

Introduction

In the aftermath of October 7th, Jewish educators have been challenged to create materials that address a heretofore unimaginable reality. When ARZA Canada embarked on the creation of an Israel curriculum for elementary grades and beyond, the task was challenging. Following October 7th, the task can feel insurmountable while at the same time being even more imperative. (For additional background on October 7th and its aftermath, see the [October 7th Shared Space Addendum](#).)

This, the second strand in the *Shared Space Israel Curriculum*, is deeply informed by our changed world. While the topic of Maps as Narrative was chosen prior to October 7th, the content has been significantly adapted to address issues that have emerged since that fateful day. For example, the issue of who is indigenous to the land and how one determines indigeneity is now at the center of one of the sessions. Space has also been made for questions about betrayal and injustice and colonization to name a couple (at an age appropriate level).

These are difficult and challenging times. Learners are likely keenly aware of the situation in the region. These sessions are designed to enable learners to ask questions and receive answers that are respectful and thoughtful. Some questions may be straightforward with readily available responses, while others will not have clear answers. For those questions that are complex without easy answers, the learners may express that the answers are not satisfying, or even frustrating.

Teachers can take three steps:

1. Restate the question to ensure that it was heard correctly,
2. Acknowledge that the answer is not easy nor satisfying
3. Ask if the learners have additional questions on the topic.

If teachers are unsure how to answer a question, it is more than reasonable for them to note the question (write on a board or piece of paper so learners can see) and bring it to someone who can provide guidance.

Grade-levels and Background Knowledge

The sessions are geared towards learners in Grade 5 and up. The assumption is that learners are proficient readers and have some basic knowledge of Israel. If you are using this strand as the first one in teaching the curriculum, you might want to look at Session 2 of the first strand, “An Introduction to Israel As a Multicultural Space”. In addition, Session 4 of the first strand provides a brief look at where the different groups live in Israel and can serve as an introduction to the map of Israel.

Complexity Not Resolution

This second strand includes six sessions. They do not have to be done in order but we do recommend starting with the introductory session. As with the previous strand, where needed we have added in some suggested responses to questions. At the same time, many of the questions raised do not have clear answers or, necessarily correct answers. This might be challenging for some, including those who are teaching. In preparation for some of the sessions (in particular Sessions 3 and 4), the educator may want to foreshadow with learners that some questions learners may encounter or raise will not have right or wrong answers. This is what makes the situation in the Middle East so complex - there are many questions and issues that do not have clear solutions.

Big Ideas

These sessions are animated by big ideas and questions for inquiry. Each session addresses some of each and, over the strand, both ideas and questions emerge and reemerge. The big ideas and questions for inquiry for the Maps as Narrative strand are:

1. Every map tells a story.
2. Maps are a window into how different groups share space.
3. Maps are subjective, interpretive documents through which individuals express their perspectives and beliefs in the context of the time and place in which they live.
4. The map of Israel can be simultaneously historical, political, religious and geographic.

Inquiry/Essential Questions

1. What can we learn from maps about sharing space?
2. Whose space is it anyway? (This is a little play on words)
3. What does a particular map teach about the world view or political stance of its user?
4. Why are some maps more or less acceptable in a given situation or moment in time?
5. How do maps reflect/teach us history?
6. What happens when groups or individuals disagree on the validity of a map?
7. What are maps used for?
8. What's a map?
9. Who creates maps?
10. What are the implications for how we "read" maps?

Session Topics and Sequence

- Session 1: Introduction to Maps as Narrative
- Session 2: The Map of Israel Over Time and Space: An Introduction
- Session 3: The Many Inhabitants and Names of the Land Throughout History (Issues of Indigeneity)
- Session 4: Divvying Up The Land: Dividing The Land in Modern Times
- Session 5: Mapping the Map: Who Goes Where
- Session 6: Shalom/Salaam: A Peace Tefilla for All

These sessions are packed and demanding. Teachers must take time to read through the sessions and accompanying materials carefully. We have tried to pare down the materials where possible but have left fuller versions in the Appendices for those who wish to explore them more in depth. As with all teaching, these plans are not etched in stone. Some may take more than one session, some may need to be altered for older or younger learners.

