Unit 1 Map Project

Background

“[T]o the contemporary eye, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mexico City looks oddly familiar. In its dystopic way, it was an amazingly contemporary place, unlike any other then on the planet. It was the first twenty-first-century city, the first of today’s modern, globalized megalopolises.”

This quote from historian Charles C. Mann in his book entitled 1493 suggests the rapidity with which global exchange occurred after European contact with the Americas at the end of the fifteenth century. In a remarkably short time, new and thriving multicultural hubs emerged in places all around the globe, joining an older network of destinations in Afro-Eurasia where diverse peoples mingled and haggled in a multitude of languages. In its increasing connectedness, the world seemed to grow smaller.

Goals

● demonstrate a solid grasp on the geography of key places in the late 1400s and 1500s
● show how these civilizations interacted with each other in the late 1400s and 1500s
● show that you understand the historical significance of major developments in the civilizations of the Atlantic world in the late 1400s and 1500s

Assignment

Your task is to choose eight important locations in the fifteenth and sixteenth-century world on the different continents we have studied during our brief world tour so far. You should choose a diverse array of places that have importance for the history of Atlantic communities.

You should then design a map (or maps) to showcase these locations. You are welcome to use a poster board if you prefer to make a physical presentation. If you choose an electronic medium, Tour Builder is strongly recommended. In either case, you may use multiple, smaller, region-based maps to show individual locations, but you should have one map that is zoomed out enough to show all eight locations. Please note: start with blank maps only; you should not use maps that are already labeled or maps that have modern political boundaries.

Each of your eight locations should be clearly labeled on the map. Each location should have an Historical ID with a definition, important factual information, and a description of the location’s significance and/or connections to other locations in the time period we are studying (see example below).

Most of the Historical ID information about each location should come from the textbook and class notes. However, where additional information is needed, you may use articles and other information from the Map Project Lib Guide. You should cite the sources of your additional information by using Noodle Tools, which the librarian(s) will show you how to use. Cite the source at the end of the Historical ID.
You are encouraged to be as creative as you like, but the main emphasis should be on the content, historical significance, and accuracy of the Historical IDs.

Reminders
- Use the Lib Guide to find good blank maps if you are making a physical map.
- Diversify. Choose locations from a variety of areas that we have studied.
- Feel free to be as creative as you like but manage your time wisely. Evaluate the amount of time given to you to complete this project, and don’t choose a medium that requires you to put in four hours of work a night.

Some Sample Types of Locations
- Cities or Towns: Constantinople, Tenochtitlan, Genoa, etc.
- Countries, colonies, or empires: the Inca, Ottoman Empire, Songhai, etc.
- Geographic features: The Mediterranean Sea, the Niger River, the Sahara, South China Sea, etc. (avoid “Atlantic Ocean”)
- Routes: Vasco da Gama’s route, the Silk Road, trans-Saharan trade route, etc.
- Regions: East African coast, the Sudan, etc.

Sample Historical ID (from a former student’s map project)

Inca Empire:
- A large, powerful, and complex empire residing in the Andes Mountains of South America.
- After civil war and disease had already weakened the Inca, the Spanish conquistadors killed the newly crowned emperor Atahualpa and brought about the fall of the Empire in 1533.
- Silver obtained from the lands of the Inca catapulted Spain into being the wealthiest and most powerful nation in Europe.
- Spain’s new wealth and power made Spain the envy of Europe and created a push for further exploration north by the English and French.


Note: Notice how the student defines the Inca Empire and then gives several factual pieces of information. Finally, the student notes the significance of the location as it relates to the time period we are studying. The significance of the location should fall within the time period. The significance of Columbus’s route, for example, should not be that it led to the founding of the USA.

Grading
Please take a good look at the attached grading rubric; it tells you what is expected and how your project will be graded.

Collaborating
Each of you should be doing your own project. That said, talking through ideas with someone else is an important way to learn. Therefore, while you should brainstorm your locations and do your final work on your own, please feel encouraged to discuss your ideas with your classmates (and me) and to help each other out.