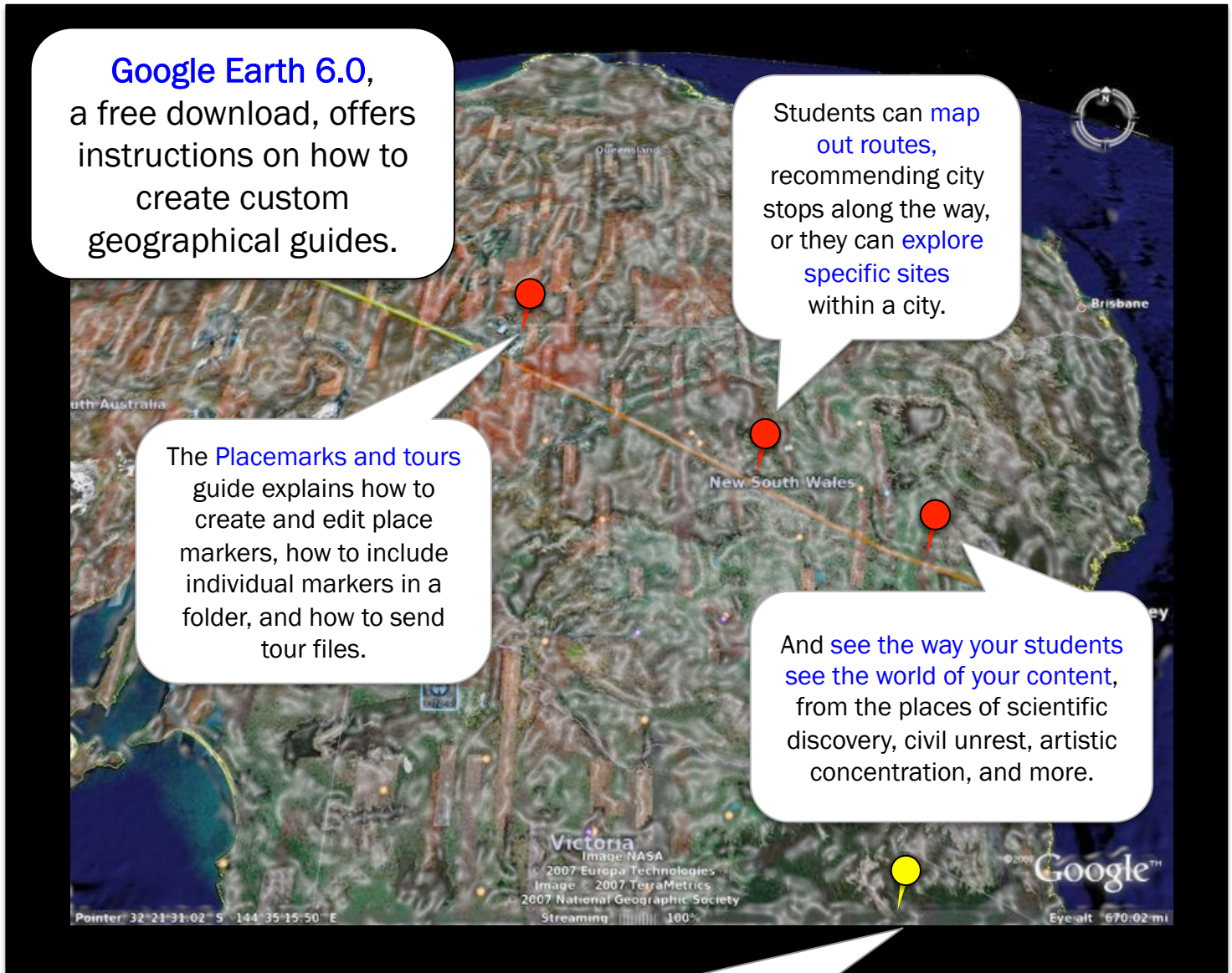# Courses that Go Places with Google Earth

Online tools can make our students stronger place-based learners. Students can use Google Earth to explore the places that involve your content and map out tours, travel routes, and activities based on a historical, literary, or scientific event. Once complete, they can hand it in like a regular assignment. They not only learn more cultural information, but contextualize the real places where abstract ideas take action.

Google Earth 6.0, a free download, offers instructions on how to create custom geographical guides.

Students can map out routes, recommending city stops along the way, or they can explore specific sites within a city.

