

## Activity 2



### Discovering Public Lands as Living Museums Map Analysis

**Overview:** Students will analyze a variety of maps before being introduced to the concept of public lands, and how humans have used our regional landscape in a variety of ways that have changed over time.

#### Outcome

Students will develop skills to “read the landscape” by examining the purpose and perceived value of historic sites on public lands.

#### Standards

**1<sup>st</sup>** – Geography – Give examples of how people use and interrelate with Earth’s resources

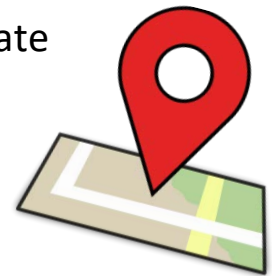
**2<sup>nd</sup>** – Geography - Identify examples of physical features that affect human activity

**2<sup>nd</sup>** – Geography - Identify and locate cultural, human, political, and natural features using map keys and legends

**3<sup>rd</sup>** – Geography – Identify the factors that make a region unique including cultural diversity, industry and agriculture and land forms

**4<sup>th</sup>** – Geography – physical environments influenced and limited immigration into the state

**4<sup>th</sup>** – Geography - Analyze how people use geographic factors in creating settlements and have adapted to and modified the local physical environment



#### Materials

Map Analysis powerpoint presentation, relief maps (2), Land Resources powerpoint, Dominguez Canyon satellite placemats, post-it arrows, Farm Implements powerpoint, map observation tool, library of congress observation tool

#### Procedure

**Part I:** Teacher uses Map Activity 2 PowerPoint presentation to orient students. Teacher models for students how to use the maps. Teacher uses physical relief map of Colorado to emphasize the characteristics of natural obstacles and

challenges pioneers would have faced traveling west and over large mountains and across canyons. Teacher uses a Google earth video file of Dominguez canyon to show canyon topography on a map.

### ***Setting the Stage***

- Ask students why their family lives in the community that they do? Students will likely respond with jobs or family.
- Ask why people move from one place to another. Answers will likely be opportunities or family.
- Ask students to imagine they were living in the 1860's and (using a large US map) identify where in the United States they would most likely live.
- Remind students that while there were American Indians living throughout the 30 Homesteaded states there were few others living in the west.
- Share with students that today they will become familiar with the Homestead Act of 1862 that encouraged the settlement of the west.

1. Teacher introduces the Homestead Act of 1862 and explains that it was an incentive to get families to travel from eastern communities to the unsettled western frontier.

### **The Homestead Act:**

*Free land and getting a new start in life*

*The 1862 Homestead Act was remarkable for many reasons. One of them was that it allowed a very broad array of people to obtain land. This included both current citizens and people who wanted to become citizens. Perhaps even more remarkable was that it gave both women and minorities, including African-Americans, opportunities to obtain free land. This happened before they had other legal rights.*

*BLM Commemoration of 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Homestead Act*

## **SUMMARY OF THE HOMESTEAD ACT OF 1862**

### **BACKGROUND**

In 1862, the Homestead Act was passed and signed into law. The new law established a three-fold homestead acquisition process: filing an application, improving the land, and filing for deed of title. Any U.S. citizen, or intended citizen, who had never borne arms against the U.S. Government could file an application and lay claim to 160 acres of surveyed Government land. For the next 5 years, the homesteader had to live on the land and improve it by building a 12-by-14 dwelling and growing crops. After 5 years, the homesteader could file for his patent (or deed of title) by submitting proof of residency and the required improvements to a local land office.

Local land offices forwarded the paperwork to the General Land Office in Washington, DC, along with a final certificate of eligibility. The case file was examined, and valid claims were granted patent to the land free and clear, except for a small registration fee. Title could also be acquired after a 6-month residency and trivial improvements, provided the claimant paid the government \$1.25 per acre. After the Civil War, Union soldiers could deduct the time they served from the residency requirements.

