How I Learned Geography
Written and Illustrated by Uri Shulevitz

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*How I Learned Geography* is an autobiographical story based on the author’s childhood memories of fleeing Poland during World War II. First, students demonstrate their prior knowledge of the relationship between maps and places by working with a partner to complete an Anticipation Guide. Next, the book’s illustrations introduce students to ten real locations in the world such as Egypt, Indonesia, and Venezuela. Finally, students explore relationships between illustrations, photographs from websites, names of places, and their locations on a world map. By engaging in the lessons’ varied activities, students begin to create mental maps of the world.

| Title of NCSS Notable Trade Book: | *How I Learned Geography*  
Written and Illustrated by Uri Shulevitz  
2009 Notable Trade Book For Young People  
ISBN: 978-0-374-33499-4  
Grade Level: 2-3  
Lesson Time: 45-60 Minutes |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Summary:</td>
<td><em>How I Learned Geography</em> is based on the author’s childhood memories. Born in Warsaw, Poland in 1935, Uri Shulevitz was a four-year-old victim of the September 1, 1939 Warsaw blitz, Germany’s occupation of Poland, and the beginning of World War II. After the invasion, Schulevitz’s family moved to Turkestan (now Kazakhstan) in Central Asia. While living in extreme poverty, Uri’s father went to the village bazaar, one day, to buy bread. Instead of buying food, his father returned with a large colorful map. At first, Uri was disappointed, but later he became fascinated by the map and all the places it could take him. While studying the map, he savored the exotic place names and created rhymes with them, and traveled the deserts, beaches, mountains, and cities of the world. Uri’s illustrations, in this book, recreate memories of those places he visited with just a map and imagination.</td>
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</table>
| NCSS Standards: | 3 – People, Places, & Environments (Early Grades)  
a) Construct and use mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size, and shape.  
b) Interpret, use, and distinguish various representations of the earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs.  
h) Examine the interaction of human beings and their physical |
environment, the use of land, building of cities, and ecosystem changes in selected locales and regions.

2 – Time, Continuity, & Change (Early Grades)
e) Demonstrate an understanding that people in different times and places view the world differently.

Materials:

Exploratory Phase:
1. 1 Anticipation Guide (Figure 1) for each pair of students
2. 1 pencil for each pair of students
3. 1 computer and large screen to show the Anticipation Guide while giving directions about how to complete it (optional).

Development Phase:
1. 1 read-aloud book: *How I Learned Geography* by Uri Shulevitz
2. Anticipation Guide from Exploratory Phase (Figure 1)
3. 1 pencil for each pair of students
4. White board and marker for teacher

Expansion Phase:
1. Large world map on bulletin board.
2. At least 10 push pins
3. Small copies (about 4”x4”) of photos (see the 10 websites with photos below). These photos correspond to the illustrations in the book
4. 1 copy of the book.
5. Class set of globes or world maps (1 for each partner set)
6. Computer & large screen to show website photos

Objectives:
1. Students will be able to demonstrate their prior knowledge of maps and geography by answering questions, with a partner, during an Anticipation Guide activity.
2. Students will be able to examine the book, *How I Learned Geography*, through a read-aloud session and book discussion.
3. Students will be able to match illustrations in the book with images on a map by visualizing mental maps.

Procedures:

Exploration:
1. The teacher will give each pair of students one Anticipation Guide (see Attachment A) and one pencil.
2. Instruct students to read and discuss the questions. Partners should decide what they “think” the answers might be and write T or F in the first column of blanks.

Development
1. Tell students the purpose of the lesson and how it relates to their
lives. The purpose of the lesson is to explore maps, discuss how they show us the locations of different places in the world, and see how those places really look. It relates to their lives because they can create mental maps in their minds, which show different locations and distances, from place to place, in the world.

2. Read *How I Learned Geography* to the class. Before reading, explain to students that, later, they will hear the answers to the questions by listening carefully to the story. After the story, students will have an opportunity to change their answers on the Anticipation Guide.

3. Before reading, show students the photo of Uri as a child on the back cover of the book. Explain that this is a photo of the author when he was a boy, and this is a true story about something that happened when he was very young.

4. Stop and discuss the story with students and show the illustrations while reading.

5. When finished, display the Anticipation Guide on a large screen. Ask student partners to look at their own Anticipation Guides, and change the answers as the class checks through together.

6. Facilitate a whole class discussion about each question using the questions as guides. Read each question and discuss the correct answers. Write them in the second column of the Anticipation Guide for all to see.

