

Contested Ground

The Compass · Grades 11–12 · instructor overview

Grades: 11–12 **Time:** ~50 min (or two periods) **Format:** pairs or small groups; one projected screen

Driving question. Why is this philosophy placed here — and what are the arguments for placing it somewhere else? The lesson turns the map into an argument students make themselves.

WHAT STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain a placement in their own words, using the entry’s reasoning.
- Tell **simplifying** an idea (what every map does) from **distorting** it (when an axis misstates a view it was not built to describe).
- Build an argument to move a placement — claim, evidence, reasoning, plus a reply to the strongest objection.
- See that the axes are choices: change the axis and the answer changes.

PACING — ONE PERIOD

PHASE	TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
1 • Orient	8 min	Project the Navigator; read one philosophy’s placement reason and a $\triangle$ on another axis.
2 • Read	10 min	Each group reads its philosophy’s Legend page for its axis, at Advanced depth.
3 • Defend	8 min	Groups write the strongest defence of the placement (Worksheet 1).
4 • Move it	12 min	Groups build the argument to relocate it — spot, evidence, reasoning (Worksheet 2).
5 • Motions	10 min	Groups present a motion; the class votes: hold or move? Philosophy, or axis?

MATERIALS

The **Navigator** map and the **Legend** A–Z pages at incognati.com/compass, in any browser. Assign each group one philosophy and one axis, or let them draw.

Running the activity

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SETUP

Model phase 1 on one philosophy with the whole class: read its placement reason, then find a $\triangle$ on another projection and name what the axis forces. Then send groups to their own Legend page.

WHEN A GROUP STALLS OR DRIFTS

IF...	MOVE
"It's just wrong / I don't agree with it."	Redirect from agreement to description: 'You don't have to agree with it — is the map's <i>placement</i> of it accurate?'
Group is stuck defending the placement.	Point them to the entry's 'why it is placed here.' The mapmaker already wrote the defence; their job is to put it in their own words.
"Move it" with no reason.	Require the three parts out loud: <i>where</i> (a specific new spot), <i>evidence</i> (an example, thinker, case, or a distortion the axis creates), and <i>because</i> (the link).
Everyone wants to move everything.	Ask: is this a fair simplification, or a real distortion? Not every simplification is an error — a map is allowed to simplify.

ASSESSMENT — SCORE THE MOTION, NOT THE VERDICT

A group can argue well for keeping or moving a placement. Look for three parts:

PART	WHAT A STRONG VERSION LOOKS LIKE
Claim	A specific, arguable position: a named new location, or a clear defence of the current one. Not 'I like it / I don't.'
Evidence	At least one concrete example, thinker, historical case, or axis-mismatch drawn from the entry.
Reasoning	A sentence connecting the evidence to the claim. Plus a fair counter-argument and a reply.

Guidance — example, tiers & extensions

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Worked example — Fascism, economic axis. The map spreads it wide and flags a $\triangle$ distortion: fascist economics was opportunistic. One group argues ‘market’ (private ownership survived), another ‘collective’ (the state directed industry) — both with evidence, which is why the entry flags the axis rather than picking a point. The dispute is about the *axis*.

TWO TIERS

	GRADES 9–10	GRADES 11–12
Depth	Basic reading level; one axis per group.	Advanced reading level; compare across two projections.
Argument	Claim + evidence + one line of reasoning.	Adds a named counter-argument, a reply, and a cited source.
Product	The completed motion worksheet.	A one-page brief, or a 3-minute motion with rebuttal.

EXTENSIONS

- **Design an axis.** For a philosophy the map distorts (Confucian thought, Indigenous sovereignty, Green politics), have students name and define an axis the Compass lacks.
- **Cross-examine.** Pair a ‘defend’ group against a ‘relocate’ group for the same philosophy and run a timed exchange.
- **Trace a lineage.** Follow one philosophy’s Legend links to what it descends from and reacts against.

STANDARDS

- **C3 D4.1.9-12** — Construct arguments with precise claims, evidence, and reasoning.
- **C3 D2.Civ.5.9-12** — Evaluate an instrument that models political ideas.
- **CCSS.ELA RH.9-12.6** — Assess how an author’s purpose shapes an account.
- **CCSS.ELA WHST.9-12.1** — Write arguments with claim, evidence, and reasoning.



Worksheet 1 — Defend the placement

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Your philosophy: _____ Your axis: _____

Open your philosophy's page in the **Legend** (incognati.com/compass/legend). Read the definition and the section 'why it is placed here' for your axis, at Advanced depth.

1. WHERE DOES THE MAP PLACE IT?

On your axis, the philosophy sits toward... (name the two ends, and which side it leans):

2. THE MAPMAKER'S REASON

In your own words, why does the entry say it belongs there?

3. YOUR ONE-PARAGRAPH DEFENCE

Write the strongest case that the placement is *right* — the argument the mapmaker would make.



Worksheet 2 — Move it: a motion to relocate

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Now argue your philosophy belongs somewhere *else* — or that the strongest challenge to its current spot still fails. Build the parts, then write the motion.

1. CLAIM — A SPECIFIC NEW LOCATION (OR A DEFENCE OF THE CURRENT ONE)

2. EVIDENCE — AN EXAMPLE, THINKER, CASE, OR A DISTORTION THIS AXIS CREATES

3. REASONING — CONNECT THE EVIDENCE TO THE CLAIM (“BECAUSE...”)

4. STRONGEST REPLY, AND YOUR ANSWER

YOUR MOTION, IN ONE SENTENCE

“We move that _____ be placed _____, because _____.”

SELF-CHECK

- ☐ My claim names a specific place (not just ‘move it’).
- ☐ I gave real evidence — an example, thinker, case, or an axis distortion.
- ☐ I explained *why* the evidence supports the move.
- ☐ I named the strongest reply and answered it.