

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Research Unit

.....PRINT VERSION.....



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Sample Unit Outline & Lesson Plans for Easy Planning

Sample Unit Outline

Here is a sample unit calendar that you can use as a guide during the unit. Have students focus on 1-2 questions per day in their journals as you see fit.

| M | T | W | Th | F |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Assign partners Draw states Send parent letter | Using Table of Contents and Index | Using Titles and Headings | Students put together journals Catch up/ review text features | What do I already know about the United States? |
| When was the United States founded? How was the United States founded? | What is the Constitution and why is it important? What is the Bill of Rights and why is it important? | What are the regions of the United States? | What are some landmarks? | What are some rights we have as citizens? |
| What are some responsibilities we have as U.S. Citizens? | My Favorite Thing about the U.S. Catch up day | What is the weather like in my state? | What is the weather like in my state? | What is the weather like in my state? |
| What are some symbols of my state? | What is the weather like in my state? | What is the weather like in my state? | What is the weather like in my state? | What is the weather like in my state? |
| Finish Journals Report work day | Create salt dough maps Send home for baking | | | |

Using the Internet for Research Mini Lesson

You Will Need:

- Using the Internet for Research Worksheet
- A computer or tablet that can be projected (on a screen or TV) for the whole class to view

Instructions:

- Have students come to the floor. Tell the students that you will be showing them how to use the internet for research.
- Open up a kid-friendly search engine, such as kiddle.com. Tell students that they will be using a kid-friendly search engine for their state research. Explain that using a search engine that is made for kids (rather than Google) will help them search for information safely.
- Ask students if they know how to use a search engine. (Call on students to answer.)
- Ask students if they think they should type in an entire question into the search box. (Students raise hands if they agree.) Tell students that typing an entire question is not usually the best way to use a search engine. They should use specific keywords when searching.
- Practice coming up with keywords for searching the following question:
 - Model in search: Who was Abraham Lincoln? (15,600,000 search results on Kiddle)
- This is too broad of a question for internet research. Sample keywords could be: Abraham Lincoln biography (5,900,000 results), Abraham Lincoln presidency (5,300,000 results), Abraham Lincoln freed slaves (230,000 results), Abraham Lincoln birth date (916,000 results), etc.
- Tell students that when researching, they should always use more than one source to ensure the information is accurate. If they find conflicting information between sources, they should continue to research until a common fact is found and determined to be accurate. This takes patience, but is an important part of researching!
- Model in search: China population
 - The World Factbook states that China's population is 1,379,302,771 (as of July 2017). Worldometers states that China's population is 1,416,903,277 (and increasing, as this is a live counter). World Population Review states that China's population is 1,416,899,661 (as of October 31, 2018).
 - In this case, students would be best off taking the live counter number and indicating that the number is as of the date found.
- Hand out the Using the Internet for Research worksheet. Walk around and assist students as answer the questions. Check for their understanding as they work. If they need additional assistance, you can review the information again as a class.

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Unit Preparation

Pages to Copy:

- State Cards:** These will be put in a basket and drawn out by the students to assign each pair of students a state. All 52 states are included with a picture of each one.
- Parent Letter:** This letter will be sent home on the first day of the unit. It will inform parents on the unit and ask them to send their student to school with informational texts about the United States and their state. It will also inform them about the State Fair and remind parents when the salt dough maps will need to be baked.
- State Fair Invitation:** This is an invitation that will be sent home with students at the end of the unit to invite their parents to the State Fair.

Table of Contents & Index Worksheet: To be used with the Table of Contents & Index Mini Lesson.

Text Features Worksheet: To be used with the Text Features Mini Lesson.

Using the Internet for Research Worksheet: To be used with the Internet for Research Mini Lesson.

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Presentation & State Fair

You Will Need:

- Completed reports and state salt dough maps

Presentation:

- Students will present their salt dough maps to the class. The partners will tell the class some facts about their state. This is an informal presentation, so students do not need to read their report word for word, but they may use it as a guide. Both students should be involved in the presentation!

State Fair:

- The state fair is a great way for students to share their hard work with other classes in their grade, as well as their parents.
- At least a few days before the fair, send home the invitation to parents inviting them to attend. Have students display their state salt dough maps on their desk and stand behind them to answer any questions about their map. Depending on the layout of the desks, you may move them around a bit to make it more accessible for those attending the fair to walk around.
- First, invite a few other classes to attend the fair. The other classes can walk around and see the maps and ask questions. This will be before the parents arrive as a practice run.
- After the classes are finished, the students' parents will arrive at the time on the invitation. The parents will be able to walk around and see their child's hard work as well as the rest of the class. This is a great way to get parents involved in their student's class!

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Table of Contents & Index Mini Lesson

You Will Need:

- Table of Contents & Index Worksheet
- An informational text that includes a table of contents and index (Any topic will do. A United States book with large text and pictures would be ideal.)

Instructions:

- Have students come to the floor. Tell the students that you will be showing them how to use two text features that can be found in informational text. These text features will help them find the information they are looking for in the text.
- Open up the book to the table of contents and show it to the class. Ask the students if they know what this page is called. (Call on students to answer.) Then tell the students that this page is called the table of contents.

