



## What and where is Puerto Rico? Activity 2: Mapping Puerto Rico

### Summary:

Through web site resources, class readings, and hands-on activities students will learn where Puerto Rico is, the geography and vegetation of the island, and understand the history of the commonwealth.

### Materials:

- Puerto Rico map (large)
- Puerto Rico maps, student copies
- markers

### Set-Up:

- **hang up** Puerto Rico map (large) on wall
- **make copies** of Puerto Rico maps, student copies

### Procedure:

#### **Mapping Puerto Rico – 30 min.**

1. Tape Puerto Rico Map in the front of the room upside down or sideways. (I am writing this lesson using the International Travel Maps Puerto Rico Map, scale 1:190 000)
2. Ask the students to take a look at Puerto Rico. What are some of the things they observe about the island. (Hopefully) one of the students will note that the map is upside down or sideways by looking at the compass rose. Explain the importance of the compass rose on a map and orienting it the correct way when reading a map.
3. Reorient the map the correct way and ask students to make observations again. What do they notice about shape, size, topography, landforms, infrastructure, etc.
4. Pass out student maps (using one from National Geographic Xpeditions website, see references)
5. Ask students to orient their map with north at the top of their desk.
6. Ask students to make observations again. What do they notice about their maps' shape, size, topography, landforms, infrastructure, etc. Which map is more helpful? Why?
7. Ask students to get out four colors of markers or colored pencils. Tell them that they are going to make a map of Puerto Rico focusing more on natural features.

### Grade Level: 7-8

**Goal:** Students learn about the history of Puerto Rico, and will be able to compare the tropical vegetation and geography to Wisconsin.

### Key Concepts:

- Greater Antilles
- West Indies
- Tropical Vegetation
- Island Origin
- Commonwealth
- Biodiversity

**Objectives:** Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

- 1) be able to identify Puerto Rico on a world map
- 2) describe the vegetation
- 3) explain the governmental relationship between the US and Puerto Rico

### Teaching Location:

Classroom  
School Forest or other outdoor area (preferably with trees)

### Activity Time:

30 minutes

### Subject Areas for Infusion:

science, social studies, English, Environmental Ed.

8. First discuss the size of Puerto Rico. Have students record the 3,515 square miles on their paper so they know the area coverage. Then ask students to write in the measurements, approximately 100x35 miles (see background).
9. Ask the students, by looking at the maps, where would you live in Puerto Rico and why? Most students will choose a spot by the water. Talk about the importance of water and farmable land. Then explain to the students that most people (about 3 million) in Puerto Rico do live on the coast, and many on the northern coast by San Juan. The other one million are spread out over the rest of the island.
10. Lead students in coloring in natural features on their maps, like the tropical rainforest, the mountainous region, and the karst country. Include areas of wet forest, dry forest, from the map received at El Yunque.
11. Keep the maps for reference later.

**Standards:**

**Science:**

B.8.4  
C.8.3-4  
E.8.1-3

**English:**

A.8.4, C.8.2, C.8.3,  
E.8.3

**Social Studies:**

A.8.1, A.8.5, A.8.8,  
B.8.3, B.8.8

**EE:**

A.8.4, A.8.5, B.8.2,  
B.8.3, B.8.5, B.8.10,  
B.8.12, B.8.15,  
B.8.23

**Assessment**

Check over maps, informal and ongoing assessment throughout lesson.

**References:**

**Xpeditions Atlas**. National Geographic, November 29, 2005. [Map of Puerto Rico]

<<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/index.html?Parent=nameri&Rootmap=purico&Mode=d>>.