



**A Teacher's Guide to Using
Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?
(a video game)
In the Classroom**

**Written by:
K Treloar**

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Part 1: Overview - Where in the World is Carmen SanDiego? | 3 |
| Genre and Platform | 3 |
| Story Line | 3 |
| Graphics | 3 |
| Audience and Objectives | 3 |
| Incorporating Video Games into the Curriculum | 4 |
| Part 2: Getting Started..... | 5 |
| Teacher Preparation | 5 |
| Student Preparation..... | 6 |
| Game Play..... | 7 |
| The Mission | 7 |
| Characters | 7 |
| Clues | 8 |
| Special Features..... | 8 |
| Part 3: The Lessons | 9 |
| Unit One: Language Arts, Narrative Writing, 6 th grade | 10 |
| Learning Objectives: | 10 |
| CDE Content Standards | 10 |
| Specified outcomes to be achieved | 10 |
| Set-up | 10 |
| Introduction..... | 11 |
| Game play | 11 |
| De-briefing | 11 |
| Assessment..... | 12 |
| Extension..... | 12 |
| Unit Two: Social Studies, Archeology, 6 th grade and Language Arts, Writing | 12 |
| Learning Objectives: | 12 |
| CDE Content Standards | 12 |
| Specified outcomes to be achieved | 13 |
| Set-up | 13 |
| Introduction..... | 13 |
| Game play | 14 |
| De-briefing | 14 |
| Assessment..... | 15 |
| Extension..... | 15 |
| Part 4: Additional Resources..... | 16 |

Part 1: Overview - Where in the World is Carmen SanDiego?

Genre and Platform

This game combines the genres of mystery and instruction and is played on either a PC or a Macintosh platform

Story Line

The ACME Detective Agency is hot on the trail of the brilliant jewel thief, Carmen Sandiego, who used to be one of their top agents. She has stolen a rare book about Marco Polo. Carmen's former partner at ACME, Jules and her rookie assistant, Hawkins chase Carmen, and her band of villains, around the world. While focusing on geography and culture, the player chases Carmen across the globe. Along the way, the player is introduced to the language, accents, art, landmarks, architecture, topography, and customs of the people in these foreign lands.

Graphics

The cartoon graphics used in this video game are crisp and colorful. The settings are beautiful and each is layered in complexity. In addition, the 360 degree settings are as life-like as possible.

Audience and Objectives

The optimal audience of this game is the 8-11 year old child. Younger children will enjoy it as well, but may require some assistance with the reading. Depending on the structure of the lesson, this video can be easily used cross-curricularly for Language Arts, Geography, or Social Studies. In addition, students can improve a variety of skills such as reading for details, map reading, following directions, data collection, and

database research. Perhaps the most important skills that this video game allows students to practice are critical thinking, problem solving, and spatial skills.

Incorporating Video Games into the Curriculum

There are a number of reasons why using video games in the learning environment can be effective. It is commonly accepted knowledge in educational circles that high degrees of motivation and engagement greatly enhance student learning. You can't manufacture much higher motivation or engagement than video games.

In addition, video games are hands on, and interactive. The learning becomes student-centered and therefore the motivational forces become intrinsic, which allows for deeper learning to take place. This offers a refreshing alternative from the way traditional lessons are structured. This can be especially true when connecting the use of the game to writing, as you will see below. In the first unit, the video game is used to create a common experience for all participants from which to introduce a genre of writing. This demonstrates a significant shift from the way writing has been taught in the past.

Now you've found a non-violent game that will align with your content standards. What's next? There are many ways that video game play can be introduced into the classroom depending on resources, learning objectives, and time constraints.

This video game can be used in a whole group setting. Using a laptop and digital projector, the teacher can have students "experts" man the controls and move through the game. As you will see in a following lesson, this can be done to establish a common experience for all students on which to base a narrative writing exercise. As a first lesson, this might be most effective, because it leaves the fine points of game play

to an expert and the teacher has the opportunity to learn along with the class. As a bonus, it's fun to model the behavior of an effective learner.