Choosing which Maps

Finally, a word about the maps themselves. We did our best to find maps that were diverse and representative of multiple groups. The map of the modern State of Israel is one designed by J Street. The choice of this map is in no way an indication of political leanings. Rather, it includes the Green Line, 1967 borders, in the most clear way of all the maps explored. For the session on the current map (Session 5) we chose to create an interactive map so we could tailor it for our age group and North American milieu.

In times like these, the work of Israel education takes on heightened importance. You are doing holy work which can, sometimes, be the hardest work. As they say in Hebrew, alu v'heetzleecho, may you find fulfillment and success.

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SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION TO MAPS AS NARRATIVE

Introduction

This session is the first in a series of six sessions. It introduces learners to the concept that maps tell the stories of the cartographers who create them, are not objective and change over time. In this introductory session, learners will begin by creating their own sketched maps of the space they are in at the time of the session, noticing that everyone in the group might have drawn a map of the same place very differently. In the second part of the session they will zoom out to maps of Canada and, finally, to maps of the world, noting that the same place can look quite different depending on which map is used.

The ultimate goal of this session is to challenge the assumption that maps can be trusted to accurately portray a particular place and to sensitize learners to the elements of which to be aware when examining and evaluating the validity of a map. This session is purposely general, not relating to Israel or the surrounding area. Maps of the area and the region through history and at the present moment will be explored in future sessions.

Learners may ask about the validity of GPS and other satellite maps. Even these maps are from a particular perspective informed by distance, the angle of the satellite, time of day and more. All maps are influenced by multiple factors, none of which are 100% objective.

Big Idea

Every map tells a story.

Questions

1. What does a particular map teach about the world view or political stance of its user?
2. Why are some maps more or less acceptable in a given situation or moment in time?
3. How do maps reflect/teach us history?
4. What are maps used for?

Outcomes

Learners will be able to:

- Point to examples in which maps, rather than representing an objective reality, reflect a particular perspective
- Identify differences between maps of the same area
- Describe why some maps may be more accurate than others

Assessment/Evidence

Learners will begin a personal journal that will record their impressions and reactions to each session.

Materials and Resources

- Blank copy paper
- Coloured pencils, crayons or markers
- Pencils with erasers
- Clipboards (1pp)
- [Classroom map of Canada](#) (order a large printed copy [here](#))
- [NASA map of Canada](#)
- [Treaty Map of Canada](#)
- [Topographical map of Canada](#)
- [Gall-Peters Project Map](#)
- [Mercator Projection Map](#)
- [AuthaGraph Map](#)
- [Classroom map of the world](#) (order a large printed copy [here](#))
- Student Journals

Setup and Preparation

- Print out all the maps
- Order and be prepared to display the classroom maps of world and Canada (see links above if necessary to order)
- Prepare copy paper, pencils for map drawing (introduction)
- Hand out Student Journals for use during the session

Overview

- I. Part 1: Map of Our Place
- II. Part 2: Three Maps, Three Narratives
- III. Part 3: Choosing a Map
- IV. Part 4: Wrap Up and Reflection

Part 1: Map of Our place

15 minutes

Set Induction to Unit (15 minutes)

The goal of this section is to underscore that maps, even of those areas that we think of as the same (shared) space, can be drawn differently, depending on who is creating the map. Learners will begin to understand the kinds of decisions Cartographers (Map Makers) make when creating a map. Understanding that maps are a reflection of the map maker's perception of the geography will help the learners begin to ask questions of any map before simply accepting that it is objective and true. This will come into sharper focus in the next section, *Introduction to Maps as Narrative*.

