Colonial Forts	Grade Level: 6, 7, 8
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Notes: This is a stand-alone lesson.

Pre-existing Knowledge:

- Prior knowledge and understanding of the European colonization of North America including regions colonized by England, France, Spain, and other imperialist countries and resources acquired within those regions.
- The students may have prior experience with using the Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool, or some version of it.
- Regions in North America colonized by different European countries (Example: England, France, Spain, Denmark, The Netherlands)
- Prior knowledge on writing research questions is required. Students should know that research questions can't be too broad or too narrow and can't be answered with one word or yes/no. They also need to be researchable.
- Students should know how to find credible sources and how to cite their sources.

Overview:

The European countries that colonized North America in the 15th-18th Centuries left behind fortification which were used for a variety of purposes including trade, defense, and religious conversion. These forts, which can be seen in satellite imagery and can be visited both in person and virtually through interactive websites like Google Earth, provide an ideal opportunity to wonder about a wide range of topics related to forts. Exploration is naturally inquiry driven, and the large numbers and diversity of colonial forts in North America is an ideal opportunity to explore forts in different regions of the continent. Inquiry-driven research is an important part of the process of historical inquiry and a key aspect of thinking like a historian. Often it is viewed as an approach to solving problems and involves the application of several problem solving skills (Pedaste & Sarapuu, 2006). Inquiry-based learning emphasizes active participation and learner's responsibility for discovering knowledge that is new to the learner (de Jong & van Joolingen, 1998). [Phases of inquiry-based learning: Definitions and the inquiry cycle - ScienceDirect](#)

Purpose: *What will students learn?*

Students will learn about US Territory and North American colonial forts through exploration, satellite imagery, and inquiry-based research.

National & State Geography Standard(s):

Alaska State Geography Standards

- Geography A1: use maps and globes to locate places and regions

National Geography Standards:

- NSS-G.K-12.1: Understand how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
- NSS-G.K-12.6: Understand how to apply geography to interpret the past.

National & State Social Studies Standard(s):

National Social Studies Standards:

- 3 PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS:
This theme helps learners to develop their spatial views and perspectives of the world, to understand where people, places, and resources are located and why they are there, and to explore the relationship between human beings and the environment. In schools, this theme typically appears in courses dealing with geography and area studies, but it is also important for the study of the geographical dimension of other social studies subjects.

Alaska State Standards:

- History C1) Use appropriate technology to access, retrieve, organize, and present historical information.

ELA Standards

Alaska ELA Standards for Literacy in Social Studies:

- **Reading 7.6-8** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- **Writing 7.6-8** Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

ISTE Teacher *and/or* Student Standard:

Student Standard 1.3a - Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.

Language Functions:

- **Inquiry Seeking/Information:** Students use language to observe and explore the environment, acquire information, inquire: Student will conduct inquiry-based research on a self-generated research question.

Culturally Responsive Lesson Strategies:

- **Voice** - Lesson/Assignment allows places for students to work together cooperatively or share their learning experiences: Students are able to share what they learned from this activity with peers and the teacher.

Objective(s):

- The student will be able to conduct research on a self-generated research question.
- The student will be able to use technology, including satellite imagery and internet resources, to analyze and research forts.
- The student will be able to use satellite-generated maps to analyze forts including key geographic observations such as (location, structure, and environment/region the fort is found in)
- The student will be able to use text material to learn about forts following the analysis of satellite imagery.

SIOP

	SIOP Elements	
Preparation Adapting content Linking to background Linking to past learning Strategies used	Scaffolding Modeling Guided practice Independent practice Comprehensible input	Grouping Option Whole class Small groups Partners Independent
Integrating Processes Reading Writing Speaking Listening	Application Hands on Meaningful Linked to objectives Promotes engagement	Assessment Individual Group Written Oral

Evidence of Mastery (Measurable):

Formative - Following their exploration of North American colonial forts on Google Earth, students will share with the class what they noticed, thought, and wondered. This will be done verbally and/or on the Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool.