7. Ask some thinking questions throughout the discussion. Here are some examples:
   - Why do you think people sometimes move during wars? Where do you think they go?
   - Why do you think some people in the world build their houses with straw and clay? Why do some people in the world build their houses with wood? Why do some people in the world build their houses with red bricks?
   - What kind of map might show beaches?
   - Have you ever seen mountains on a map? How did they look?
   - How might places with tree groves or orchards look on a map?

8. **CLOSURE:** Facilitate a whole class discussion, which reviews what students have learned so far in the lesson. Teacher should encourage students to ask questions. Teacher should clarify misconceptions.

1. Post a large world map on a bulletin board (suitable for pushpins).
Expansion

2. On a large screen, show students the photos found on the websites below:

**Village of Mud & Straw Homes - Djenne, Republic of Niger**

**Bazaar – Egypt**
- http://media.nowpublic.net/images/1f/4/1f4cfae2bb24a93cdef4f747f121dbe.jpg
- http://media.nowpublic.net/images/e7/5/e75972e398ee89ee753730f737b11850.jpg

**Desert – Venezuela**

**Beach - Caribbean (Bahamas)**
- http://yourchoir.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/sandy-cay-caribbean-beach.jpg

**Mountain Range – Alaska**

**Temple – Thailand**

**Fruit Groves – Hawaii**
- http://image55.webshots.com/155/7/13/96/450271396kvTcLo_fs.jpg

**Palm Trees & Fresh Water – Indonesia**
- http://www.weltrekordreise.ch/bilder%20id/312-P1130323.JPG

**Skyscrapers – Dubai**
- http://cache.virtualtourist.com/2672763-Skyscrapers_along_Sheikh_Zayed_Road-Dubai.jpg

**Skyscrapers – New York City**

3. Facilitate a whole class discussion about where these photos were taken in the world: Dejenne, Egypt, Venezuela, Caribbean, Alaska, Thailand, Hawaii, Indonesia, Dubai, and New York City.

4. Write the names of the places on the board.

5. Distinguishing between countries, states, and cities is important; however, in this lesson, this is not as important as students relating the photograph to the “location” to which it belongs on the map.

6. Have small copies of these photos and give each set of partners one of these photos.
7. Ask each set of partners to come to the map and pin the photo in the correct location on the world map.
8. Encourage students, in the whole class setting, to discuss each place and its name. Help students pronounce the names.
9. After all the photographs are pinned to the world map, get the book, *How I Learned Geography*, again. Thumb through the illustrations of the different places that Uri visualized, with his map, and ask students to name the places.
10. Students will be able to match the places with the illustrations:
   - Djenne, Niger – pages 4 & 5
   - Cairo, Egypt – pages 7 & 8
   - Venezuela – page 17
   - Caribbean – page 18
   - Alaska – pages 19 & 20
   - Thailand – pages 21 & 22
   - Hawaii – pages 23
   - Indonesia – page 24
   - Dubai – pages 25 & 26
   - New York City – pages 25 & 26
11. Encourage students to create mental maps with these specific locations.
12. To check for understanding, give each set of partners a globe or world map. Call out each of the 10 places studied in the lesson and ask students to point to them on the map or globe.

**Assessment:**

**Objective 1**
Students will be able to demonstrate their prior knowledge of maps and geography by answering questions with a partner during an Anticipation Guide activity

**Assessment 1:**
Teacher will listen to students during their group discussions and classroom sharing and observe partners’ completed Anticipation Guides.

**Recording for Assessment 1:**
A checklist (Figure 2) is used to record individual student’s accomplishment of the objective.

**Objective 2**
Students will be able to examine the book, *How I Learned Geography*, through a read-aloud session and book discussion.

**Assessment 2:**
Teacher will observe individual student’s participation in discussions related to the read-aloud.

**Recording for Assessment 2:** A checklist (Figure 2) will be used to record individual student’s accomplishment of the objective.
Objective 3

Students will be able to match illustrations in the book with location places and names.

Assessment 3:

(1.) Thumb through the illustrations in the book and ask students to name the places that match the illustrations, (2.) To check for understanding, give each set of partners a globe or world map. Call out each of the 10 places studied in the lesson and ask students to locate them on the map or globe, (3) Participation in discussions and collaboration with partner also are assessed.

Scoring for Assessment 3:

A scoring rubric (Figure 3) is used to score students’ accomplishment of the objective.

Extension Objective 4:

Students will be able to locate place names on a map and create rhymes with the names.

