

How I Learned Geography

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Subjects: Social Studies

Year: 2015
Grade: 2nd

Artform: Dance
Duration: 2-3 hours

OVERVIEW

Second grade students will travel to all seven continents and discover some of the most significant sights and landmarks for each. They will do this after hearing the beginning of the story of [How I Learned Geography](#) by Uri Shulevitz. Note that this lesson needs to be split into sections and can be spread out over a period of time.

SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES

- Computer and projector
- PDF slideshow (included with this lesson plan) of pictures of specific sights at each continent

MUSIC FOR EACH CONTINENT:

- Australia - [Walkabout](#) by Yanni
- Asia - [Said the Emperor](#) by Richard Souther
- Europe - [Italia](#) by Suzanne Ciani
- Africa - [Ibo](#) by Geoff Johns
- Antarctica - [Waters of Cesme](#) by Cusco
- South America - [Palomitay](#) by Pachakuti
- North America - [Copland: Rodeo Hoe Down](#) by Stephen Gunzenhauser

RESOURCE BOOK:

- [How I Learned Geography](#) by Uri Shulevitz

FINE ART STANDARDS

DANCE STANDARD 2:

The student will identify and demonstrate movement elements (time, space, energy and motion) in performing dance.

INTEGRATED STANDARDS

2ND GRADE: SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARD 3: (GEOGRAPHY)

Students will use geographic tools and skills to locate and describe places on earth.

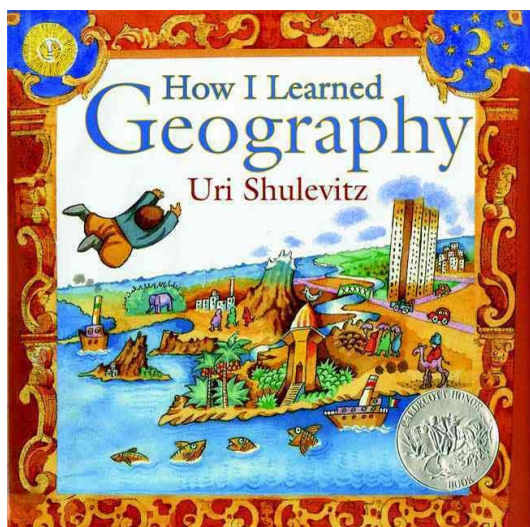
OBJECTIVE 2:

Demonstrate geographic skills on a map and a globe.

D. Locate and label the following on a map or a globe: the seven continents, the five oceans, the poles, and the equator.

OBJECTIVES

Second grade students will gain an understanding of the uniqueness of each continent. They will dance about different sights and landmarks that are found on each.



TEACHING AND TIMELINE

INTRODUCTION:

Tell the beginning part of the story [How I Learned Geography](#) by Uri Shulevitz:

“When war devastated the land, buildings crumbled to dust. Everything we had was lost and we fled empty-handed.” . . . We traveled far away to another country and lived in a small room with people we didn’t even know. We slept on a dirt floor and we had very little food, if any at all. Then one day dad went in to market to buy some bread. Instead, he ended up coming home with a map. I was sad. So sad. I wanted bread. I was very hungry. The next day father hung the map. Suddenly the room was flooded with color. I was fascinated by the map and I studied every detail. My hunger seemed to fade away and my imagination started to transport me far away. I traveled the world and visited every continent.

Here’s what I saw: (this is not part of the story)

NOTE: This lesson is long. Just pick and choose from the following what you want your students to know about each continent. You can create and add more movement and information as needed.

DEMONSTRATION:

