

Teacher's Guide: **Imperial Geography (World Empires)**

Overview: Students match maps with the empires they depict.
In 6th grade, students get an additional clue, in the form of brief descriptions of location within continents (thus making the activity primarily a review of continent and subcontinent names).
In 7th grade, students focus on the relationships between empires.

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| Grade: 6 and 7 spiral |
| Related Discipline: History |
| GLCE 6-G4.1.1, 7-W3.1.2 |
| Time: 20-40 minutes |

Setup: Remind students that ancient empires are not just ancient history – they left many legacies that affect life today, from road networks and trade connections to cultural heritage and religion, even the languages that people speak in different parts of the world.

Procedure: In 6th grade, focus on the subcontinent names, perhaps by marking them on a banner map or projecting the clickable world map with the subcontinent names – especially South Asia, East Asia, Central Asia, Southwest Asia (also called the Middle), West Africa, Andean South America, and Mediterranean Europe.

In 7th grade, focus on the relationships between empires. If they existed at the same time, did they have trade relationships, or did they meet along a border that might have been an area of conflict? Or were there barriers (e.g., high mountains, barren deserts) that kept them separate?

Answers:

- Persian Empire – Map H modern Iran, plus parts of Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, other “stans.”
- Han Dynasty – Map B much of modern China
- Mauryan Empire – Map G most of modern India, plus parts of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan
- Roman Empire – Map F modern Italy, plus all or part of France, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, Greece, Balkan countries, 5 countries across North Africa, Palestine (Canaan, Israel, Lebanon), plus parts of Turkey, Syria, Jordan, etc.
- Islamic Caliphates – Map C Saudi Arabia plus Yemen, Oman, many countries across North Africa, Spain, Turkey, and eastward to Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Mongol Horde – Map E modern Mongolia, plus much of China, southern Russia, Kazakhstan, and parts of many countries across Central Asia and Eastern Europe
- Mali/Songhai Empire – Map A modern Mali and parts of many other countries in West Africa
- Inca Empire – Map D most of modern Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador, plus parts of Chile and Colombia

Debrief: A useful review is to identify era boundaries on a GeoHistoGram, by drawing horizontal lines on the dates that mark the beginning and end of various historic eras. Then, you can easily identify the empires that occupied the most land and had the most influence during those eras.

Vocabulary: civilization culture country empire imperial trade conflict

Extension: Add additional empire maps, and describe them in terms of how they relate to the areas occupied by the “Big Eight.” Do research and make individual posters or presentations about various empires. Discuss which empires were the most powerful, wealthy, humane, democratic, any other measure you think may be appropriate. Use the “Geometry of Empire” activity to explore reasons why empires may tend to stagnate and decline after they reach a certain size, where internal costs have risen to the point that they offset the external “loot” obtained by capturing more territory (along with the gold, silver, tools, life savings, slaves, food, and other goods from the captured peoples).