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Activities

Digital Map Making

Name: _____ Date: _____

Map making has come a long way in the digital age. Satellites and super-fast computers team up to gather and display data in hundreds of ways. In this Planet Diary activity, you'll make and interpret your own digital maps.

Directions

- Go to the National Atlas Map Maker. The *Map Layers* tab on the right has data in eleven categories. For your first map, select *Climate* from this tab. Select *Average Annual Precipitation 1961–1990* from the expanded menu. Then click *Redraw Map* below the Map Layers tab to see the precipitation map. Click the *Map Key* tab (to the right of the Map Layers tab) to learn what the colors represent. Use the information to answer Workspace questions 1 and 2 below.
- Click *Clear Layers* to start with a blank map. Return to the Climate tab. From the *Tornadoes 1950–2004* menu, choose *2000–2004*. Click *Redraw Map*. View the *Map Key*, then answer question 3.
- *Clear Layers* again. Choose *Hurricanes/Tropical Storms* from the *Hazard Events 1995–2000* menu (in the Climate tab). Click *Redraw Map* and look at the *Map Key*. Answer question 4.
- This time, select *July–September* from the *Sea Surface Temperature 1985–2001* menu in the Climate tab. Click *Redraw Map* and *Map Key*, then answer the last two questions.
- Explore the other layers to see the types of data they display. Happy map making!

Workspace

1. What is the average annual precipitation where you live?

2. Which states (or parts of states) have the lowest annual precipitation? Which have the highest?

3. Which part of the country gets the most violent tornadoes (Fujita class 2 or higher)?

4. Which part of the country is most likely to be hit with hurricanes?

5. How does the average July–September sea surface temperature on coasts of the regions you listed in question 4 compare to that along the California coast?

6. Look at your answer to question 5. Hypothesize why there are frequent hurricanes in the regions listed in question 4, but not in California.

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