



New York | Lesson Plan

What are the unique facts and features about the state of New York?

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

Learning Objectives:

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

Key Vocabulary:

- **Henry Hudson:** An English explorer who sailed for the Dutch in the early 1600s. In 1609, he explored a river that would later be named the Hudson River, which flows through New York. His journey led to Dutch claims on the land and the founding of New Netherland, laying the groundwork for New York's colonial history.
- **"Excelsior":** A Latin word meaning "ever upward" or "still higher." It's the official motto of New York and appears on the state flag. The word reflects New York's values of striving for excellence, opportunity, and a hopeful future, symbolized by the rising sun and figures of Liberty and Justice on the flag.
- **Erie Canal:** A man-made waterway built between 1817 and 1825 to connect the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. It ran through New York, linking the Hudson River to Lake Erie, and helped turn the state into one of the busiest trade centers in the world while making it easier for Americans to move west.
- **Niagara Falls:** A group of powerful waterfalls on the border between the United States and Canada. Part of the falls is located in New York, where more than 3,000 tons of water rush over the cliffs every second, making it one of the most famous and awe-inspiring natural wonders in the world.
- **West Point:** A prestigious U.S. military academy located in New York, founded in 1802. Known as the United States Military Academy, West Point trains future Army leaders with values like duty, honor, and country, and is featured in the New York script as one of the state's iconic landmarks.
- **"The Big Apple":** A nickname for New York City, popularized in the 1920s by newspaper reporters covering horse racing. It came to symbolize the biggest and most exciting prize: a place full of opportunity, culture, and energy. Today, it refers to New York City's status as a vibrant hub for arts, theater, shopping, and iconic landmarks.
- **Statue of Liberty:** A giant copper statue gifted to the United States by France in 1884, standing over 300 feet tall in New York Harbor. It is a worldwide symbol of freedom and democracy, with a torch to light the way and a tablet inscribed with the date of American independence.



- **Ellis Island:** A small island in New York Harbor that served as the main immigration station for the United States from 1892 to 1954. More than 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island, making it a powerful symbol of hope and new beginnings for families arriving in America.

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

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 New York.

Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Facilitate a review of the nine key facts about New York, encouraging students to articulate their learning and contribute their insights either verbally or by writing on the board.
2. Consider collecting the completed 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](#))

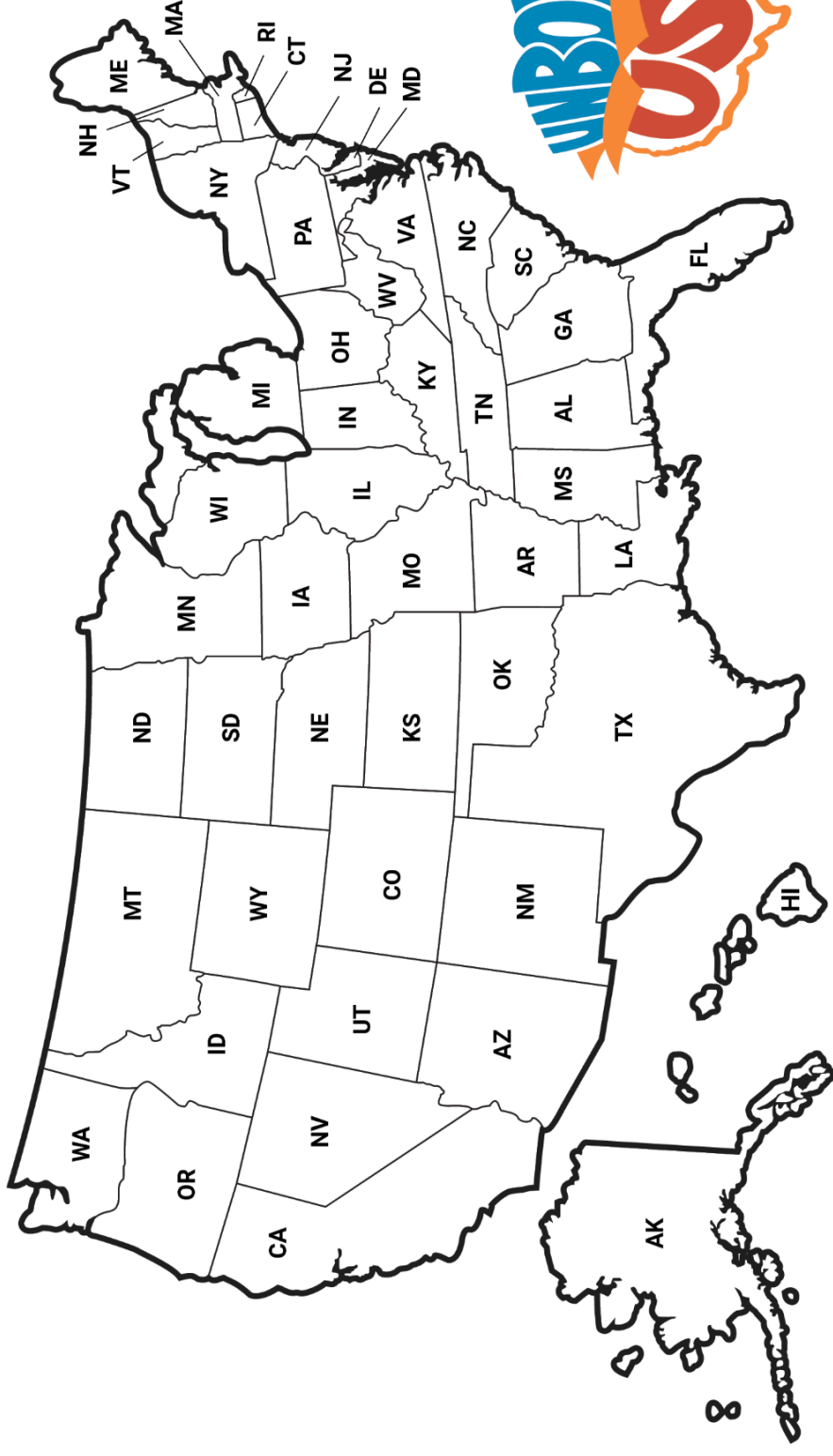
- Analyze the concept of federalism and its impact on the relationship between state and national governments, as outlined in the U.S. Constitution.
 - *Street Smarts: Federalism* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))
 - *Leo & Layla: Madison & Montesquieu* (Video and educational resources [Here](#))
 - *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