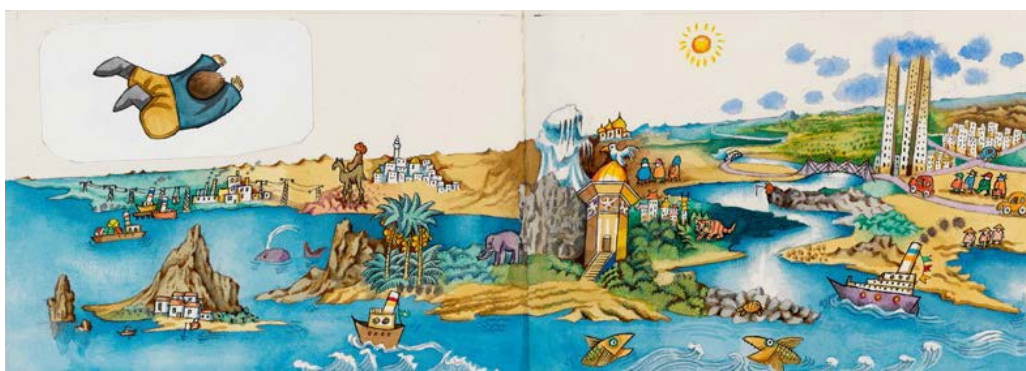
Dance the following: (Use the PDF slideshow included with this lesson to show pictures of the following places.)

AUSTRALIA

MUSIC: [Walkabout](#) by Yanni (CD - Chameleon Days)

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
GREAT BARRIER REEF	World’s largest coral reef system composed of over 2900 individual reefs and 900 islands.	Coral - axial movement with swaying arms and bodies. Half create “coral” & half do sustained swimming to create the “fish”. Switch. Then everyone spread out and make an island shape to represent the 900 islands.
KANGAROOS	Marsupial; has large powerful hind legs & large feet for jumping (can jump the length of a school bus); muscular tail for balance.	Try jumping the length of a school bus and try balancing shapes.
SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE	Performing arts center in Sydney. Opera, dance, symphony, choirs, theater, etc. come to perform there.	Perform a solo dance on a big pretend stage in front of a large audience. Start and end in a shape.
AYERS ROCK (OR ULURU)	Large sandstone rock in central Australia. Uluru means island mountain. It extends 1.5 miles into the ground; 5 miles around; 1,142 feet tall at highest point (over 50 stories high).	Whole class make a large circle to create the rock. Walk 5 miles around, jump up 50 times and dive down 1&1/2 miles deep.

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
TASMANIA	Australian island and state; “The island of inspiration”; Tasmanian Devil lives there in the wild (marsupial carnivore) (and a Looney Tunes cartoon character).	Island of inspiration: girls make mountains, trees, flowers (axial) & boys make rivers & surrounding ocean, birds (locomotor movement). Switch. Then the feeling changes as you add in Tasmanian devils.
WALK ABOUT	Walkabout refers to a rite of passage during which male Australian Aborigines would undergo a journey during adolescence and live in the wilderness for a period as long as six months.	Girls freeze in wilderness shapes / boys wander the wilderness - hunting, sleeping, defending themselves (percussive, sneaky, weak & strong movements).



ASIA

MUSIC: [Said the Emperor](#) by Richard Souther (CD - A Childhood Remembered)

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
YANGTZE RIVER	Longest river in Asia and third longest in the world.	Hold hands creating a long river weaving in curving pathways throughout the space. (Discuss: Nile River is longest river and Amazon is second longest.)
FORBIDDEN CITY	The Forbidden City Beijing is the best preserved imperial palace in China and the largest ancient palatial structure in the world. The Forbidden City, situated in the very heart of Beijing, was home to 24 emperors of the Ming and Quig Dynasties.	Build the Forbidden City (big rectangular shape). Have emperor's live inside. Choose a few children to walk slow and stately like an emperor within the walls of the "Forbidden City."

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
GREAT WALL OF CHINA	Was built over 2,000 years ago by the first emperor of China during the Qin (Ch'in) Dynasty. The Chinese worked on the Great Wall for over 1,700 years. In turn, each emperor who came to power added pieces of the wall to protect their dynasties. Running in general east to west through the entire northern part of China.	Slowly build a long wall of shapes. Have one child create a shape, then add child after child to the "wall" as if you're adding each new section of the wall with each new emperor.
MT. EVEREST	Highest mountain in the world	All kids jump really high. See who can jump the highest and nickname them Everest. Cross the ice fields over ladders (balancing across a narrow line), climb with heavy gear, oxygen tanks (heavy movement) and with spikes in boots digging into the snow (percussive feet).
TAJ MAHAL	Built by an emperor in memory of his 3rd wife (who died during childbirth of their 14th child). It is completely symmetrical except for the two tombs inside because the male tomb must be larger than the woman's tomb. It was completed in 1648.	Make symmetrical shapes alone, with partner, as a class.



