Salt Dough Maps

Making maps with homemade salt dough incorporates kinesthetic experience into geography activities. The maps can be used as a learning activity or an assessment with a variety of tasks and age levels.

Materials needed

- Sturdy cardboard
- An outline map of the country, continent, region, or state
- Salt dough (recipe below)
- Tape or glue
- Toothpicks, Popsicle sticks, plastic knives, or other tools for working with the dough
- Paint (optional)
- Permanent markers (optional)
- Small Post-it notes and toothpicks (optional)

Salt Dough Recipe

2 cups flour
1 cup table salt
1 cup water

Mix flour and salt in a bowl. Gradually add water, mixing well. If dough is too sticky, add flour. If it is too dry, add water. Unused dough can be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to a week. Teachers may choose to make the dough in advance, or students can practice measuring skills while making it themselves.

The amount of dough needed will vary depending on the type and size of map. For a whole class activity, several batches of dough will be needed.

TO MAKE MAPS:

1. Tape or glue the map to the cardboard base. This provides an outline of the country, continent, region, or state.

2. Cover desired areas with thin layers of dough, using tools to shape the edges as desired. (Maps can be worked on in stages, as long as students come to an acceptable stopping point each time. Once the dough hardens, it is difficult to remove.)

3. With toothpicks and small pieces of paper, students can create flags to label cities and other features. Small Post-it notes work well for this purpose. The toothpicks must be inserted when the dough is soft!

4. Students may also choose to paint and label their maps. Map keys and a compass rose can be added if desired.