



The Cornhusker State | Lesson Plan

What are the unique facts and features about the state of Nebraska?

Students will understand Nebraska's geography, unique characteristics, and historical significance.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and locate the state of Nebraska on a map, understanding its geographical positioning among the 50 states.
- Know the abbreviation for the state of Nebraska and be able to spell its name.
- Describe nine unique characteristics of Nebraska, including aspects of its history, climate, and cultural significance.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Corn Husk:** The outer covering or leafy part of a corn ear, which protects the kernels while they grow. Corn husks are typically green and fibrous and can be removed before cooking the corn.
- **The Great Plains:** An expansive region of flat terrain centrally located in the United States, characterized by its vast grasslands and sparse tree coverage. Often referred to as "America's Heartland," it is a key agricultural area where farming and ranching thrive due to fertile soil.
- **"Big Muddy":** Nickname for the Missouri River, which is one of the two longest rivers in the U.S. It forms the eastern and part of the northern borders of Nebraska, with rough waters flowing for more than 2,500 miles.
- **Louisiana Purchase:** The large land area that the U.S. purchased from France in 1803. Nebraska's land was organized as a territory in 1854, during a difficult time when America was divided over the issue of slavery.
- **The Oregon Trail:** A historic route about 2,170 miles long, used by pioneers in the mid-19th century to travel from Missouri to Oregon and other parts of the Pacific Northwest. It was crucial for America's westward expansion, as settlers used it to move west in covered wagons.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.W.7, CCRA.W.8

Academic Subjects: America, History, Geography

What You'll Need

- Video: *Unboxed, USA: The Cornhusker State* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Unboxed, USA: Game Map* (Click [Here](#))
- Optional: colored pencils, crayons, or markers to color the map

Scan to watch episode:



Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Begin by exploring the concept of the United States as a unified country with diverse states, each with its unique history, landscape, and characteristics. Reflect on the meaning of the word “United” in “United States” and its significance.
2. Introduce the “Unboxed, USA: Game Map,” explaining the instructions and emphasizing the mystery element of identifying one of the fifty states through clues.

Watch and Complete: (25 mins.)

1. Explain that students will play a game to discover the mystery state.
2. Play the video. Encourage active participation and observational skills.
3. Pause the video as needed to allow students time to process information, make educated guesses, and understand key points in greater depth.
4. Take time to go over key vocabulary and historical elements for the state of Nebraska.

Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Facilitate a review of the nine key facts about Nebraska, encouraging students to articulate their learning and contribute their insights either verbally or by writing on the board.
2. Consider collecting the completed game map activities as a formative assessment to gauge understanding and engagement with the lesson's content.

Optional Extension Lesson:

