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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2021 Volume III: How to Do Things with Maps

A Modern Scramble: Envisioning Colonialism in Africa using Maps and Literary Critique

Guide for Curriculum Unit 21.03.05
by Robert Schwartz

This unit is designed to introduce parts of Africa's geography and history to students who may not be able to do so through experience, by using maps and literary critique. We will explore the merits of using maps for historical and literary study, as well as explore maps of our communities and even design maps of our own. From there, we will explore the history and maps of the Scramble for Africa, when several European nations colonized 90% of the continent, using a map to divide the land and resources between them. We will enhance our study using literature of the time period, specifically, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. However, we will not be engaging in a novel study. We will be regarding it as a marker of the time, but with a highly critical view using our own insight, and an essay by Chinua Achebe vilifying the novella as racist. Once our multi-media journey is finished, hopefully students will come away with a larger understanding of less familiar parts of the world, and where they fit into history and today.

(Developed for African American and Latinx History, grades 11-12; recommended for English and History, grades 11-12)

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