- Ask learners to **create a map of the space** they are currently in (synagogue, camp, JCC, etc.). They should not talk while doing this (even better, seat them with their backs to one another so they cannot see what others are doing).
- Hand out clipboards, Student Journals or paper, pencils and any other drawing supplies you are providing.
- **After 5 minutes-** reconvene and ask students to sit in pairs/small groups/whole class.

Ask:

- What do you notice that is different in each of your maps?
- What is the same?
- What elements did you choose to include or not include (examples: key, compass, names, doors, etc.)? Why?
- What can you learn about what's important to the map maker from these decisions?

Conclusion: Maps are not necessarily “factual.” Indeed, most maps reflect what is important to the mapmaker or at the time the map is created.

Part 2: Three Maps, Three Narratives

30 minutes

This section begins with maps of Canada which learners likely know and then zooms out to the maps of the world from three distinct historical periods. The goal is for learners to engage with maps that might challenge how they understand the place of Canada in the world (size, geographical location, relationship to other countries and continents) and, in general, the world map as they may have encountered it in school or on the internet. This will set them up for future sessions in which they assess these same elements and more for the area that is Israel.

Maps of Canada (10 minutes)

The three maps to be examined are a map of [Canada typically found in a classroom](#), a [topographical map](#), [map from space \(NASA\)](#) and a [Treaty Map](#). Gather learners around in a circle with the three maps laid out on the floor.

Ask the following:

- What are the differences between the maps?
- What's included and/or missing on each of the maps?
- What is important for the mapmakers to show?
- How do you know?
- What do you think this map might be used for?

Maps of the World (20 minutes)

The goal of this section is to enable learners to practice identifying distinctions between maps of ostensibly the same place and then reflect on how they might determine the accuracy of any given map. Through examining three maps of the world presenting very different proportions and viewpoints on what the world looks like on a map, learners will begin to grasp that maps, documents that we tend to think of as being objective are actually reflective of a particular worldview (for example, the importance of a particular country or area of the world in the eyes of the mapmaker).

Display/handout Use these three maps of the world (one bonus map provided if the group is larger and you want more variety):

1. [Gall-Peters Projection Map](#)
2. [AuthaGraph Map](#)
3. [Classroom map of the world](#)
4. [Mercator Projection Map](#) (BONUS)

Divide into 3 small groups (10 minutes):

Learners should be able to complete this section on their own but may need some help getting started. If the class is big enough, breaking learners into small groups might bring out differing perspectives among the groups. This exercise can also be done in a larger group (up to 5 people) if class size is small.

Each group will use the worksheet instructions to compare the three world maps:

- Find Canada
- Find Israel
- Find Europe
- What do you think was important for the map maker to show?
- What is unique/special/different about this map?
- Why use this map?

In **large group**, discuss the following (10 minutes):

- What did the maps have in common?
- What was different?
- What surprised you?
- Why would you use [insert map name] (repeat for all 3 maps)?
- What did you learn about the nature and creation of maps by seeing these three maps?
- [Read the description of why the map was created and what it portrays.](#)

Part 3: What do I believe? Choosing a Map

8-10 minutes

The goal of this section is to sensitize learners to the notion that maps are subjective documents that cannot necessarily be trusted to portray the world as it is. This is meant to be challenging for the learners both in terms of their perspective on maps and that there may not be such a thing as one “right” map or perspective. This will be significant going forward as learners examine maps of Israel/Palestine from the perspective of multiple groups.

Which map? (8 minutes)

In this section, learners will weigh in on their personal perspectives and uncover what might be challenging to them about the concept that maps are subjective, reflecting the perspective of the publisher of the maps (or cartographers). The goal is to affirm for the students that this might be a hard concept for them to grasp, particularly if they had previously thought of maps as objective representations. Part 4, the wrap up, will address this.

- Lay the maps from all three categories on the floor or post on the wall.
- Choose ONE of the following frames for the prompt as learners walk around:

Framing #1: Which map is the most RIGHT map in your eyes? Why?

