

Map the Straits

This is an activity to accompany an on-site visit to a Mackinac State Historic Parks site. It involves using observation to describe the geography of the Straits of Mackinac. This can be used at Fort Mackinac, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park or Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse

Objectives

Students will have a better understanding of the geography and significance of the Straits of Mackinac through observing their surroundings, analyzing maps and using critical thinking to interpret what is around them.

- Students will list landforms that can be seen from their location
- Students will label a map, transferring what they see to paper
- Students will learn compass directions by using critical thinking about the layout of their surroundings

Directions

Each student should come into the activity with a general knowledge about the Straits of Mackinac. Sources of information include the Mackinac Island Visitor's Guide and various activities on the website of Mackinac State Historic Parks, www.mackinacparks.com.

Give each student one booklet (print pages back to back and staple in the center) and instruct them to go to a place where they can see the lake and landforms in the area. The tower at Mill Creek, the front lawn of the Lighthouse and the front porch of the wood quarters at Fort Mackinac are good places to observe. Students should work together in groups of 2-3.

Taking it further

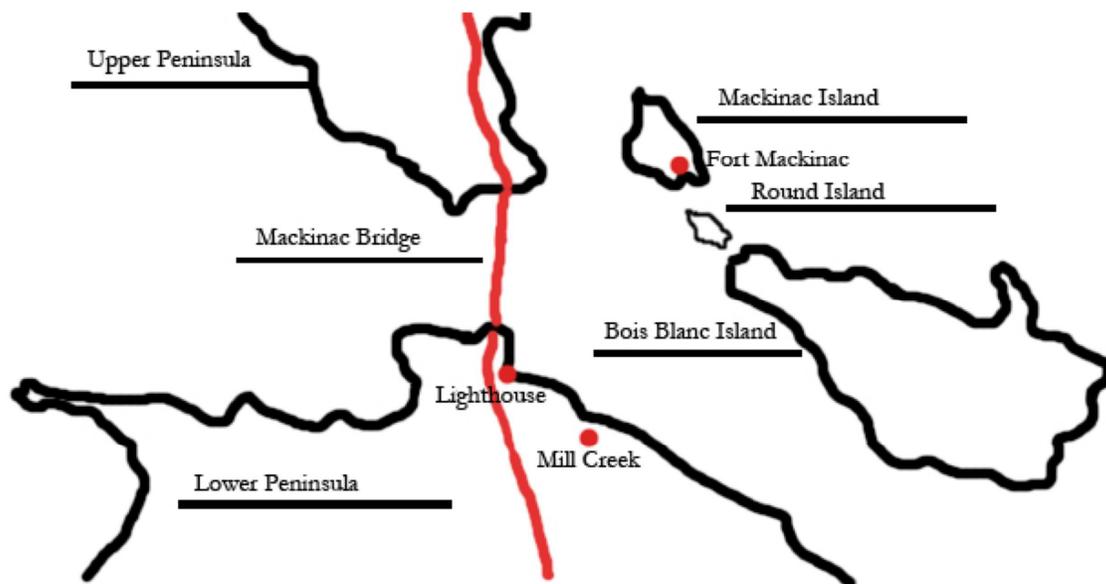
With the students gathered, discuss their findings and correct any errors. Talk about how they can use logic and deduction to find the directions of the compass, i.e. the Upper Peninsula is north of the Lower Peninsula, so if you are looking in the direction of the Upper Peninsula, you are looking north. Discuss what makes the area unique compared with other places in Michigan and the United States. How is Mackinac important for trade and the movement of goods?

Questions

Each question should have its own page along with a title page for the student's name and site.

1. Describe what you see around you.
2. How many islands are there? What else do you see?
3. On the map, label each landmark on the line next to it. Keep in mind where you are right now and use that to figure out the landmarks.
4. Label the compass directions on the map (North, South, East, West)
5. Which landmark seems farthest away from you? How can you tell?
6. Looking at the geography of Mackinac, tell how it is important to trade. What does it have that helps goods to be moved?

Map Answer Key



Social Studies Benchmarks

These standards can be reached depending on the activities, exhibits and sites you visit at Mackinac State Historic Parks. These can be reached with the teacher's/instructor's help and guidance. Good luck in reaching your goals and objectives!

Later Elementary (can be adapted for other grade levels)

The World in Spatial Terms

Standard 4-G1.0.1: *Identify questions geographers ask in examining the United States (E.G. where is it? What is it like there? How is it connected to other places?).*

Standard 4-G1.02: *Use cardinal and intermediate directions to describe the relative location of significant places in the United States*

Human Systems

Standard 3-G4.0.3: *Describe some of the current movements of goods, people, jobs or information to, from or within Michigan and explain reasons for movements.*