

PATIENCE LEARNING • FREE 1-DAY CASE

The Route Everyone Loves

A free single-session case from the world of **The Compass**, the 11-day geography & decision simulation.

GRADE 6 • SOCIAL STUDIES (GEOGRAPHY, TRADE & READING DATA) • ~45 MIN • 1 CLASS PERIOD

Your students are royal cartographers choosing the path for a kingdom's new trade road. One route arrives wrapped in thrilling expedition tales. Another is backed by a quiet table of numbers. Everyone in the court already loves the exciting one — and the data is about to disagree.

TEACHER QUICK-START

Objective: Students compare route options using geographic data, weigh vivid anecdote against systematic evidence, and defend a recommendation — resisting the pull of the popular choice.

Standards tie-in: C3 Framework D2.Geo.4–6 (how geographic factors influence human decisions and movement) and evidence-based argument (D4.1); reading data tables (CCSS 6 quantitative reasoning).

What you need: Just this packet. Print the student pages (works individually or in teams of 3–4). No prep.

- 1. Set the scene (5 min).** “You’re the kingdom’s mapmaker. The court loves the dramatic route. Your job is to recommend the one the evidence supports.”
- 2. Read the routes (8 min).** Teams read the three route options and the travel data table.
- 3. Compare & decide (20 min).** Use the data to compare routes, then recommend one and defend it.
- 4. The reveal (8 min).** Walk the answer key. The point: a great story is not the same as a good road.
- 5. Reflection (4 min).** Each student answers the reflection question.

The Mapmaker's Brief

You are a royal cartographer for the Kingdom of Aldermoor. The king wants a permanent trade road built, and merchants will travel it for generations. Three routes are proposed. The whole court is buzzing about the Mountain Pass because of the stories explorers tell about it. You have something the storytellers don't: the travel records.

THE THREE ROUTES

Route A — The Mountain Pass (the exciting one): Explorers return with breathtaking tales — hidden valleys, a legendary summit view, a heroic river crossing. Everyone at court already wants this one.

Route B — The River Road (the quiet one): No famous stories. Just forty pages of merchants' travel logs, summarized in the table below.

Route C — The Old Road (the comfortable one): The route people already know. Familiar, but the logs show it floods badly two seasons a year.

THE TRAVEL DATA (from the merchants' logs)

Route	Days to cross	Fresh-water stops	Trips w/ a serious problem (of 40)
A — Mountain Pass	14 days	2	22 of 40
B — River Road	9 days	6	4 of 40
C — Old Road	11 days	4	18 of 40

Your Call (Decision Sheet)

Team name: _____ Period: _____

Step 1 — Read the table. Which route is fastest? _____ Which has the most fresh-water stops? _____ Which has the FEWEST trips with a serious problem? _____

Step 2 — The famous route, by the numbers. The court loves Route A. But per the data, how many of 40 trips on Route A had a serious problem? _____ Is that better or worse than Route B? _____

Step 3 — Anecdote vs. data. Route A has thrilling stories; Route B has 40 boring log entries. For a road merchants will use for generations, which kind of evidence should matter more, and why?

Step 4 — Your recommendation to the king. Which route do you recommend? Defend it with the data — and be ready to explain why you're telling the court something it doesn't want to hear:

ANSWER KEY (for the reveal)

Step 1 — Reading the table:

Fastest: **Route B** (9 days). Most water stops: **Route B** (6). Fewest serious problems: **Route B** (4 of 40). Route B wins every measured category.

Step 2 — The famous route by the numbers:

Route A had a serious problem on **22 of 40 trips — more than half**. That's far worse than Route B's 4 of 40. The exciting stories are real, but so are the 22 bad trips the storytellers don't brag about.

Step 3 — Anecdote vs. data:

Forty log entries should matter more than a few dramatic tales. Stories are memorable but cherry-picked — a returning explorer tells the thrilling version, not the average trip. Forty records show what usually happens, which is what a road for generations needs.

Step 4 — The recommendation:

Route B, the River Road. It's fastest, has the most water, and fails least often. A strong answer names specific numbers (9 days, 6 stops, 4/40) and acknowledges the hard part: telling a court in love with the Mountain Pass that the boring route is the right one. That's the cartographer's real job.

The big idea:

A thrilling story and a good road are not the same thing. The Mountain Pass wins the campfire; the River Road wins the data. Good decisions weigh the forty quiet records over the one exciting tale — even when everyone in the room wants the tale.

REFLECTION (graded on thinking, not the “right” answer)

“The whole court loved the exciting route. What in the data gave you the confidence to recommend the boring one instead?”

SCORING THE THINKING

	3 — Strong	2 — Developing	1 — Beginning
Reads the data	Pulls correct values from the table	Some correct	Misreads it
Data over anecdote	Explains why 40 logs beat a few tales	Mentions it	Sides with the stories
Owens the hard call	Notes the cost of defying the court	Hints at it	Ignores it
Explains clearly	A reader can follow it	Partly clear	Unclear

READY FOR THE FULL SIMULATION?

This was three routes. The Compass is eleven days of them.

In the full 11-day simulation, each student is a royal cartographer weighing routes where thrilling expedition tales collide with quiet tables of data — and a familiar comfort route arrives late to test whether comfort can outvote evidence. Students lock in early, then watch the data slowly argue against their first instinct. Graded on reasoning, never on the “right” route.

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