



The North Star State | Lesson Plan

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

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

Learning Objectives:

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

Key Vocabulary:

- **Fur trading:** The historical practice of exchanging animal pelts, primarily from beavers, for goods and services, playing a crucial role in the economic development and exploration of North America and involving extensive trade networks between Native Americans, European settlers, and trading companies.
- **Fort Snelling:** A historic military fort located at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, serving as a key military, trade, and cultural site in the early 19th-century American Midwest.
- **Lumbering:** The process of cutting down trees, processing them into logs, and transporting the timber to sawmills or markets. It has historically been a significant industry in many forested regions for producing wood for construction, fuel, and other uses.
- **Flour milling:** The process of grinding grains, such as wheat, into flour, which involves cleaning, conditioning, and then grinding the grain into a fine powder used for baking and cooking.
- **L'etoile du Nord:** Minnesota's official state motto, meaning "The Star of the North," reflects its position as the northernmost state in the contiguous United States (in 1861) and symbolizes guidance and aspiration.
- **Mall of America:** A large shopping and entertainment complex located in Bloomington, Minnesota. It is one of the largest malls in the United States, featuring over 500 stores, numerous restaurants, an indoor amusement park, an aquarium, and various entertainment venues, making it a major tourist destination.

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 North Star State* (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 Minnesota.

Wrap-Up: (10 mins.)

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

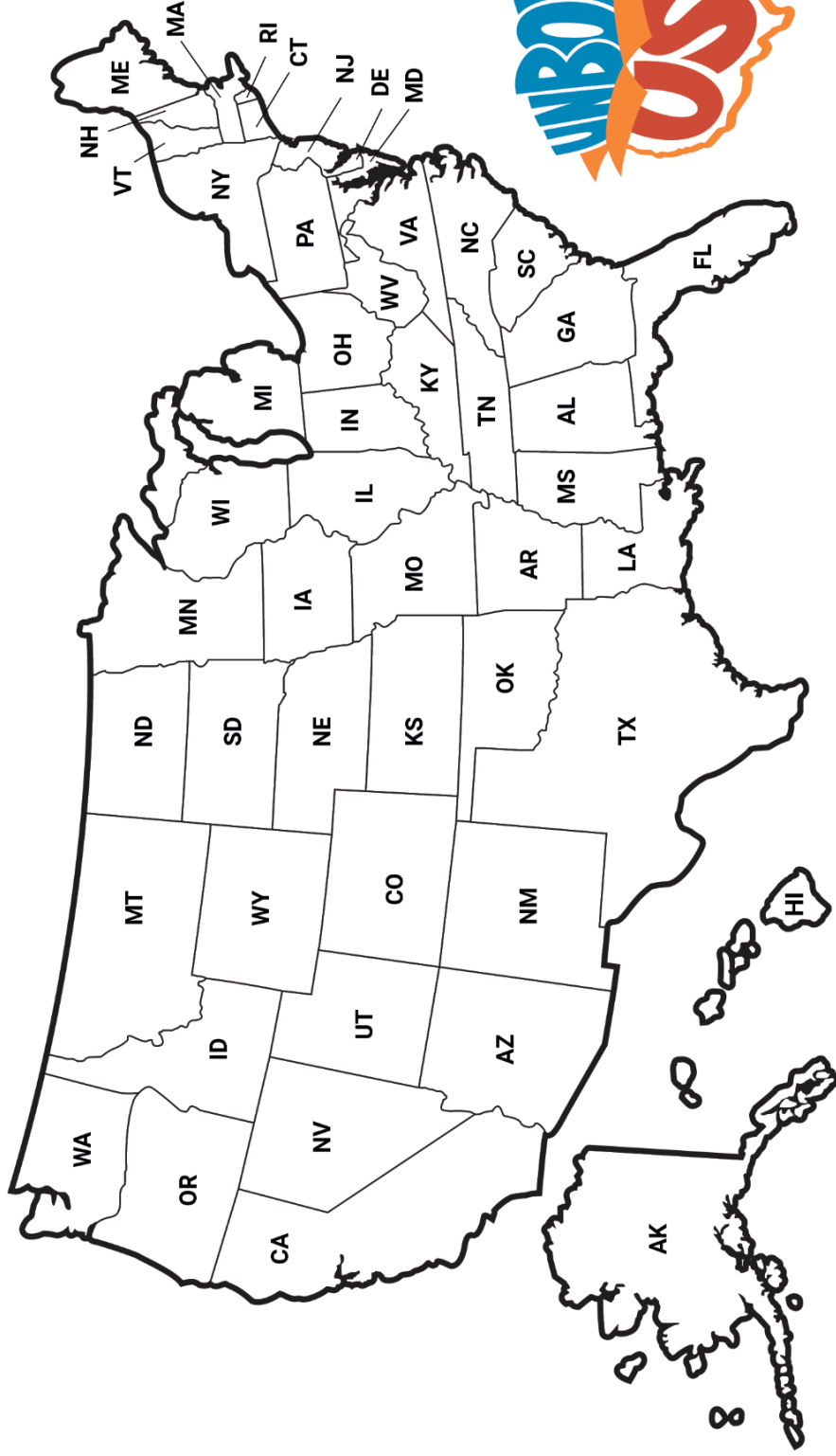
- Analyze the role of the Electoral College in the presidential election process, considering its impact on state representation, the balance of power between states, and its alignment with the principles of federalism outlined in the U.S. Constitution.
 - *Street Smarts: The Constitution* (Video and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