Summative - Students will conduct research on a self-generated research question. This research question will be inspired by the individual students' exploration of the forts on Google Earth. Students will write between one paragraph to two pages (teacher discretion) reporting on the answer to their research question. Their writing will be assessed using the Rubric below. A score of 7 to 8 or higher will indicate mastery.

Answer to Research Question Rubric

Exceeds Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formulates clear and insightful research questions related to colonial forts. ● Conducts thorough research to answer the research questions, providing in-depth and well-supported responses. ● Demonstrates a deep understanding of the topic through comprehensive research. ● Research is organized, well-structured, and effectively addresses the research questions. ● Sources are cited accurately 	10-9
Meets Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formulates research questions related to colonial forts. ● Conducts research to answer the research questions, providing sufficiently detailed and relevant responses. ● Demonstrates a good understanding of the topic through the research conducted. ● Research is generally organized and adequately addresses the research questions. ● Sources are cited accurately 	8-7
Approaches Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formulates research questions with limited clarity or relevance to colonial forts. ● Conducts research with some gaps in coverage or relevance to the research questions. ● Demonstrates a basic understanding of the topic through the research conducted. ● Research may lack organization or depth in addressing the research questions. ● Sources cited, but not in the correct format 	6-5
Fails to Meet Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fails to formulate clear research questions related to colonial forts. ● Conducts insufficient or unrelated research in response to the research questions. ● Demonstrates a lack of understanding of the topic through the research conducted. ● Research lacks organization, relevance, and depth in addressing the research questions. 	4-1

<p>Key vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● defense - the act of protecting oneself, others, or a place from harm or danger ● fortified - strengthened to defend against potential dangers 	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Copies of North American Colonial Forts Text Resource</i>- 1 per student (In Lesson Materials Document)
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- **missionary** - a person who spreads their religious beliefs to others, often in different parts of the world
- **barter** - the exchange of goods or services for other goods or services without using money as a medium of exchange
- **trading post** - a place where people exchange goods with one another
- **forts** - strong structures that served as shields against threats and attacks
- **ancestral lands** - the lands that belonged to one's ancestors or earlier generations of their family.

- Student access to computers to view maps/websites and conduct their own research
- *Google Maps: Star Forts Around the World:* (See link in Sources) To view this map in Google Earth, click the three-dot menu and then click 'View map in Google Earth.' It takes a moment to load.
- Copies of Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool (Link in Sources)

Sources:

- [Google Earth](#)
- [Google Map: Star Forts Around the World](#)
- [Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool](#)
- Vocabulary definitions and text used in the North American Colonial Forts resource derived from [ChatGPT](#), an AI language model developed by OpenAI. (OpenAI, 2021).
- Images used in the North American Colonial Forts text resource were taken by Myla S. Liljemark.

Engage

Teacher Will: (Hook)

1. The teacher will engage the class in a discussion. This can be done as a whole-class discussion, or small-group discussion with a share-out to the rest of the class. The teacher will ask the students:
 - *Have you ever built a fort?*
 - *What kind of forts have you built?* (Possible answers: tree fort, fort made from blankets and pillows in the living room, snow forts, plywood forts, forts inside things like rotten old growth stumps or large tractor tires).
 - *What did you use the fort for?* (Possible answers include: Imagination play, protect from the rain/snow/wind, camping, hunting, games)
2. The teacher will tell the class that forts are actually real things used by different groups of people throughout history. They have

Students Will:

1. Students share their stories, either in a small group or large group discussion, about forts that they have built in the past and what they were used for.
- (Preparation: Linking to background)**
(Group: Whole class or Small groups)

