South America: Countries and Capitals

Grade Level: Grades 4–12
Objective: To learn the locations, names, and capital cities of the countries of South America while becoming familiar with the ABC Maps Online database.
Duration: 1–2 hours
Materials: Labeled political map of South America; printed unlabeled political map of South America; individual access to ABC Maps Online for all participating students; pens or pencils and paper

Instructions: Use ABC Maps Online to print out a unlabeled political map of South America and then use a labeled political map of the continent to label its various countries. Capitals and places of geographic significance can also be labeled.

Assignment 1: Map the continent:
• Search ABC Maps Online for a labeled political map of South America. Review it online, taking some time to study it closely and committing as much to memory as possible.
• Use the map to make a numbered list of the countries that make up the continent of South America.
• Download and print out an unlabeled political map with the country boundaries outlined. Without looking online, use your list of countries and your memory to label the countries on the outline map.
• When you're stuck, review the map again online, and then go back to filling in the outline map.
• Cross off each country on your list as you add its name to the map, and continue until all countries have been added.

Assignment 2: Add capital cities:
• Return to the labeled political map online to identify the capital city of each country you listed in Assignment 1. Write the name of the capital alongside the country's name on your list.
• Use this list to add capital cities to the country map you labled in Assignment 1. Refer to the online map for correct placement.

Assignment 3: Add geographic features:
• Using ABC Maps Online, find a reference map and use it to draw in other important features of South America, such as the Amazon River, Andes Mountains, Lake Titicaca, Patagonian icecap, Cape Horn, Strait of Magellan, and Tierra del Fuego. Also locate and label the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea.

Extra Credit: Use colored pens or pencils to color in the countries so that no two countries that share a border are the same color. Try to use as few colors as possible.