1. Turn to page 16 in the book. Discuss how Uri created rhymes with the names of places he saw on the map.
2. Show students how to locate names of places on a world map and copy them on paper.
3. Model how to create a rhyme with an AABB pattern, like Uri’s rhyme.
4. Give groups of 3-4 a world map, and ask them to write rhymes with the place names. If there are sets of world maps, allow each student to create and illustrate her/his own rhyme.
5. Create a class book with the rhymes and their illustrations.

Extension Objective 5

Students will be able to research the 10 locations, introduced in the first lesson, and create technology projects (digital stories (using a free download of Photo Story 3) or PowerPoint presentations) showcasing those places.

Extension Objective 6

Students will be able to analyze various thematic maps.

Examples:

- Temples – Seven Wonders of the World
- Earthquake History – Japan

Extension Objective 7: (for upper grades)

Students will be able to research Polish immigrants, like Uri, displaced during WWII.

Accommodations:

1. Read the book to students as a read-aloud.
2. Pre-select members for group work to assure equitable participation opportunities. Monitor each group and provide assistance and feedback.

3. Allow more time by having students take reading materials home to read before the lesson.

4. Pre-teach vocabulary and assist students in creating operational definitions for unfamiliar words: steppe, bazaar, exotic, incantation, papaya, and mango.

5. Use pictures to explain words or ideas expressed in the book. For example:

- **Mangos** –
  - http://biology.uco.edu/bidlack/botany/botanypics/plant%20compounds/mango.jpg

- **Mud & Straw Bricks** -
  - http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_jyTxa6V_fCk/TTV6bMBRril/AAAAAAAAACck/i7BJtnQ0opw/s1600/IMG_6590.JPG

- **Papayas (growing)** –

- **Papayas (harvested)** –

6. Provide examples and non-examples of concepts.

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**Additional References**


**Books Highlighting Cultures to Support/Extend the Lesson**

**France:**


**South America**


**Egypt**

**Anticipation Guide**

With your partner, decide whether you think each answer is true or false. In the blanks in the left column, write T or F. After we read the book together, you will have an opportunity to change your answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answer Before Reading the Book T or F</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. People sometimes have to move from their homes because of a war.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. People build houses of clay and straw in some parts of the world.</td>
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<td>3. Maps can show you where deserts are located in the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Maps cannot show you where beaches are located in the world.</td>
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<td>5. Maps cannot show you where mountains are located in the world.</td>
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<td>7. Maps can show you where temples are located.</td>
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<td>8. Maps cannot tell you where fruit groves are located.</td>
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<td>9. Maps can tell you where cities are located.</td>
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<td>10. Maps are important for helping us find different places in the world.</td>
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Figure 1: *Anticipation Guide*
## Assessment Checklist for Exploratory & Development Phases of the Lesson Cycle

**Assessment 1 (Exploratory):** Students will be able to demonstrate their prior knowledge of maps and geography by answering questions with a partner during an Anticipation Guide activity.

**Assessment 2 (Development):** Students will be able to examine the book, *How I Learned Geography*, through a read-aloud session and book discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Names</th>
<th>Assessment 1 Student accomplished Exploratory objective (Yes/No)</th>
<th>Assessment 2 Student accomplished Invention objective (Yes/No)</th>
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Figure 2: Assessment Checklist for Exploratory and Development Phases
Expansion Phase III - Scoring Rubric

Teacher Name: ________________________________________________

Student Name: _________________________ Total Score: ____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4-5</th>
<th>2-3</th>
<th>0-1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying locations that match the illustrations in the book.</td>
<td>Student was able to identify 7 or more of the places that match the illustrations in the book.</td>
<td>Student was able to identify 4-6 of the places that match the illustrations in the book.</td>
<td>Student was able to identify 1-3 of the places that match the illustrations in the book. OR Student was unable to contribute to the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating places on the globe or world map.</td>
<td>Student was able to locate 7 or more of the places on a globe or world map after participating in the lesson.</td>
<td>Student was able to locate 4-6 of the places on a globe or world map after participating in the lesson.</td>
<td>Student was able to locate 1-3 of the places on a globe or world map after participating in the lesson. OR Student was unable to contribute to the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work &amp; Discussion Participation</td>
<td>Student participated consistently in the work and the discussion during this project.</td>
<td>Student participated most of the time in the work and the discussion during this project.</td>
<td>Student participated some of the time in the work and the discussion during this project. OR Student was unable to contribute to the project.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Comments: _________________________________________________________
Figure 3: Expansion Phase III Scoring Rubric

Author Bio
Janie Hubbard is an Assistant Professor of Elementary and Social Studies Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Alabama. She is a former K-6 educator, both in the U.S. and abroad. E-Mail: hubba018@bamaed.ua.edu.