



Big Minnesota/Little Minnesota

Strand Identification: V - Geography

C. Spatial Organization

Standard 2: The student will explain how the regionalization of space into political units affects human behavior.

Benchmarks: 2. Students will provide examples of the impact of political boundaries on human behavior and economic activities.

Grade Level: 9-12

Overview: Students will be evaluating the effectiveness of the current boundaries in the state of Minnesota as well as the implications of different boundaries on the state. Students will be able to recognize the different types of boundaries for the state of Minnesota and use those terms to define the different boundary types found in Minnesota.

Time: Two class periods

Subjects/Topics: Geography, U.S. History, Minnesota Studies.

Required Materials: The territorial maps of Minnesota from the History Center. Or territorial maps of Minnesota prior to statehood in 1858.

1. 1837 – “Cartes des Etats-Unis d’Amerique comprenant une partie des districts de l’oest et de la Nouvelle Bretagne” by J. Andriveau-Goujon. #G3700 1837 .A53 Reserve 4F.
2. 1850 – “Map of the organized counties of Minnesota.” By Thomas Cowperthwait and Company. #G4140 1850 .T493 c. 3
3. 1852 – “Map of Minnesota Territory.” Young, J.H. Thomas Cowperthwait and Company. #G4130 1852.Y66 2F
4. 1853 – “Map of Minnesota Territory.” Young, J.H. Cowperthwait, DeSilver and Butler. #G4130 1853.Y66 2F.
5. “Wisconsin and Iowa.” #AV1981.118.1

Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Analyze the three different types of boundaries: geometric, physical, and cultural.
2. Evaluate the factors of the development of boundaries of the state of Minnesota.
3. Identify the territorial expansion and recession of the boundaries of the territory of Minnesota through the use of territorial maps of Minnesota.

Suggested Procedure:

The teacher should begin by giving students the definitions of the three different types of boundaries as well as the four different types of boundary disputes. By looking at the territorial

maps of the territory of Minnesota students will be placed in three groups. These groups can either be teacher directed or student selected.

The three groups will all be receiving the maps from the Minnesota Historical society or will need to study the maps at the museum to understand the complexity of territorial boundaries.

The three groups will be as follows:

1. Minnesota should be larger than the current state today encompassing much of the current state of North Dakota. Land should be given to the Missouri River instead of the Red River of the North.

Reasons:

- A. It makes more geographic sense to go to the Missouri based on the original land plottings.
 - B. The resources in North Dakota would give Minnesota a large economic boost.
 - C. The agricultural land in the Red River Valley would be invaluable to Minnesota's economy.
 - D. The transportation of the industrial and agricultural resources could be better managed under one state's ownership.
2. Minnesota should look like it does today with its current boundaries. The boundaries should extend using the St. Croix and Red Rivers for their respective boundaries using physical features and geometric boundaries for the border with Iowa.

Reasons:

- A. Minnesota would not have to deal with the Indian problems in the west.
 - B. Minnesota would still have the source of the Mississippi River in its state and therefore could control trade on the river.
 - C. Minnesota would still have a large section of agricultural productivity in the southern and western portions of the state.
 - D. Minnesota would still own the Iron Ore resources needed for the steel production in the east. Could gain wealth.
3. Minnesota should be smaller than the current state today. Cede the southern portion of the state to Iowa and the Eastern portion of the state to Wisconsin.

Reasons:

- A. Minnesota would not have to govern such a large state where transportation was a problem in the settlement era.
- B. Minnesota would not have had the Dakota conflict in southern Minnesota involving the hanging of 38 Indians. Relations with Indian Americans might have been different.
- C. Lack of funds to build infrastructure in areas with sparse settlement in the far north and southwestern part of the current state.
- D. Minnesota would still have an agricultural and industrial base with the ownership of St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis as well as the hub of Steamship transportation in St. Paul.

Students will need to give a minimum of three reasons for their cause for one of the positions. One student from each group will get with another student from one of the other groups. Each student will have three minutes to share their experiences and rationale for the development of the territorial, and eventually the state, borders with other states and one country.

Upon completion of the debate students will share their reasons with the class. The top answers will go onto the board and class decides which of the three options would have been the best for the state of Minnesota.

Students upon completion of the debate must use the different boundaries in the state of Minnesota and determine which of the boundary types are identified in each.

1. Eastern Minnesota South of Duluth – Physical boundary with the St. Croix River.
2. Eastern Minnesota North of Duluth – Physical boundary with Lake Superior.
3. Northern Minnesota to Lake of the Woods – Physical boundary with Boundary Waters.
4. Northern Boundary West of Lake of the Woods – Geometric and antecedent. Along the 49th parallel.
5. Northwestern boundary – Physical with the Red River of the North.
6. Southwestern border – geometric. Using line of longitude.
7. Southern border – geometric. Using a line of latitude.

Suggested Assessment:

Students should define the different types of boundaries and borders in the state of Minnesota.

Definitions:

1. Geometric boundaries – the use of latitude and longitude to produce separations in the organization of the earth. These lines are straight on the surface on the earth.
2. Physical boundaries – the use of physical features of the earth to create separation in the organization of the earth's surface.
3. Cultural boundaries – the use of cultural features such as language or religion to establish separation in the organization of the earth's surface.
4. Definitional boundary disputes – the legal language of a treaty's definition of the boundary.
5. Locational boundary disputes – definition of the border is not questioned but rather the interpretation of the border.
6. Operational boundary dispute – two sides disagree on a major issue revolving around the location of the border.
7. Allocational boundary dispute – questions the use of the boundary.
8. Antecedent boundaries – boundaries before human settlement in the area.
9. Subsequent boundaries – boundaries developed in conjunction with the cultural landscape.
10. Superimposed boundaries – boundaries that ignore existing cultural organization on the landscape.
11. Relic boundaries – a boundary that shows a past boundary.

12. Territory – a geographic area under the authority of a governing country.

Credits: Kelly Swanson, Teacher, Geography Consultant, Johnson Senior High School
1349 Arcade Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55106, Kelly.swanson@spps.org