Framing #2: Which map most challenged your perceptions? Why?

- Ask learners walk around for 3-5 minutes, take a look with the framing question in mind:
- When everyone has stopped by a particular map, ask them to share why they chose the map they did?

Part 4: Wrap Up and Reflection

5 minutes

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Set a conceptual framework that maps are subjective documents that tell a story. When talking about Israel and the area in which it is located, people often choose maps to represent their opinions. In our upcoming sessions you will need to figure out which map of Israel you think is the right map to use and why. Think about all the people you have learned about who share space in Israel and consider what maps they might use as you make your decision!

Student Journal

- Which map of Canada do I think best represents Canada? Why?
- What kinds of maps do I prefer? Why?
- What do I think is MOST important to include on any map?

Appendix

[Here is a fun clip about Peters Projection Map from the American television series The West Wing](#). Another West Wing clip is used in session 3 so you might not want to use this one with your learners, but you can if you wish, knowing you'll have a different clip in Session 3. (Maps come up a number of times in the West Wing series. We wonder why they seem to be of such interest in a television series about the American presidency!)

NASA Map of Canada



SOURCE: NASA Open Source

Topographical Map of Canada



(SOURCE: From English Wikipedia image of 7-July-2005)

Classroom Map of Canada



SOURCE: Scholastic Canada

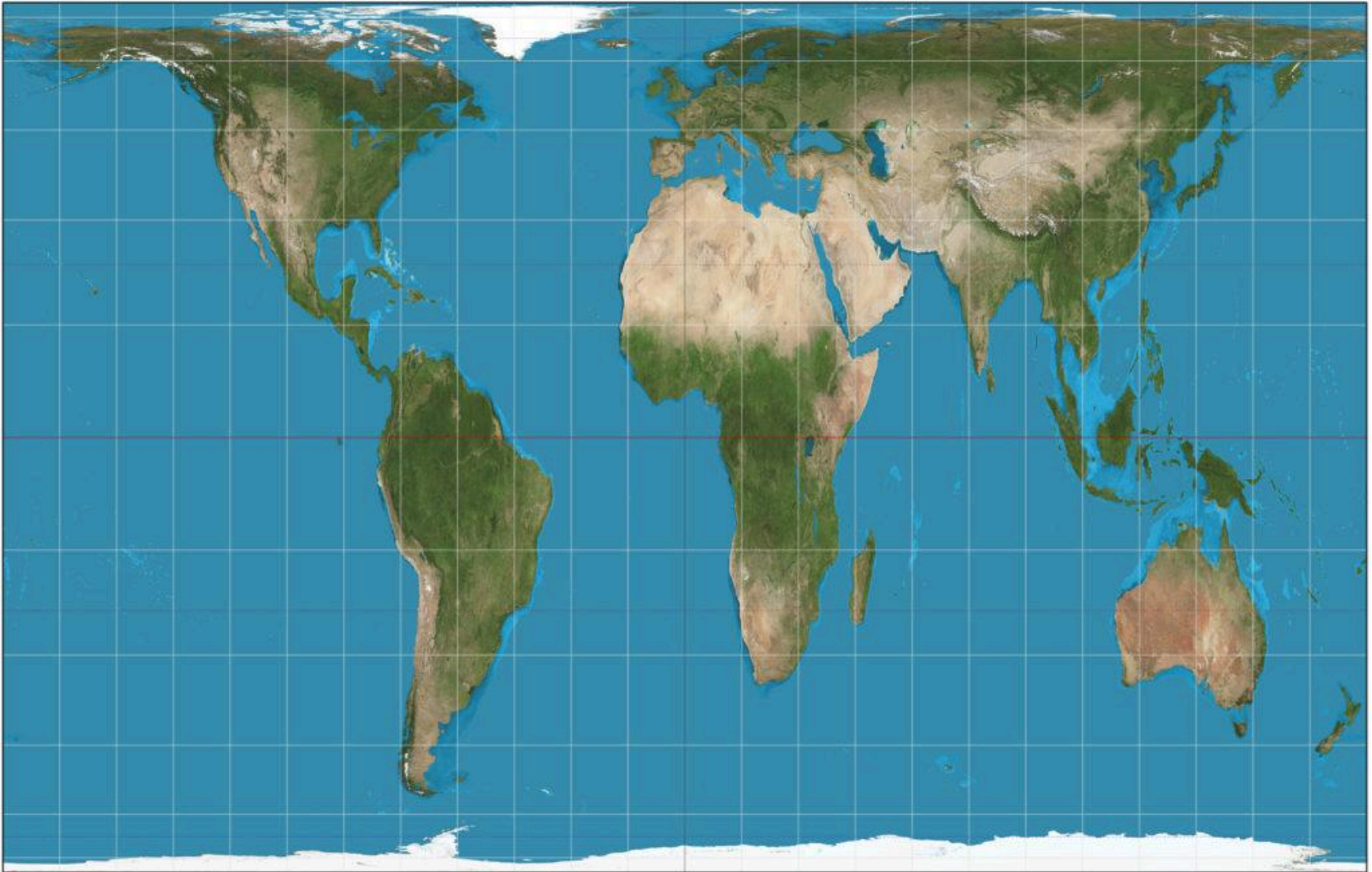
Treaty Map



SOURCE: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5d/Numbered-Treaties-Map.svg>

Print all of the following maps so the map image is on one side and info on the back.

Gall-Peters Projection Map



The biggest criticism for the skewed Mercator projection came in 1973 from German filmmaker and journalist Arno Peters. Peters argued that by enlarging Europe and North America, Mercator maps were giving white nations a sense of supremacy over non-white nations.

His solution? **An equal-area projection that would show the correct sizes of countries relative to each other.** Not that the Gall-Peters projection came without any flaws. In its quest of removing size distortions, the map stretched some places near the poles horizontally to a shocking degree. It also stretched land masses vertically near the Equator.

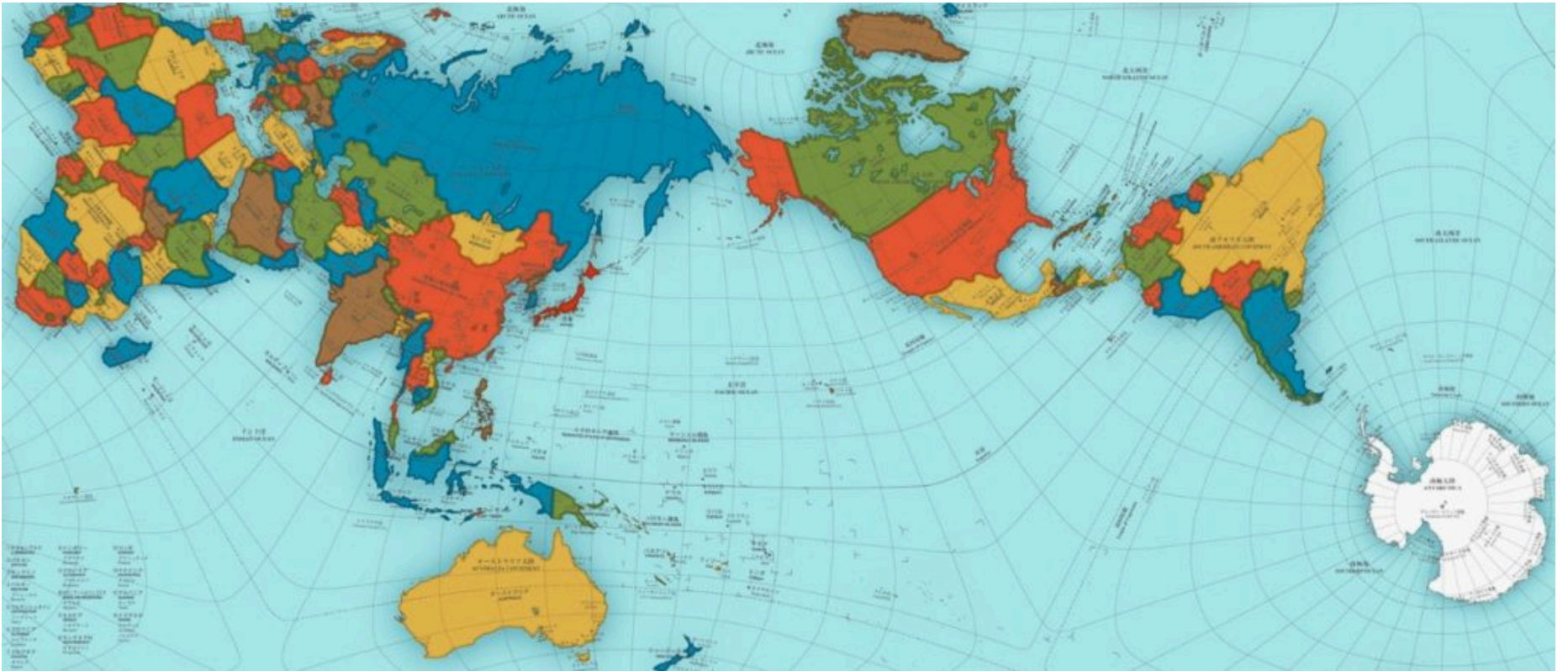
So, if the map looks really odd to you, it's because the shapes and angles are all wrong – exactly the reason why we don't see this map online much. Nevertheless, it's quite widely used in the British school system.