The Placemarks and tours guide explains how to create and edit place markers, how to include individual markers in a folder, and how to send tour files.

And see the way your students see the world of your content, from the places of scientific discovery, civil unrest, artistic concentration, and more.

For a look into a professor's activities with Google Earth and more specific directions, visit

oakland.edu/teachingtips

Courses that Go Places with Google Earth

A great first internet assignment for acclimating students to the places related to a course is to use Google Earth to allow students to explore areas, learn about them, write what they have learned with descriptions in the "pushpin" spots. They can create personalized tours based on what interests them and turn in the files as an assignment.

The example below is an instruction used for an undergraduate Introduction to Russia class. It directs students to create two virtual field trips: one involving West-East travel via the Trans-Siberian Railway; the other, involving a North-South cruise on the Volga River. This assignment uses Google Earth to introduce you to the vast geographic area which Russia occupies.

Step-by-Step Instructions of Strategy:

[Download Google Earth 6.0](#) (Free)

There are a number of video tutorials as well as step by step instructions for using the various features of Google Earth. These guides are located in the "Start-up Tips" found in the drop down "Help" tab. The links below will take you directly to tutorials which you need to complete the Landmass Assignment.

[Navigating in Google Earth](#)

Once you understand how to navigate in Google Earth, I encourage you to spend some time just exploring. Locating places which one has visited or read about can provide hours of entertainment.

Landmass Assignment

You will need to create two virtual field trips. One involves West-East travel via the Trans-Siberian Railway, while the other involves a North-South cruise on the Volga River. You will use Google Earth to complete this assignment.

The [Placemarks and tours](#) link explains how to create and edit place markers, how to include individual markers in a folder, and lastly, how to send your .kmz file to me.

Trip #1 - West-East travel via the Trans-Siberian Railway (RED place marker)

The Trans-Siberian Railway represents the longest network of railways that connects European region of Russia starting in Moscow to Vladivostok, in the Asian region of Russia. This railway incorporates stops in the following list of cities: Moscow, Vladimir , Nizhny Novgorod , Kirov, Perm , Yekaterinburg , Tyumen , Omsk, Novosibirsk , Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Chita, Birobidzhan, Khabarovsk, Ussuriysk, and Vladivostok.

Instructions:

1. In addition to Moscow and Vladivostok, you are to locate ten (10) of the cities from the above list and mark each one on a Google map using a **RED** "pushpin/thumbtack".

2. Type the name of the city

3. Using "Wikipedia" find an interesting fact for each city, **AND** include it in the "description" box. (The "description box" also accepts HTML tags i.e., links to URLs and images.) [**HINT**: To include a link to a picture/graphic in the "description" box. When you add an image from the web to the description box of the placemarker, follow the procedure listed below:

*   click on the tab "Add Image"

*   find the image you want

*   "right click" on the image and select "Copy image location"

*   paste this URL link in the "Add Image" box and click save [same line as Add URL and Add image]

*   add any additional comments and save your work again [Lower right hand corner]

4. Once you have marked all twelve cities, put the cities for the tour *in sequential order.*

5. Create a folder entitled "Trans-Siberian Railroad" under **My Places** and move all of your cities into this folder.

6. Save your work in **My Places**

Trip #2 – Cruising on the Volga River (YELLOW place marker)

The Volga River is one of the most spectacular rivers in Russia. Cruises on the Volga River attract many Russians and tourists from around the world. Cruises go in one of two (2) directions, to the north or to the south, often using Moscow as its starting point. Your virtual cruise, however, begins in St. Petersburg and ends in Astrakhan. In addition to St. Petersburg and Astrakhan, your cruise will pass through the following cities: Kizhi, Goritsy, Yaroslavl, Uglich , Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Cheboksary, Kazan, Saratov, and Volgograd.

Instructions:

In addition to St. Petersburg and Astrakhan, you are to locate eight (8) of the cities listed from the above list and mark each one on a Google map using a YELLOW "pushpin" or thumbtack" icon. Type the name of the city

From this point same instructions as with Tran-Siberian Railway

Additional comments:

I typically ask students to find an "uncommon" landmark, one that is NOT readily associated with one of the cities on the two (2) tours AND a graphic (.jpeg or .gif) that represents this landmark. I request that they send me this "uncommon" landmark to me via email. I compile these unusual facts and graphics and put together a "scavenger hunt" for the next class.

Submitted by:

Gregory Allar

Oakland University

allar@oakland.edu