

RESOURCE LIBRARY  
ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

## Food Crops in the Americas

Students use a map that shows land use, land cover, and major crops to create a large, thematic map of the Americas and analyze the patterns they see.

### GRADES

3 - 5

### SUBJECTS

*Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography*

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## OVERVIEW

Students use a map that shows land use, land cover, and major crops to create a large, thematic map of the Americas and analyze the patterns they see.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/food-crops-americas/>

## Program



## DIRECTIONS

**1. Have students indicate predominant land use and land cover on the Americas Mega Map.**

Project the Major Crops of the Americas/Food and Forests map for students, and have students identify the general areas of grassland, forest, cropland, wetland, desert, and tundra

in the Americas. Students should decide how best to group categories from the map key in order to show these general areas on the Americas Mega Map. Have students create a Land Use/Land Cover key for the large map. When indicating these land use areas on the large map, students may choose to color in areas entirely, or fill larger spaces with crosshatching or diagonal lines to indicate a certain land use type. Provide them with enough time to indicate predominant land use and land cover on the Americas Mega Map.

## **2. Have students indicate major food crops on the Americas Mega Map.**

Have students select food crops from the Major Crops of the Americas/Food and Forests map and create a Major Crops key for the Mega Map. Encourage students to reuse symbols they like and create new symbols when needed. Then have students create symbols for each crop using colored construction paper or drawing paper and crayons or markers. Ask students to tape the symbols showing where different crops are grown on the Americas Mega Map.

## **3. Have a whole-class discussion about patterns between land use, land cover, and where food crops are grown.**

Lead students in a discussion about any patterns they see, or relationships between land use and land cover and where food crops are grown. Ask: *Do you see the same crop growing in different countries? Are there any similarities in land cover where the same crops are grown?*

# Extending the Learning

This map activity can be extended to illustrate energy and mineral resources and use, import and export patterns in the Americas, and renewable versus nonrenewable resources. Discuss with students other potential topics to cover with this mapping activity and sources they can use to research the necessary information.

## OBJECTIVES

# Subjects & Disciplines

### Geography

- [Human Geography](#)
- [Physical Geography](#)

# Learning Objectives

Students will:

- identify the location of different land use and land cover designations on a map of the Americas
- identify the location of major crops on a map of the Americas
- discuss patterns and relationships between land use, land cover, and major crops in the Americas

## Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

## Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning

## Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Themes
  - Global Awareness
- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Analyzing
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information
  - Analyzing Geographic Information
  - Organizing Geographic Information

## National Standards, Principles, and Practices

### NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 1:

How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

• **Standard 3:**

How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface

## **Preparation**

## **What You'll Need**

### **MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE**

- Colored pencils
- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Drawing paper
- Markers
- Scissors
- Transparent tape

### **REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY**

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector
- Plug-Ins: Flash

### **PHYSICAL SPACE**

- Classroom

### **GROUPING**

- Large-group instruction

### **OTHER NOTES**

Before starting this activity, assemble the Americas Mega Map.

## **BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY**

# Background Information

Geographers use maps to convey information to others. You can display physical, political or cultural information, or use maps to illustrate specific themes and topics. Maps are useful in helping to see patterns or relationships between layers of information.

## Prior Knowledge

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## Recommended Prior Activities

- None

## Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
crop	<i>noun</i>	agricultural produce.
land cover	<i>noun</i>	physical material at the very top surface of the Earth, such as grass.



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