Pros: The only 'area-correct' map of its time; got featured in The West Wing (S2E16)

Cons: Galled the cartographic community in the 1980s

SOURCE: <https://geoawesomeness.com/best-map-projection/>

AuthaGraph Map



This is hands-down the most accurate map projection in existence. In fact, AuthaGraph World Map is so proportionally perfect, it magically folds it into a three-dimensional globe.

Japanese architect Hajime Narukawa invented this projection in 1999 by equally dividing a spherical surface into 96 triangles. These triangles were then projected onto a tetrahedron, which not only helped maintain the proportions of land and water, but also helped to unfold the map into a perfect, flat rectangle. Narukawa, however, insists that if the map is refined a step further to increase the number of subdivisions, its accuracy will improve and it can officially be called an area-equal map.

Nonetheless, AuthaGraph realistically represents all oceans and continents, including the neglected Antarctica. And while the general shape of the continents is maintained, you will notice that their orientation is skewing upwards – as if in a smile!

Pros: Most accurate; will win you Japan's biggest design award; can be folded into a 3D globe

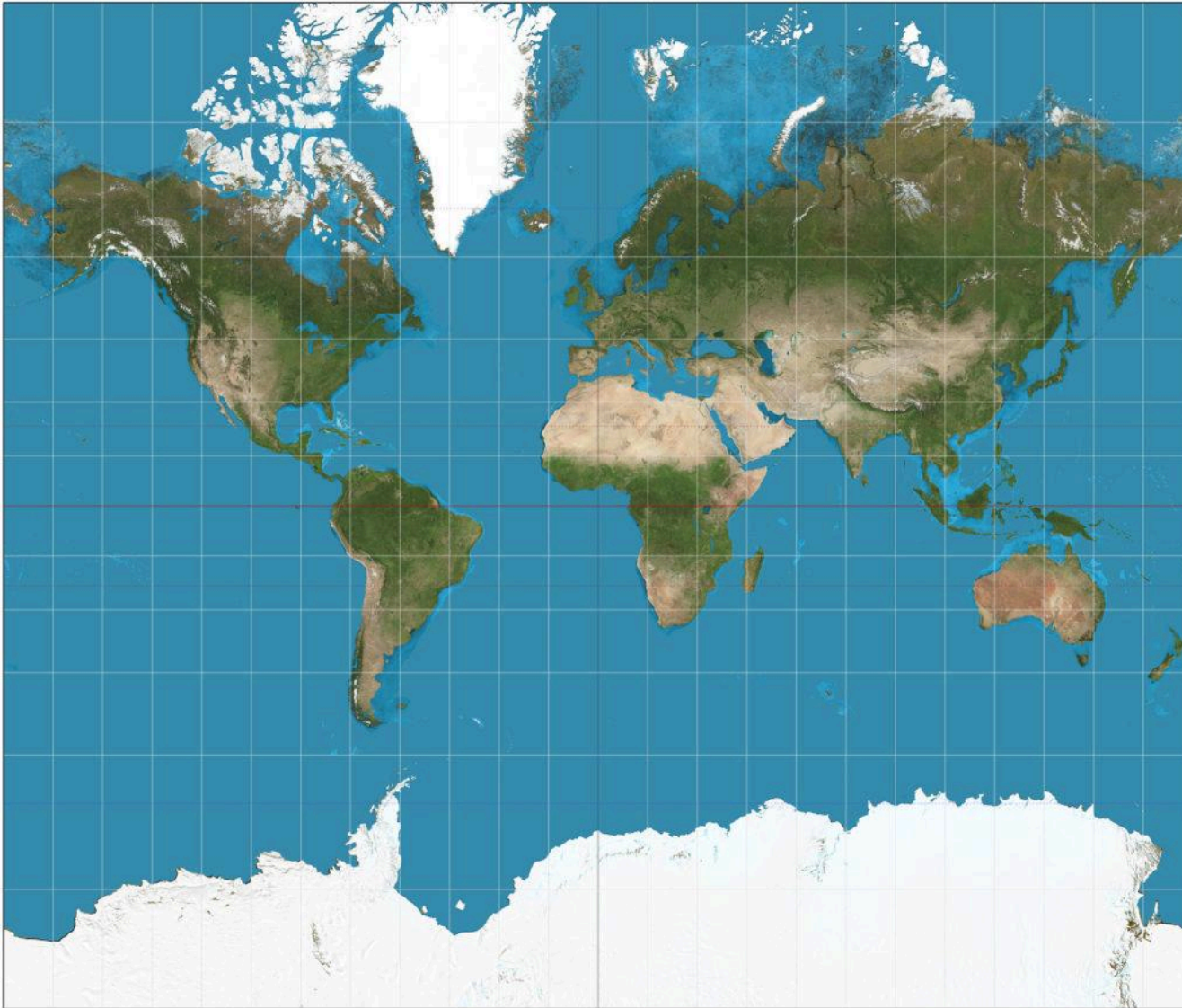
Cons: The Arctic Circle gets somewhat squashed

SOURCE: <https://geoawesomeness.com/best-map-projection/>

Classroom World Map



Mercato Projection Map



The Mercator Map was created by Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569 – a time when Antarctica hadn't even been discovered. Mercator was designed as a navigational tool for sailors as it was most convenient to hand-plot courses with parallel rules and triangles on this map. In most maps, when you try to fix one kind of distortion, you increase another kind of distortion. However, Mercator is one of those rare maps whose answer to latitudinal distortion was to ensure that the longitudinal distortion is equally bad!

On a Mercator projection, Greenland is roughly the same size as Africa. In reality, Africa is almost 14 times larger, and Greenland can fit inside China no less than four times. The map also suggests that Scandinavian countries are larger than India, whereas, India is actually three times the size. And yet, Google Maps, Bing, Yahoo and even OpenStreetMaps continue using some version or the other of the Mercator to display the world.

Pros: Sailors loved it; preserves angles and directions in a small area

Cons: Bad for understanding the real size and shape of continents and countries

SOURCE: <https://geoawesomeness.com/best-map-projection/>