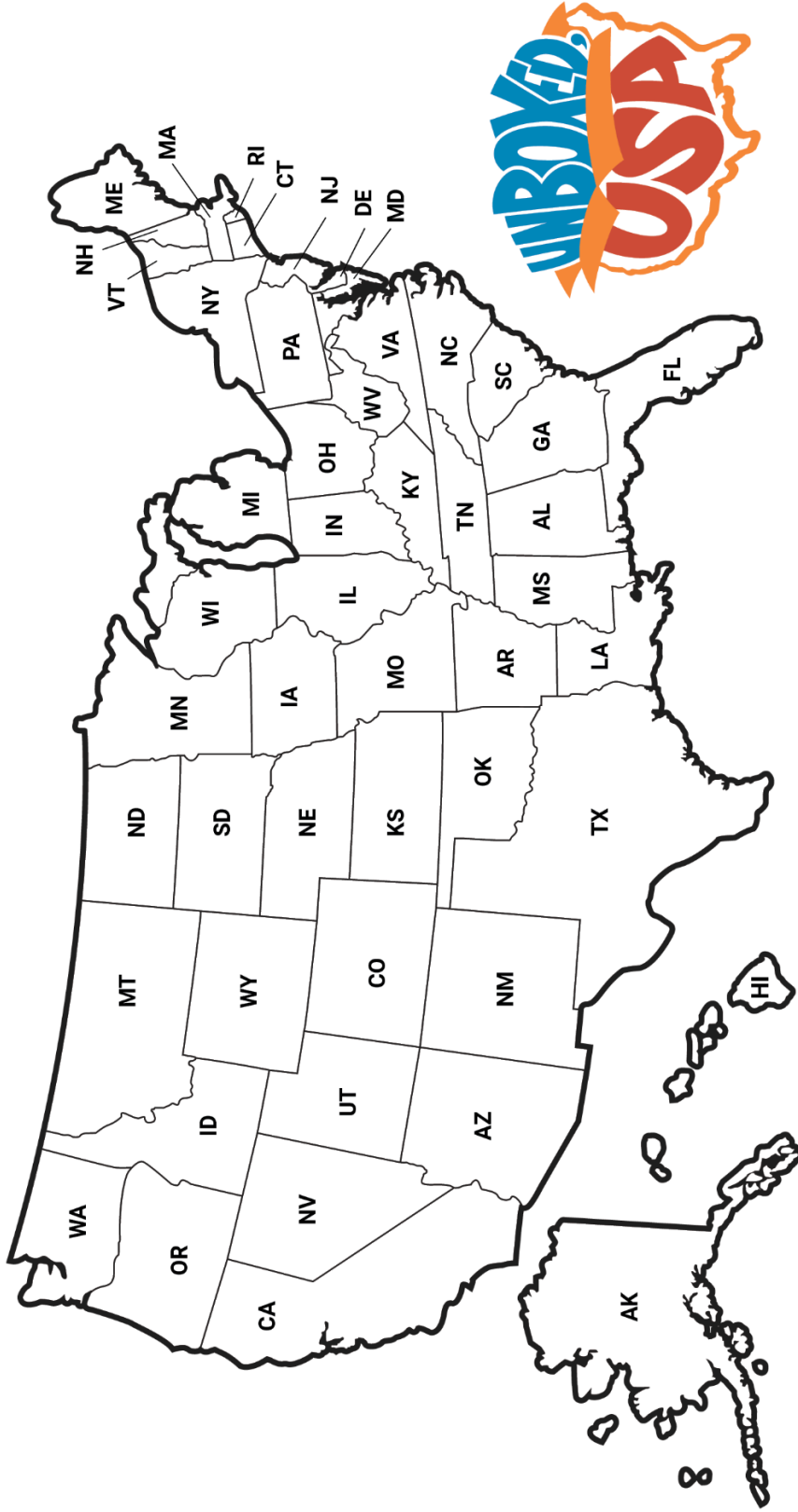
- Analyze the role of the Electoral College in the presidential election process, considering its impact on state representation, the balance of power between states, and its alignment with the principles of federalism outlined in the U.S. Constitution.
 - *Street Smarts: The Constitution* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))
 - *Street Smarts: The Electoral College* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))
 - *Craftory: Ballot Box* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))
- Analyze the concept of federalism and its impact on the relationship between state and national governments, as outlined in the U.S. Constitution.
 - *Street Smarts: Federalism* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))
 - *Leo & Layla: Madison & Montesquieu* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))
 - *Leo & Layla: John Adams & Thomas Jefferson* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))
 - *Leo & Layla: Justice John Marshall* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 mins.)

Distribute the game map and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.

Instructions:

Play along with the *Unboxed, USA* video. After the first three clues, mark your initial guess with a "1" on the state you think it is. Start jotting down any important facts on the lines provided. After the next three clues, make your second guess by marking a "2" on the state you think it is. Continue adding facts to your list. Following the last set of three clues, make your final guess and mark it with a "3." Were you correct? Put a star on the correct state and write it out on the line provided. Aim to have a list of six key facts by the end of the episode.



Fact 1 _____

Fact 4 _____

Fact 2 _____

Fact 5 _____

Fact 3 _____

Fact 6 _____

_____ **State Name**