This video game could also be used in a cooperative learning group setting. If resources permit, students can be broken up into small cooperative learning groups and given a task to complete. An example of this would be to use the Explorer mode and have students find required information about that country using the game and database.

Individual exploration is another option that can be used with this game. Many of the same assignments that are given as cooperative learning can easily be adapted for individual use. If the use of a computer lab isn't possible, this type of exploration can also be done in centers, where each student has an opportunity to rotate through. Another way to accomplish this would be to permit students access to the computers before or after school or during lunch times. It's amazing to see how much time students will put into completing a project that involves a computer.

An important issue to consider as you begin your planning is the all-consuming issue of how to best use your educational minutes. Many teachers are hesitant to use video games because of the time commitment. However, a whole group activity like the one used in the lesson below is no more time consuming than any other activity built around creating a common experience for all students.

Part 2: Getting Started

Teacher Preparation

The best way to ensure the success of your lesson is to be familiar with the game before you introduce it to your students. This doesn't mean you have to muddle through

it on your own. You can choose a student who knows the game and let them be the teacher. Spend a lunch-time with the student and have her/him show you how the game works. Older students can also be quite creative when involved in the planning process. For example, if students are working on reading for detail, the “expert” might be familiar with a level that has particularly intriguing written clues.

It is very simple to install – just follow the screen prompts. From that point, you just put the CD Rom into the drive and it access the game.

What starts out as a highly engaging lesson can quickly turn into a frustration if you do not have some of the rudimentary skills mastered (don’t worry, they’re easy). Most importantly however, it is only by playing the game (or watching it being played) that the teacher can understand what learning objectives can be achieved.

After you have familiarized yourself with the game, you can begin planning your lessons. Two lessons have been included in this guide to help get you started. In addition, the gaming publisher, The Learning Company, has a comprehensive teaching guide, complete with lesson plans, available.

Student Preparation

After you have prepared yourself, you still need to prepare the students. It would be advisable to present the students with the learning objective from the lesson, in order to keep them focused and on-track. Also, behavioral standards for the lesson should be shared. It can be beneficial to use this game as a whole group activity the first time to familiarize students with the basic concepts. Use of this game is so simple that no posted instructions should be necessary.

Game Play

There are two modes – Gameplay and Explore. The Gameplay mode is a fast-paced pursuit of the thieves. Explore is a more leisurely mode that allows you to explore the exotic locations that you are in.

The Mission

After you have received your assignment briefing, you are given a deadline to capture Carmen, her band of villains, and find the stolen treasure. Then it's off to the travel screen, where you choose the next destination to trace her. At each location, you must search for and interpret various clues from a number of sources (i.e., informants, puzzles, notes, etc.) to determine where she has headed. You are successful in your mission when you track Carmen to the correct final hideout with the arrest warrant issued before the deadline. There are 8 missions in all and they become progressively more difficult as you solve cases and win promotions.

Characters

There are four main characters:

- Jules Argent: Jules was Carmen's partner at ACME Detective Agency.
- Shadow Hawkins: Hawkins is Jules' assistant who is somewhat arrogant and short sighted.
- Chief: She is the head of AMCE Detective Agency and appears in the Chief Cam.
- Carmen Sandiego: She is sassy and rebellious. She always wears a red coat, lipstick, and hat.

Clues

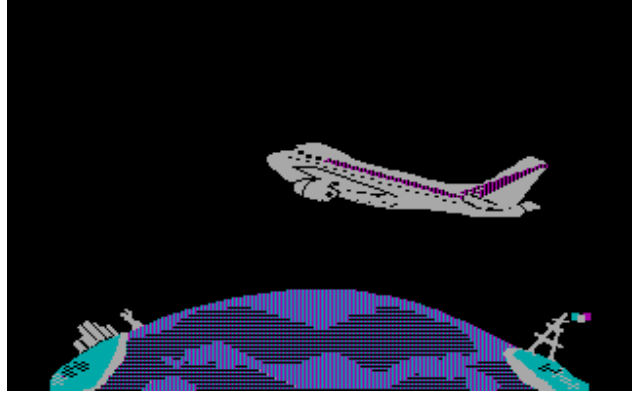
Jules and Hawkins travel in search of clues. These clues can take many forms, such as notes, litter, keys, stone etchings, etc. The player finds clues by moving the cursor over the screen. A magnifying glass appears when there is a link to follow. However, not all links are to clues, some give “educational” information about the place that is being visited.