<p>different purposes, are built in many different places, and look different as well.</p> <p>3. The teacher will then pass out copies the <u>North American Colonial Forts Text</u> and read the text out loud to the students with them following along. While reading, the teacher will introduce the key vocabulary that is identified in the text. <i>The teacher will ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>What is a trading post?</i> ● <i>In trading posts, goods were traded without money. What is this called?</i> ● <i>What are forts?</i> ● <i>What is a missionary? How did missionaries use forts?</i> ● <i>What does it mean to be ‘fortified’?</i> ● <i>The text said that forts were used for defense. What does that mean?</i> 	<p>3. While the teacher is reading the <u>North American Colonial Forts</u> text, the students will use their copy to silently read along. It is recommended that they use a finger to follow along with the words as they are read. As the teacher asks vocabulary review questions, the students will answer the vocabulary review questions by raising their hand and providing the answer when the teacher calls on them.</p> <p>(Grouping: Whole class) (Application: Meaningful/Promotes engagement) (Integrating processes: Listening/Reading/ Speaking)</p>
<p>Explore</p>	
<p>Teacher Will: Inquiry question #1: <i>What similarities and/or differences can you find in your research of forts?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher will explain that forts are all around us and serve as important places to learn more about the past. 2. The teacher will guide students to opening up the <u>Google Maps: Star Forts Around the World</u> link and will further guide them to open it in Google Earth. <p>(NOTE) Tips for exploring Google Earth: Street View - click the person icon in the lower right hand corner and then click on a blue area on the screen to enter street view. Press escape to exit street view. 3D - To view a fort in 3D, hold the shift button down while using the arrow keys to maneuver left, right, up, and down.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Students will be instructed to explore forts in North America (including the Caribbean). Students can focus on just one fort or explore and compare many. They can be instructed to focus on forts in specific regions, such as areas colonized by certain 	<p>Students Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Visit the <u>Google Maps: Star Forts Around the World</u> link and open it in Google Earth using the teacher’s guidance for how to explore Google Earth. 3. Students will use the map to explore forts in North America (including the Caribbean) and focus on forts based on what the teacher has instructed them to do. As they explore the forts, they will also gain experience about how to use Google Earth.

countries, or they can explore without restriction.

(NOTE) Students should be directed to find a marked fort, scroll into the fort and then use street view to explore the fort more closely. Students can also explore forts that show up as 3D, by holding the shift button down and using the arrow keys to change the angle at which the fort is viewed. They should not be in street view to use this function. Also, It is helpful to give students the freedom to talk, as many will find forts that they think are interesting and will want to share with the students sitting near them. This should be encouraged as it will further spark their curiosity and genuine interest to explore more.

4. The teacher will introduce inquiry question #1: ***What similarities and/or differences can you find in your research of forts?*** to guide student exploration. The answering of this question will be done using the [Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool](#) : [Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool](#). The teacher will model for students how to access and respond to the inquiry question using the Primary Source Analysis Tool.

(Scaffolding: Modeling)

(NOTE) this can also formally and formatively be assessed in the Explain section of the lesson through verbal sharing of their information. In using the [Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool](#), the inquiry question directly relates to the “observe, reflect, and question” on the form. Because this exploration is self driven and does not require reading, All students, including ELL, SPED, and Gifted and work at their ability level. Their recording of information on the Primary Source Analysis Tool can be done with a variety of supports including text-to-speech and peer-partnering.

(Grouping: Whole class) (Application: Hands-on/Promotes engagement)

4. Reflect on Inquiry Question #1 and think about what they are gaining from their exploration of forts on Google Earth. As students explore the forts, they will record their observations using the [Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool](#) to record things that they notice, inferences that they make, and things that they wonder about.

(NOTE): This last part is important as it will guide their research in the Elaborate section of this lesson.

(Grouping: Whole Class or partners) (Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement (Integrating Processes: Listening/Speaking/Writing)