EUROPE

MUSIC: [Italia](#) by Suzanne Ciani (CD - Hotel Luna)

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
PARTHENON	Is a temple in Athens, Greece, dedicated to the Greek goddess Athena. Completed in 423 BC.	Tall straight pillars in rectangular shape. Then sustained floating movement to represent Athena.
EIFFEL TOWER	Was built as an entrance arch to the world's fair in 1889. Tallest building in Paris. Most visited paid monument in the world.	Create triangle shapes. Climb stairs to second level. Then get on elevator and ride to the top (slow movement going low to high).
LONDON BRIDGE	Over Thames River. Connects London and Southwark. Built of granite and has 5 arches. Originally it was built of wood but it was destroyed by fire.	Make 5 arches (using 10 children) that connect. Have "boats" (swaying, sustained movement) go under the arches.
VENICE	City stretches over 117 islands. There are 170 boat canals. Known as the floating city. Marco Polo was born there. Gondola rides.	Sit down and scoot along while rowing as you travel throughout the canals in curving pathways.
LEANING TOWER OF PISA	Has 8 stories. 8th floor has bells. Built on a riverbed on sand and clay. Not sturdy enough for a building that heavy. First started leaning to the north (when it was 5 years old) so they fixed it up and then it started leaning to the south. Made several attempts to straighten it. It took so long to build and that's part of the reason it hasn't fallen over. The foundation had time to become strong and embedded. 293 steps. With guide you can climb but they limit the number of people.	Have the kids make an 8 leveled shape in small groups with the top swaying like bells. Then lean it first to the north, then to the south.



AFRICA

MUSIC: [lbo](#) by Geoff Johns (CD - Bakongo!)

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
KRUGER NATIONAL PARK	Place to safari in South Africa (protecting wildlife). Contains all of the "Big Five Game" (lion, elephant, buffalo, leopard, rhinoceros).	Boys pick one of the 5 animals and create that shape. Girls go on safari - by boat or jeep - and take pictures as they find the animals. Switch.
VICTORIA FALLS	Zambezi River "greatest curtain of falling water", has a moon bow during a full moon. People hang over the edge (during the safe times) while swimming in devils swimming pool.	Together as a class create the great curtain of water with great falls. (Run, leap, fall). Make a moonbow (arching shape). Swim in devils swimming pool and hang or suspend over the edge.
TABLE MOUNTAIN	A flat topped mountain at Cape Town, South Africa.	Make a huge flat topped mountain shape (with jagged edges and a flat top).
KHUFU'S PYRAMID	Khufu (the largest pyramid) was the tallest building (about 40 stories high) until Eiffel Tower was built. Tunnel inside is so low that you can't stand up straight the entire way to the burial chamber.	Create pyramid shapes. Then enter in the pyramid, keeping body low the whole time you're traveling through the tunnel.
MT. KILIMANJARO	Highest point in Africa, 8 blind people climbed it, one man in a wheel chair climbed it. Former volcano - has 3 volcanic cones - all extinct.	Create a volcano. Explode and from there create 3 volcanic cones (circular shapes with a partner or small group). Then freeze showing the volcanoes never erupted again.



ANTARCTICA

MUSIC: [Waters of Cesme](#) by Cusco (CD - The Best of Cusco)

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
PENGUINS	Can swim underwater for 25 minutes. Emperor sleeps standing up.	Waddle, swim graceful, sleep standing up, "fly" or swim fast, stay under water for 25 minutes, toboggan or slide on stomachs.
GLACIERS	Large body of ice that has formed over many years.	Have one child make a shape. Slowly add more and more kids until a huge glacier is formed.
DEEP SEA DIVING	Always unpredictable. May see sea-snails, crabs, sea butterflies, fish, jellyfish, sponges and starfish. Lucky divers may even see seals, penguins and maybe even whales while exploring the icy waters around Antarctica. Must be an expert diver to dive there.	Swim low underwater in dark and silence. Trade off with boys and girls - one group makes certain animals: jellyfish, starfish, crabs, seals, penguins, whales, etc. while the others find them. Switch.
ELEPHANT SEAL	Largest of all seals, males can weigh up to 8,800 pounds. Not named elephant due to size but due to their trunk like inflatable snouts.	Make large, wide shapes. Who can make the largest shape? Now add inflatable snouts (have one arm or leg extend out and in).
SOUTH POLE	Point where the earth's axis of rotation intersects. There's a sign stating where the south pole is but it has to be repositioned every year due to the movement of the ice.	Have one kid make the south pole sign ("t" shape). Others create ice that shifts often (shift weight side to side). The ice moves the sign (so that child slowly moves away from the center), so reposition the sign. Repeat.