Special Features

This video game is exceptionally easy to navigate. Using your mouse you can scan across the setting. When the player wants to exit the screen they move the cursor to the bottom of the screen where a large white arrow will appear. Clicking this takes the player back to the setting. There are also a number of special features which players can use to help organize and access their data.

- Journal - By clicking on Jules’ head you can access her journal. This journal contains pieces of information that have been gathered during the investigation. Included in the journal is a passport page which holds the passport stamps of countries that you have visited. Finally, the journal has sketches of the items that Carmen has stolen.
- Chief Cam – This is accessed by clicking on the green digital phone that Jules carries. This digital phone allows the player to have video conferences with the Chief. The Chief Cam is the game’s help feature. The Chief will guide you towards your next assignment as well as give hints when you are stuck.
- World Wide Date Resource – Click on Hawkins’ vest and click again on the WW Data Resource. This feature instantly locates important information in 50 countries.

- Digital Clue Inventory – This is also found by clicking on Hawkins' vest. This feature stores the clues you've found for easy reference.
- Global Transportation System (G.T.S.) – Hawkins' vest is the place to find this also. This is how Jules and Hawkins travel. You click on the country you want to visit, and viola!



- ACME Equipment Organizer – This is found by clicking on Hawkins' vest. After each level of play, you earn another gadget or device that can be used to help solve the puzzle in the future. Examples of this equipment would be the AMCE Clue Analyzer and a flashlight. This is where these devices are stored.
- Abort Mission Button – This is the green button at the top of Hawkins' vest. Clicking on this button will allow you to abort the mission and exit the game.

Part 3: The Lessons

You will find two sample lessons here. These lessons are intended as a jumping off point for your own imagination. Please feel free to use them or modify them in any way. Unit One is intended to be used as an introduction to a narrative writing unit, while Unit Two is a cross-curricular lesson to be used as practice in compare and contrast writing, as well as to better understand the role of an archaeologist.

Unit One: Language Arts, Narrative Writing, 6th grade

Learning Objectives:

- To create a common experience from which to base a shared narrative writing
- To create and model the narrative writing genre

CDE Content Standards

Language Arts, Writing

2.1 Write narratives

- a. Establish and develop a plot and setting and present a point of view that is appropriate to the stories.
- b. Include sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character.
- c. Use a range of narrative devices (e.g., dialogue, suspense).

Specified outcomes to be achieved

The learner will take notes to prepare for a shared narrative writing activity. The learner will participate in a shared writing activity.

Set-up

- You will need:
- Laptop
- Digital projector
- Video Game CD Rom
- Student expert(s) (optional)

Students will need: paper and pencil for note taking

Introduction

This is a great way to introduce narrative writing for the first time. Discuss narrative writing characteristics and make a web on the board. Advise students that they are going to create a story that we will re-tell together in a shared writing activity. Write on the board the elements of narrative writing (plot, setting, characters, sensory details, concrete dialogue). Have students divide their paper into 6 squares and label each square with an element. Advise students that they will be taking notes from the game in each of these squares.

Game play

Only one student “expert” will actually play the game, as this is a whole group activity. Selected students can offer suggestions as to how to proceed throughout the game. The “expert” will begin a new game. Students will watch the introduction piece and then begin the process of moving the cursor to look for clues and solve the mystery. Have the “expert” pause periodically to allow students time to take notes. Finishing the game play is not imperative to this lesson. However, if time permits, it allows the narrative writing to end at a logical point.

De-briefing

Facilitate discussion with students after playing the game. What information did they have in each of their boxes? Make a graphic organizer on chart paper (or Kidspiration, if available) to connect the information noted. Make another chart, whole group, on the sequence of events, as they unfolded. Advise students that they will be participating in a shared writing experience using these elements during the next lesson.