Explain - Formative Assessment

<p>Teacher Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher will start a whole-class discussion about the things that students noticed, thought, and wondered. The teacher can ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What are some things that you noticed?</i> <i>What are some things that you thought of? Why did you think of them?</i> <i>What are some things that you wondered?</i> <i>What similarities did you see between forts when you were exploring?</i> <i>What did you notice about the location of the forts in relation to water?</i> <i>Did you see anything that we learned about in the text? What did you see?</i> <p>(NOTE) If a student has a particularly interesting fort that others want to see as well, or has a hard time explaining something, the teacher can pull it up on the SmartBoard and the class can explore it together. As the students share out their responses to the teacher’s questions, the teacher will make note of the students’ responses for use as a Formative Assessment. All students, including ELL, SPED, and gifted students can participate in this at their level. Gifted students can be given the opportunity to elaborate on their thoughts and what they found. ELL and SPED students can do peer-partnering for support when needed.</p>	<p>Students Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students will raise their hands when asked questions by the teacher. They will share what they found and thought when they explored the forts. <p>(Grouping: Whole class or Partners) (Integrated Processes: Listening/Speaking) (Application: Meaningful/Promotes engagement)(Assessment: Individual/Oral)</p>
<p>Elaborate</p>	
<p>Teacher Will: Inquiry question #2: “What do you observe about star forts?”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher will review research questions asking the question: What makes a good research question? and have students share 	<p>Students Will:</p>

their knowledge/understanding of research questions. Students should know that research questions can't be too broad or too narrow and can't be answered with one word or yes/no. The questions also need to be researchable.

2. The teacher will then have students write three research questions about something related to forts that they would like to learn more about. The teacher will let students know that if they have used the Primary Source Analysis Tool when exploring forts, they can get ideas for their research questions by looking at the "Question" box.

(Optional) Students can be instructed to show their three research questions to 1-2 other students in the class to determine if they are quality research questions. The conversations that happen between students about research questions can help them to see which is the strongest question or can help them to realize which they are interested in the most.

3. Students will be directed to choose the research questions that are most keen for researching, and they are to use internet websites to find the answer to their question. The teacher will provide time for the students to research their question and if they struggle to find any information after about 5-10 minutes, they can be given the opportunity to try researching one of the other questions. If students are researching and they discover something new that interests them even more, they can change their research question. This is a natural process for historians and helps students fine-tune their research.

(NOTE) Gifted students will be able to access the information from internet text material at a variety of Lexile levels. Students with IEPs and English language learners can work in small groups of 3-4 students and research a question together. They can also be provided books or websites by the teacher that are at the reading level of the student.

2. The students will write three research questions about forts. These questions are things they are genuinely interested in.

(Optional) Students can also show their research questions to 1-2 students in the class to ensure that the questions are quality and to discuss why they are interested in the topics.

3. Students will use the internet to research one of their questions - the question that they are most drawn to. If they are struggling to find information to answer their question, then students should modify their research question or choose one of the other two that they wrote instead.

(Grouping: Independent) (Application: Hands-on/Meaningful/Promotes engagement /Linked to objectives) (Integrating Processes: Reading/Writing & may include Listening/Speaking)

<p>These resources could help the students find answers to their research questions. (Preparation: Strategies used) (Scaffolding/ Guided practice)</p>	
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Evaluate - Summative Assessment	
<p>Teacher Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When finished researching their research questions, the teacher will have students use what they have learned to write the answer to their research question. This could be a paragraph as short as 150 words, or a 1-2 page essay depending on the ability and needs of the class and individual students. The writing must answer the research question. <p>(NOTE): This assignment can be modified so that all students, including SPED, ELL, and Gifted, are able to experience success. Essay/paragraph length or assessment components can be modified to meet the needs of all students.</p> <p>(Preparation: Adapting Content)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The teacher will present the <u>Answer to Research Question Rubric</u> to the students and go over the following criteria for what needs to be included in the students' written response to their research question and how it will be assessed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality of the research question ● Quality research and answer to the research question ● Demonstrating understanding of the topic ● Writing is organized and well-structured ● Inclusion of a bibliography with sources cited in the correct format. 3. When done, the students will turn in their written response and the teacher will use the <u>Answer to Research Question Rubric</u> to grade their work. A score of 7 to 8 or higher will indicate mastery. 	<p>Students Will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students will use what they have learned from their research to write their research question response. Their writing should fully answer the research question and meet the expectations lined out in the rubric. <p>(Grouping: Independent) (Assessment: Individual/Written)</p>

Extension(s): Take students on a Field trip to a local fort or Zoom with an expert on the fort.

- Have students explore star forts in other parts of the world.
- Teacher can create a lesson about the different components of a star fort and then have students design and build their own fort.