Physical conditions on the frontier presented even greater challenges. Wind, blizzards, and plagues of insects threatened crops. Open plains and deserts meant few trees for building, forcing many to build homes out of sod. Limited fuel and water supplies could turn simple cooking and heating chores into difficult trials. While 160 acres may have been sufficient for an eastern farmer, it was simply not enough to sustain agriculture on many of the dry plains, desert scrub,

and old growth giant forests of the west. Resource scarcity and geographical challenges made homesteading a great challenge. As a result, in many areas, the original homesteader did not stay on the land long enough to fulfill the claim.

However, homesteaders who persevered were rewarded with opportunities as rapid changes in transportation eased some of the hardships. Six months after the Homestead Act was passed, the Railroad Act was signed, and by May 1869, a transcontinental railroad stretched across the frontier. The new railroads provided easy transportation for homesteaders, and new immigrants were lured westward by railroad companies eager to sell off excess land at inflated prices. The new rail lines provided ready access to manufactured goods and catalog houses like Montgomery Ward offered farm tools, barbed wire, linens, weapons, and even houses delivered via the rails.

Many pioneers populated the land, building towns and schools and creating new states from the territories. In many cases, the schools became the focal point for community life, serving as churches, polling places and social gathering locations.

2. Use the Map Activity PPT to show students different types of maps.

1. a political map of the U.S. with state boundaries
2. shows a 1862 map – this highlights which areas were territories and which were states
3. shows a satellite view of the U.S. emphasizing terrain
4. Colorado – emphasize terrain
5. Western Colorado

Choose any of the over maps to complete a map analysis using the library of congress observation tool as a whole class – chart student responses

2. Using the relief maps of Colorado –discuss with students what challenges they might face if they moved across the plains and Rocky Mountains with their families.

- Locate Grand Junction on the map and point out its proximity to natural features like mountains and rivers.
- Ask Students – What natural features or resources might influence a migrating settler’s decision to choose a homestead site?
- What challenges might they meet physically or mentally?
- What questions would students have for other pioneer kids?

3. Next, tell students that you will be using a Google earth tour to explore a special place in western Colorado. The tour will fly us into an area called Dominguez Canyon Wilderness. Tell them that this canyon is in public lands, which means it belongs to all people – the public. Nobody owns this place – we all share it like a library book. Just like library books we can all visit this place, but because it’s so special we all must try our best to leave it in as good if not better condition than when we found it. Also like a library book, this canyon is full of stories – stories of the people and animals who have called this place home for thousands of years. Tell students that later we will go on a virtual hike with archaeologists to solve some of the mysteries in the canyon using clues. Today we will become familiar with its location and the surrounding terrain.

3. Show Google earth video of Dominguez canyon (last slide of Map Activity PPT) to help students relate a 3-D map concept to the 2-D map hand-out they will soon receive

## **Part II**

1. Introduce students to the location of a real homestead that’s on public land, and inside of the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness. Tell the story of the Rambo family homestead (see summary)

## Summary of Rambo Family Homestead

In the year 1911 a man named, William H. Rambo was granted a homestead patent on a piece of land in an area known today as the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area. Rambo, his wife Charlotte, and their children lived in a small cabin they built on the land. The family carved out a life in this remote side canyon utilizing the natural resources that were available. A nearby creek, and fertile soil enriched by the shape of intersecting drainages in the valley permitted the Rambos to maintain a small fruit orchard and a few crops to sustain their livelihood.

Nearby access to water was essential, but it wasn't enough to sustain the whole family year round. The family had to devise a way to bring the water to them. To solve this problem, the Rambo's installed an irrigation ditch system that would allow the transportation of water throughout the property for agricultural and household purposes.

The Rambos, in time, constructed a makeshift road, allowing access from their canyon homestead to nearby towns like Bridgeport, Grand Junction and Delta. With a path cleared, the family was able to deliver goods and tools essential for cultivating the land and integrating life into the harsh desert landscape.