Assessment

As this is a whole group activity, assessment is done by teacher observation and class discussion.

Extension

Students whose learning needs to be extended may play another level of the game and write their own narrative story using the notes they have taken.

Unit Two: Social Studies, Archeology, 6th grade and Language Arts, Writing**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will understand the skills and traits of a detective.
- Students will compare and contrast a detective's role with an archaeologist's role using a Venn Diagram.
- Students will practice writing an essay and participate in the writing process

CDE Content Standards

Social Studies, World History and Geography

6.1 Students describe what is known through archaeological studies of the early physical and cultural development of humankind from the Paleolithic era to the agricultural revolution.

Language Arts, Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

2.2 Write expository compositions (e.g., description, explanation, comparison and contrast, problem and solution):

- a. State the thesis or purpose.
- b. Explain the situation.
- c. Follow an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition.

d. Offer persuasive evidence to validate arguments and conclusions as needed.

Specified outcomes to be achieved

The students, separated into collaborative learning groups, will play one level of the game and take notes on traits and skills that detectives need to have. They will complete a Venn Diagram on the two roles. The students will then write a compare and contrast essay using the roles and skills of detectives and archaeologists as the subject.

Set-up

You will need:

- Multiple computers, 1 for each group
- Video Game CD Rom for each computer
- Copy of learning web done in Social Studies
- Cooperative Learning Group Assignments (hint: try and find a student who has played this game before to act as the technical expert for each group).
- Timer, for timing job rotations
- Job Chart on board – player, note taker, etc. There needs to be one job for every student in the group.

Students will need: *paper and pencil for note taking

Introduction

Do not use this for the student's first exposure to this genre of writing, but instead as an opportunity for practice and to strengthen cross-curricular learning. Review the learning web from Social Studies on the skills and equipment that archaeologists need to do their jobs. Explain that detectives and archaeologists have similarities and differences in their roles. Solicit predictions as to the skills and equipment that

detectives might need to have and whether that would be the same or different from an archaeologist. Explain each job on the chart and the learning objective. Advise students that they are going to take turns in 10 minute rotations doing each of the assigned roles and that they will follow the order listed on the board (Hint: an easy way to manage this is to give each student in the group numbers. This will allow you to announce, "All 5's will now...."). Remind students about the additional features that each character has and encourage them to use all of these features to help them solve the puzzle. Explain to them that there is no rush to get through the game because play time is already set, instead they are to focus on writing down the skills and equipment a detective needs to do their job.

Game play

Students, in collaborative learning groups, will rotation through the job rules, with each one having the opportunity to play the video game hands on. Each collaborative group will start at a specified level, it doesn't matter which one, or even if all students are on the same one. By moving the cursor over the screen to uncover clues and learn background information, students will attempt to solve the mystery. Set the timer and begin rotations.

De-briefing

Begin a whole group discussion and start a Venn Diagram on the board to compare (and contrast) the roles, tools, and skills of archaeologists and detectives. Students will also complete this diagram on paper to use as notes for their essay. Reference the previously made learning web from Social Studies during this discussion to complete the diagram.

- What was hard about being a detective and what was easy?
- What skills did the detective need?
- What tools helped the detective do the job?
- What kind of personality would a good detective have?
- What would their lifestyle be like?

Assessment

Students will write a rough draft of a compare and contrast essay. They will move through the writing process with a peer editing partner, and submit a final draft for assessment.

Extension

Students who need extension can write a rough draft of a compare and contrast essay using *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* and their favorite video game.

Part 4: Additional Resources

The official Carmen Sandiego website. Student's can receive an agent name, super secret password, and a personal display device.

<http://www.carmensandiego.com/>

Product support

http://support.riverdeep.net/faq_list.asp?id=1294820715

Need help with the game? Also

<http://www.carmensandiego.com/products/productsworldplayer.html>

Additional Teaching Materials - Comprehensive teaching guide, including lesson plans offered by The Learning Company

<http://www.carmensandiego.com/TEACHER.html>