



The Mount Rushmore State | Lesson Plan

What are the unique facts and features about the state of South Dakota?

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

Learning Objectives:

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

Key Vocabulary:

- **Louisiana Purchase:** The acquisition of territory by the United States from France in 1803, which was comprised of 828,000 miles. The purchase included land that would become part of 15 states.
- **Battle of Little Bighorn:** A significant battle between the U.S. Army and Native American tribes in 1876. Also known as "Custer's Last Stand," it was a decisive victory for the Native Americans.
- **Badlands National Park:** A vast protected area in South Dakota known for its striking landscapes, which include sharply eroded buttes, pinnacles, and spires, alongside the largest undisturbed mixed grass prairie in the United States. The park is also renowned for its rich fossil beds, which tell the ancient story of the area's natural history.
- **Mount Rushmore:** A colossal monument carved into the granite face of Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Completed in 1941, it features the 60-foot-high faces of Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln.
- **Fossils:** The preserved remains, impressions, or traces of organisms that lived in the geological past, often preserved in petrified form or as a mold or cast in rock.

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 Mount Rushmore 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 South Dakota.

Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Facilitate a review of the nine key facts about South Dakota, 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:

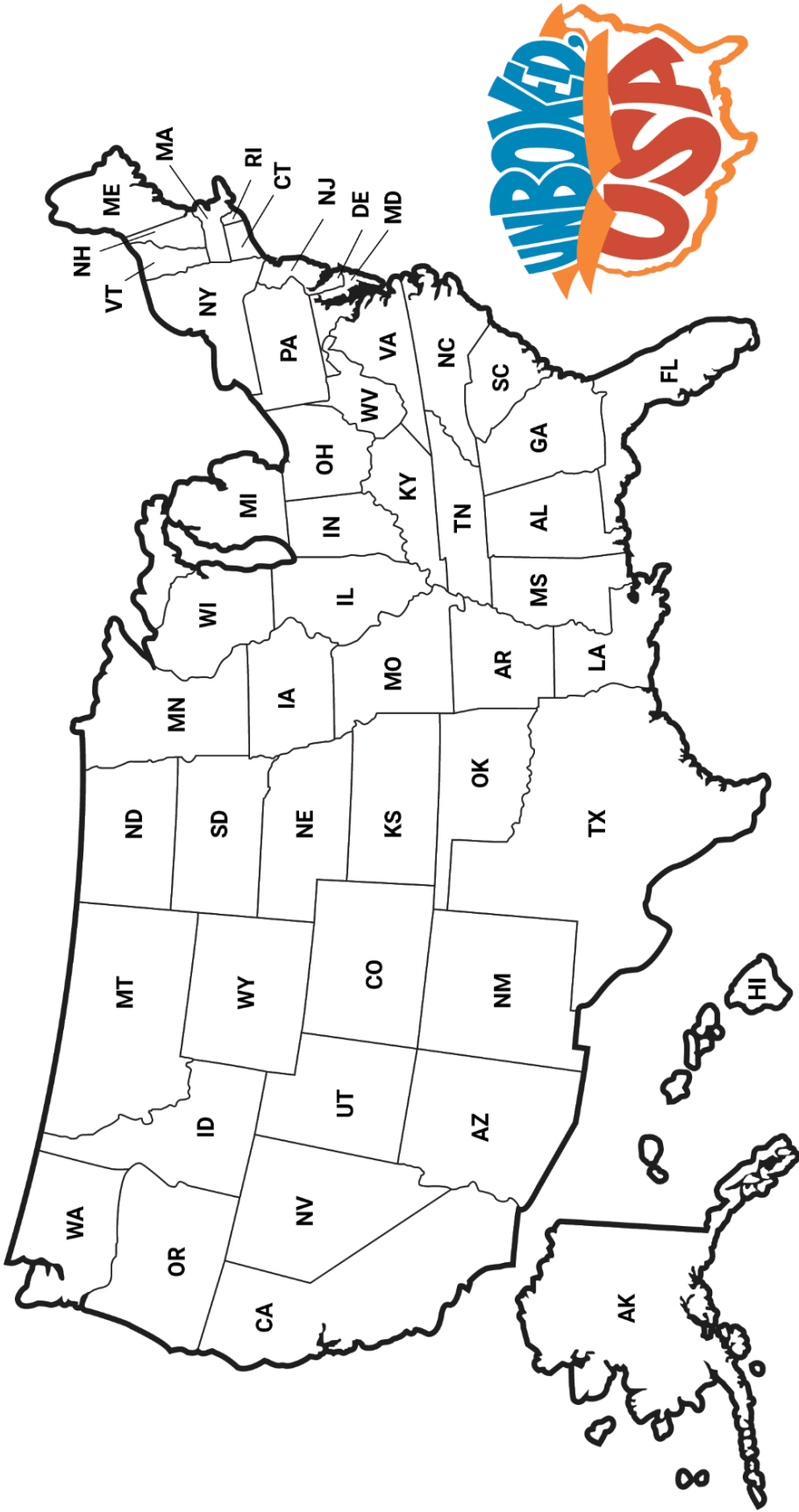
- Analyze the role of the Electoral College in the presidential election process, considering its impact on state representation, the balance of power between states, and its alignment with the principles of federalism outlined in the U.S. Constitution.
 - *Street Smarts: The Constitution* (Video and 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**