SOUTH AMERICA

MUSIC: [Palomitay](#) by Pachakuti (CD - Indian Flower)

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
MACHU PICCHU	An Inca sacred place in the Andean Mountains of Peru.	Create group shapes like walls that go up like steps, from low to medium to high.
AMAZON RIVER	2nd largest river in the world; carries the largest amount of water; fresh water; richest tropical forest in the world; contains 1/3 of all animal species. (Some land animals are: alligators, monkeys, parrots, toucans, red eyed tree frogs, jaguars, anacondas. Some water animals are: crocodiles, electric eels, manatees, otters, pink dolphins, yellow spotted turtles, piranhas.)	Half create jungle; other half weaves throughout the jungle in a long connected line. Move like various animals and fish that live in the river and the tropical forests. (Don't pantomime but pick out the movement qualities of the various animals).
ANDES MOUNTAINS	Worlds longest continental mountain range; contains many active volcanoes; covers 7 countries.	Have 7 kids go down in a low shape in a line. Everyone else lines up and jumps over them one at a time (the mountain crosses over 7 countries). Then see how long of a shape the whole class can make. Finally make several volcanoes (exploding shapes).
IGUAZU FALLS	Huge waterfall covering a section of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay; has the famous "Devil's throat" ("U" shape).	Create a U shape with the class. Make it expand. Slowly come closer into the U shape then do creative leaping and falling.
GALAPAGOS ISLANDS	Volcanic islands by equator (19 islands and over 100 islets and rocks). Some of the volcanoes are still active in the west.	Melt by the equator. Explode like active volcanoes.



NORTH AMERICA

MUSIC: [Copland: Rodeo Hoe Down](#) by Stephen Gunzenhauser (CD - Appalachian Spring)

	INFORMATION	MOVEMENT
MT. RUSHMORE	Features 60-foot sculptures of the heads of former US Presidents - George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln.	Freeze in shapes with dynamic focus. Have 1/4 make "W" shapes, 1/4 make "J" shapes, 1/4 make "R" shapes, and 1/4 make "L" shapes.
GRAND CANYON	Is a steep-sided canyon carved by the Colorado River in Arizona.	Go to the edges of the gym. Create steep downward shapes to create the canyon. Enter the canyon and make beautiful rock formations.
CENTRAL PARK	Is a public park at the center of Manhattan in New York City.	Make big tall building shapes on the outer edge of a rectangle. Inside play at the park (swing back and forth, skip down jogging path, swaying motion on boat, etc).
STATUE OF LIBERTY	Was a gift of international friendship from the people of France to the people of the United States.	Create the exact same shape as the Statue of Liberty. Wave hand for the flame.
NIAGARA FALLS	Located on the Niagara River draining Lake Erie and Lake Ontario and drops over 165 feet.	Run, leap off edge, spiral, plunge and fall to a low shape on the ground.
YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Has approximately ? great students! One of the best places in the world!	



CLOSURE/SUMMARY:

After traveling to each continent, conclude this unit by telling the ending of the story . . .

“My hours I spent enchanted with the map took me away from my hunger and misery. After many years I forgave my father. He was right, after all.”

INTEGRATION INFORMATION

Integration information is included in the lesson.

DIFFERENTIATION

Adjust the dance as needed for individual student needs.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is Included throughout the lesson.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

While the kids are dancing watch to see if they are understanding the concepts. If not, sidecoach them to help them understand.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

You can have a discussion or quiz at the end of the lesson; or have the students share what they learned with a partner and then report to another group of students or to you as to what they learned.

They can also demonstrate their understanding through choreographic assignments (but be sure the objectives are clear for the assignment and then make sure they meet those objectives).