Some of the farming implements that were brought into the homestead can still be found today on the historic property. In 1987, Bill Rambo – son of William Rambo, sold his property to the Bureau of Land Management under a guarantee that his property would be incorporated into the wilderness area that now surrounds his childhood home. In 2009 Dominguez Canyon and Escalante Canyons were officially recognized as just that. Wilderness areas are some of the most highly protected public lands in the nation, and they serve to fortify the Nation's most pristine undeveloped lands. Billy Rambo retired to his childhood cabin in 1975 and stayed there until his recent passing. After Bill's death in 2015, management of this special piece of local heritage was absorbed by the Grand Junction BLM field office. The location of the cabin is in undisclosed, but lies within the Dominguez Canyon Wilderness.

2. Use the Land Resources PPT to answer the following questions with students:

Guide questioning to discuss human relationship with the natural world.

- how did the Rambo's survive in this challenging landscape? What did they need? (food, water, shelter)
- what technologies did the family use to access natural resources: irrigation, ditches, tools for cultivating the land, fence making
- what living or non-living things did the Rambo's interrelate with in order to survive?
- How did the Rambo's modify the landscape to survive?

3. Hand out the Dominguez Canyon placemats

4. As a whole class students study the placemat of Dominguez Canyon. Use the map analysis tool from the library of congress to guide student understanding of the source chart their responses. Guide student learning towards understanding what role resource availability plays in the selection of a homestead.

- Identify and define geographic land forms (canyon, river, drainage, creek, trees, rock, North, South, East, West) and explain the map legend

5. Students will study map independently and determine where they might choose to settle, or build a homestead based on resource availability. Have students place a post-it arrow or use erase makers to identify where they would live.

6. Students present and justify their homestead selection to their classmates (where they chose and why) in a large class discussion. Their recommendations are recorded by teacher. (water access, natural shelter, wind protection, vegetation, clearing)

8. Show images of tools laminated handouts and ppt slides (Implements PPT) that were used to integrate life on the land through technology. Students can use observation tools to record their findings

- Students can make inferences about how these tools were used

9. Teacher guides class to answer the question: **Should historic sites like the Rambo homestead be preserved?...Why?**

**Extension:** After students have selected a homesteading site on their landscape placemat, they can use Lincoln logs to construct structures as they imagine what life would have been like – living off the land.

**Extension:** Use the original homestead land patent documents. This primary resource can be used with an observation tool to investigate what homesteaders had to do in order to claim land from public domain during the Homestead Act.

Extension: Use a National Archives lesson for teaching the Homestead Act with primary resources see: <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/homestead-act/>

Use the this tool to analyze the maps individually/groups/whole-class

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>

## TEACHER'S GUIDE ANALYZING MAPS



Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. **Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.**

### OBSERVE

**Ask students to identify and note details.**

Sample Questions:

Describe what you see. · What do you notice first?  
· What size and shape is the map? · What graphical elements do you see? · What on the map looks strange or unfamiliar? · Describe anything that looks like it does not belong on a map. · What place or places does the map show? · What, if any, words do you see?

### REFLECT

**Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.**

Why do you think this map was made? · Who do you think the audience was for this map? · How do you think this map was made? · How does it compare to current maps of this place? · What does this map tell you about what the people who made it knew and what they didn't? · If this map was made today, what would be different? · What would be the same?

### QUESTION

**Invite students to ask questions that lead to more observations and reflections.**

What do you wonder about...  
who? · what? · when? · where? · why? · how?

## FURTHER INVESTIGATION

**Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.**

Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

#### Beginning

Have students write a brief description of the map in their own words.

#### Intermediate

Study three or more maps of a city or state at different time periods. Arrange them in chronological order. Discuss clues to the correct sequence.

#### Advanced

Search for maps of a city or state from different time periods, then compile a list of changes over time and other differences and similarities between the maps.

For more tips on using primary sources, go to

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers>