

Using Mnemonics to Teach 18th Century North American Battles

Objective: To use recoded mnemonic keywords and color coding as familiar concrete proxies to help students relocate map features

Setting and Materials

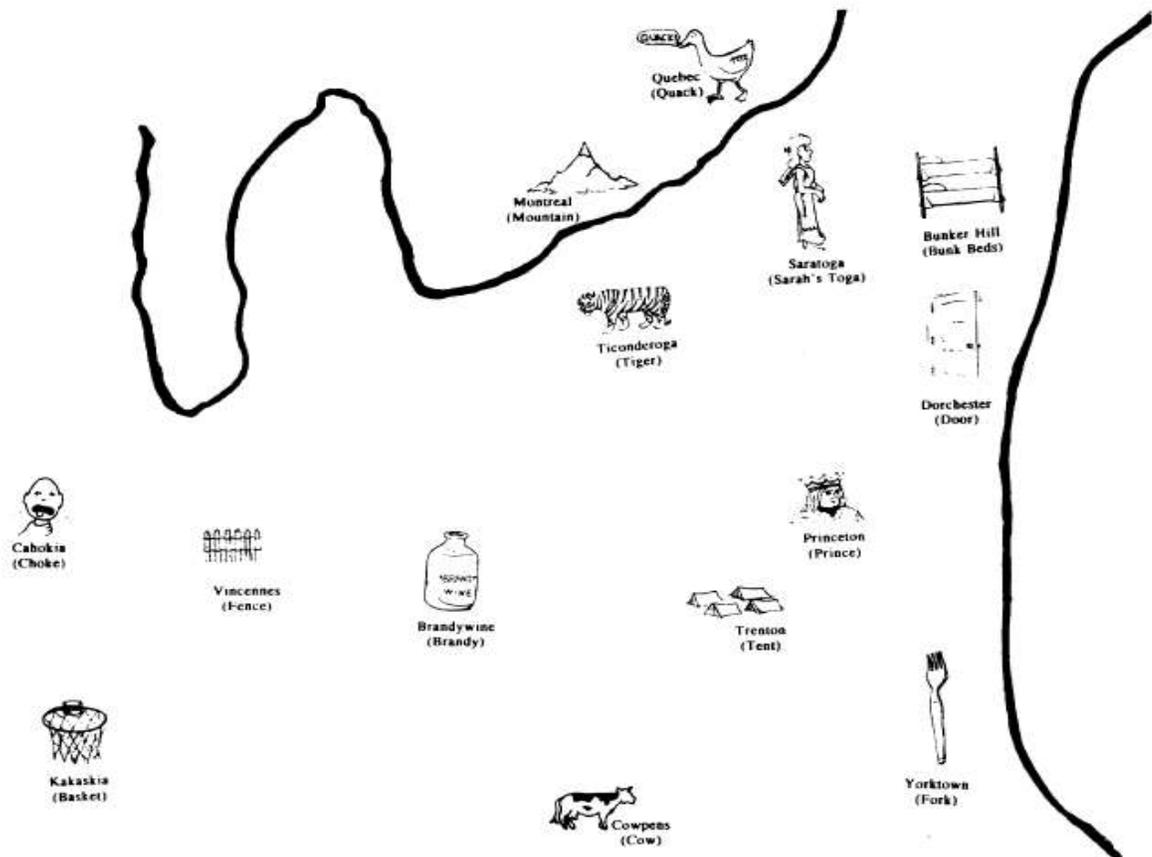
Setting: special education classroom

Materials:

1. 8.5" x 11" practice map and corresponding test map of the same size
2. 11" x 17" map of Eastern United States and Canada and corresponding test map of the same size
3. Red and blue (for American victories) markers for color coding features of maps (i.e., red for British victories and blue for American victories)

Content Taught

18th Century North American Battles



This map lists the name of each of the 14 battles with the keyword in parentheses [e.g., Ticonderoga (tiger); Yorktown (fork)] with small illustrations of the keyword and color coding of red if the battle was a British victory and color coding of blue if the battle was an American victory.

Teaching Procedures

1. Tell students they will be learning about battles of North America using a practice map.
2. Show students place names and corresponding keywords for features on practice map (e.g., “The keyword for Deerfield is deer. What is the keyword for Deerfield?”)
3. After practicing keywords, show students practice map and ask them to point to first feature and provide feature name (e.g., “The keyword for Deerfield is deer. Later when I ask you where Deerfield is, think of the keyword, deer, think of where the blue deer was on the map, and show me where the deer was on the map. When I ask you who won the Battle of Deerfield, remember that it was the blue deer, and that blue means it was an American victory. What is the keyword for Deerfield? And who won the Battle of Deerfield?”)
4. Follow this same procedure to allow students to practice using keywords and feature names for the remaining battles.
5. Give students a practice test and feedback on their performance following procedures above for at least two items on practice map.
6. During practice test, instruct students to enter an “L” in the box where Lockhaven was located and a “D” in the box where Deerfield was located.
7. Next, have students circle “B” if it was a British victory and “A” if it was an American victory.
8. Give students feedback on their performance as they use practice map.
9. Present students with a United States map. Ask students to indicate location of each map feature, one at a time, for 30 seconds per location while providing relevant feature information.
10. After describing all the features on the map, give students an additional 30 seconds to view entire map.
11. Take map away and give students another “filler” activity or task for 90 seconds.
12. Next, give students test map and have them initial each feature on map and circle corresponding victory (e.g., “Write a ‘T’ in the box where Ticonderoga is. Circle ‘B’ if it was a British victory, or circle ‘A’ if it was an American victory.”)

Evaluation

Mark the student responses as correct or incorrect. During testing do not prompt or give clues to students. The test is not timed, but be sure to measure student growth of the 14 North American Battles over time.

Lesson Plan Based on:

Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A., Brigham, F. J., & Sullivan, G. S. (1992). Effects of mnemonic reconstructions on the spatial learning of adolescents with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*, 15, 154-162.