



Illinois | Lesson Plan

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

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

Learning Objectives:

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

Key Vocabulary:

- **Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet:** French explorers who ventured down the Mississippi River and into the Illinois region, mapping the land and forging relationships with Indigenous peoples, thereby becoming among the first Europeans to extensively document and understand the area.
- **The French and Indian War:** A conflict between France and Britain from 1754 to 1763 over control of North American territory, involving alliances with various Indigenous tribes. It was part of the larger Seven Years' War (1756–1763) and ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763, which significantly reshaped colonial boundaries and solidified British dominance in North America.
- **Northwest Territory:** A large U.S. region established by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, encompassing present-day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. It marked the first organized expansion of the United States, setting a precedent for the creation of future states.
- **Nuclear Energy:** The power released during nuclear reactions, where the nucleus of an atom is split or combined. It is a significant energy source used for electricity generation, offering high efficiency and low greenhouse gas emissions.
- **The Land of Lincoln:** A nickname for Illinois honoring Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, who lived in the state for much of his adult life and began his political career there. It reflects Illinois' deep connection to Lincoln's legacy of leadership and dedication to freedom and equality.
- **Route 66:** A historic highway (also known as the "Mother Road") that originally stretched from Chicago, Illinois, to Santa Monica, California. Established in 1926, it became a symbol of freedom, adventure, and the American road trip, passing through eight states and showcasing diverse landscapes and cultures.
- **Sovereignty:** The authority and power of a state or governing body to govern itself without external interference. It represents the ability to make laws, enforce decisions, and control resources within a defined territory.

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

Scan to watch episode:



Academic Subjects: America, History, Geography

What You'll Need

- Video: *Unboxed, USA: Illinois* (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 Illinois.

Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

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

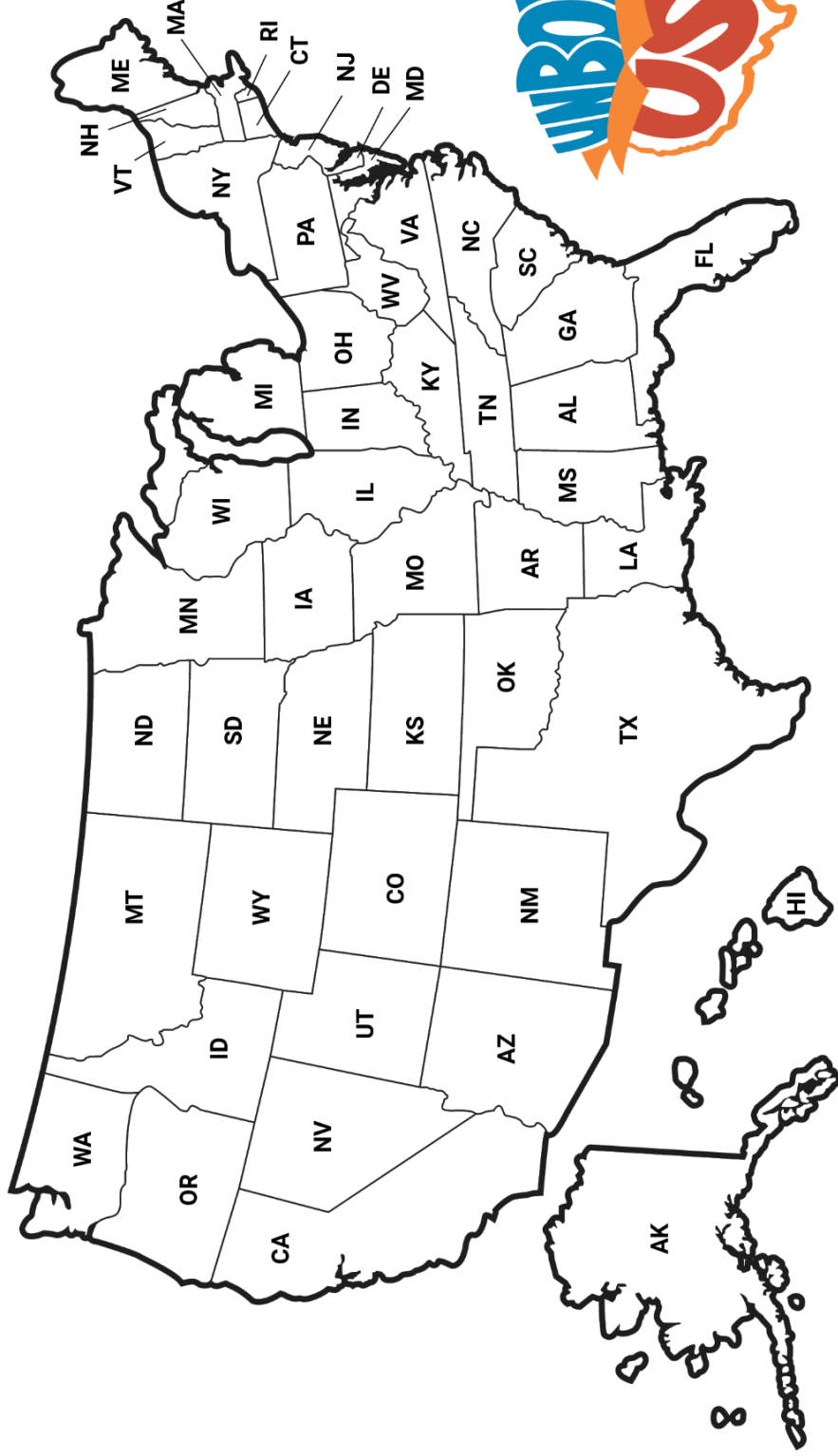
- Analyze the role of the Electoral College in the presidential election process, considering its impact on state representation, the balance of power between states, and its alignment with the principles of federalism outlined in the U.S. Constitution.
 - *Street Smarts: The Constitution* (Video and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