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# Maps That Challenge Power

TEACHER GUIDE • lesson design & facilitation

Grade band: 9–12 | 6–8 sessions, 50–70 minutes

Media: drawing, print, collage or approved digital media

## The artistic problem

Make an original map that reveals whose movement or story a conventional map overlooks.

**Essential question:** How do selection, labels, and scale shape public knowledge?

**Place-based cultural lens:** Compare historic New Orleans maps with contemporary public geographic resources.

## Learning targets

- Investigate the question: How do selection, labels, and scale shape public knowledge?
- Apply data visualization, counter-mapping, symbol hierarchy in a deliberate original composition.
- Use critique evidence to improve data visualization and name one next step.

## Student-visible success criteria

- The final artwork solves this problem: Make an original map that reveals whose movement or story a conventional map overlooks.
- Artwork includes a source-audited legend and a clearly identified omitted perspective.
- Process evidence shows three different options before selection.
- Visual decisions demonstrate data visualization and support the intended audience.
- Feedback results in at least one visible revision that the student can explain.

## Standards & studio habits

Louisiana 9–12 cluster: VA-CE-H1, VA-CE-H2, VA-CE-H3, VA-CE-H7, VA-AP-H6

Studio Habits of Mind: Understand Art Worlds, Develop Craft, Express, Engage & Persist, Reflect. These habits are developed interactively, not in a fixed rank or sequence.

Instructional alignment: Louisiana benchmark codes are official broad grade-cluster benchmarks; specific expectations are developed locally. The ten instructional stages come from the supplied Artistic Investigations framework.

## Preparation & materials

- Drawing paper or sketchbook for idea studies
- drawing, print, collage or approved digital media
- Samples and images from reliable sources, with attribution
- Tools appropriate to local safety rules and grade level
- Choice of visual, oral, or written reflection tools

## 10-stage teaching sequence

**01 / Engage** Present the artistic question: How do selection, labels, and scale shape public knowledge? Give students two contrasting examples that do not dictate a finished product.

**02 / Investigate** Compare historic New Orleans maps with contemporary public geographic resources. Gather visual evidence and note what is observed rather than assumed.

**03 / Skill Studio** Demonstrate data visualization, counter-mapping, symbol hierarchy. Make thinking visible by testing two alternate solutions and identifying what each communicates.

**04 / Generate** Develop three possibilities for the challenge: Make an original map that reveals whose movement or story a conventional map overlooks. Change the focal point, material, arrangement or viewer perspective between drafts.

**05 / Plan** Compare sketches to the success check (a source-audited legend and a clearly identified omitted perspective); choose a direction and state why it better communicates the intention.

**06 / Produce** Produce an original visual response using data visualization, counter-mapping, symbol hierarchy; conference on one technical choice and one contextual question.

**07 / Critique** Partners identify where the artwork communicates the intended idea and locate evidence of data visualization in the work.

**08 / Revise** Revisit the specific checkpoint: A source-audited legend and a clearly identified omitted perspective. Make one visible change after critique and preserve the initial view for comparison.

**09 / Present** Present with a title, medium, one key artistic decision and any needed credit or contextual limitation.

**10 / Reflect** Reflect: What evidence proves you improved data visualization? What will you try or investigate next?

## Studio sessions & evidence checkpoints

| Session | Teaching move | Capture evidence |
|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | **Locate the problem**<br>How do selection, labels, and scale shape public knowledge?; Compare historic New Orleans maps with contemporary public geographic resources. | Initial inquiry and positionality check. |
| Day 2 | **Source and context audit**<br>Evaluate evidence, stakeholders, permission or material constraints. | Source log with known/uncertain claims. |
| Day 3 | **Investigate technical options**<br>Demonstrate data visualization, counter-mapping, symbol hierarchy. Make thinking visible by testing two alternate solutions and identifying what each communicates. | Material trials and design comparison. |
| Day 4 | **Generate + plan**<br>Three robust concepts with intended audience and criteria. | Annotated concepts and rationale. |
| Day 5–6 | **Build and document**<br>Develop work with dated process notes and ethical checks. | Progress photos, source credits, technique notes. |
| Day 7 | **Critique + substantive revision**<br>Test with peers for communication and context; revise data visualization. | Feedback and before/after comparison. |
| Day 8 | **Present + evaluate**<br>Curate for audience and acknowledge limitations. | Rubric, portfolio record, and next investigation. |

## Key technique to model

data visualization, counter-mapping, symbol hierarchy

## Access without lowering the artistic goal

Explore who can navigate a space differently because of language, disability, transit, or community history. Offer physical samples, captioned images, accessible demonstrations, flexible planning modes, and alternate materials while retaining the common visual learning target.

## Teacher coaching questions

- What is the visual problem you are solving?
- Which decision communicates your intended meaning most clearly?
- What does your reference prove, and what are you still imagining?
- What could a viewer misunderstand?
- What visible revision will strengthen your next version?

## Cultural care

Never publish personal routes or private locations; distinguish data from assumption.

## Stretch & explore

Make a companion map for a contrasting audience.

Design provenance: Original Studio Fieldnotes investigation developed for the 50-lesson library; informed by the teacher-supplied ten-stage Artistic Investigations architecture and reflective Studio Habits framework.