The table of contents is a short, 1-2 page found in the book. Show the students how it is in the order that the information is found in. The broad topics that are covered in the book are a broad topic they would like to find in this book and choose one that is relevant. Model using the table of contents. Then ask the students to look at the table of contents. The end and show the students the index. Ask them know what it is called. Explain that it is the index has many pages. It has descriptions of facts that can be found in the book. Show the index in ABC order.

The index is a specific topic they would like to find in this book and choose one that is relevant. Model using the index. Then ask the students to tell you the index.

Contents & Index worksheet. Walk around and fill out the Venn Diagram. Check for their work. If they need additional assistance, you can again as a class.

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The unit sample outline gives you an idea of how you could implement the unit into your schedule. (However, feel free to implement the unit activities however you see fit!) We have included lesson plans to open your students for their research projects.

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Parent Letter and Invitation to Keep Parents Involved and Informed

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are starting a new unit about the United States. Students will begin researching the United States and an assigned state using informational text. Your child's state is _____. If possible, please send your student with a book about this state, as well as a book about the United States of America. These books could be from the public library, the school library, or from home. We will begin using the texts on _____. If you are unable to help them find a book, we will make sure there are still texts available for your student to use.

After students have finished their research, they will create a salt dough map of their state. Students will be shaping the maps in class and bringing them home to bake for 2 hours at 200°. They will be sent home on _____ and will need to be returned by _____. We will be displaying these at our State Fair on _____.

Please let me know if you have any questions!



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YOU'RE INVITED!

You are invited to our State Fair!
Students will be showcasing their own salt dough maps created using their research.
Information is below!

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

Details: _____



**We Hope
to See You
There!**

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We have included a letter to parents and a State Fair invitation to help keep your students' parents and guardians involved and informed. You can type the dates and your name right into the letter.

A decorative border consisting of a horizontal row of 25 colored circles. The colors are red, green, and blue, arranged in a repeating pattern. The circles are slightly overlapping and have a soft shadow.

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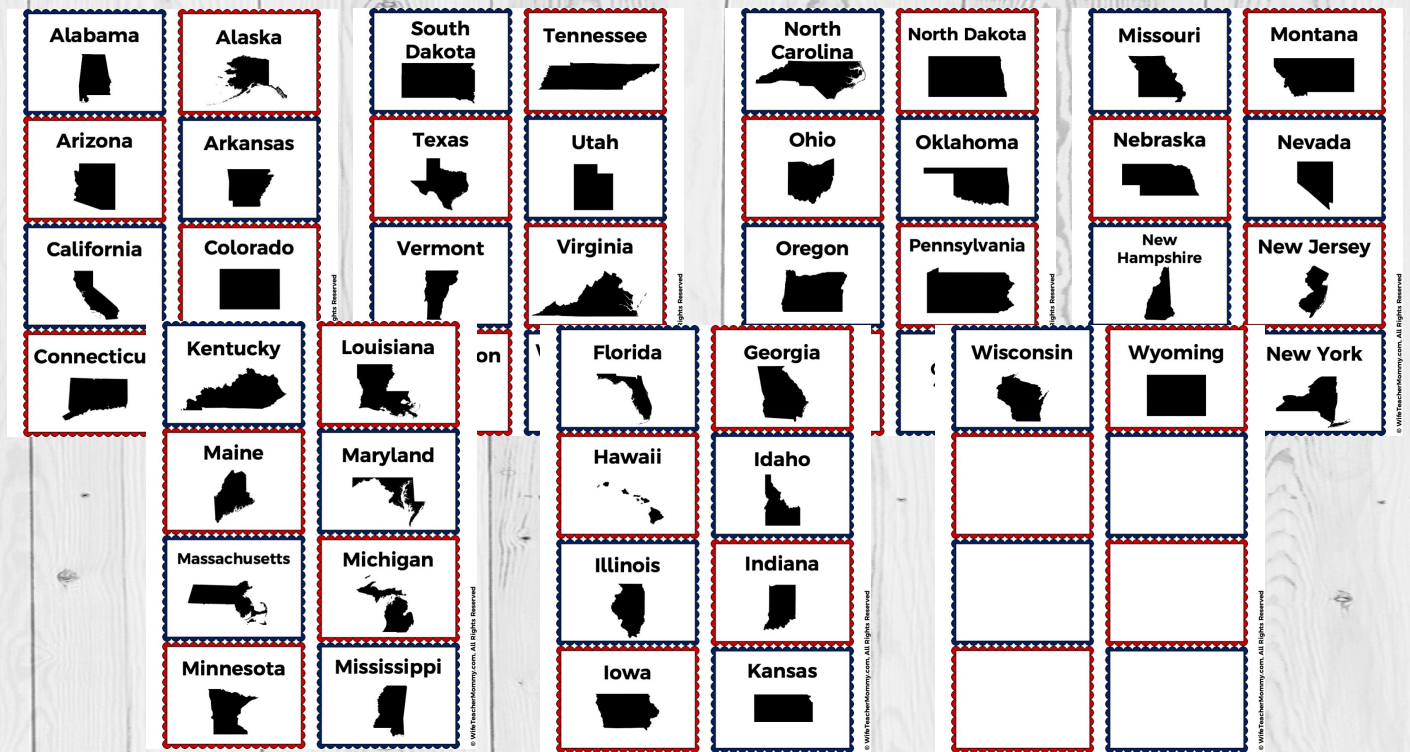
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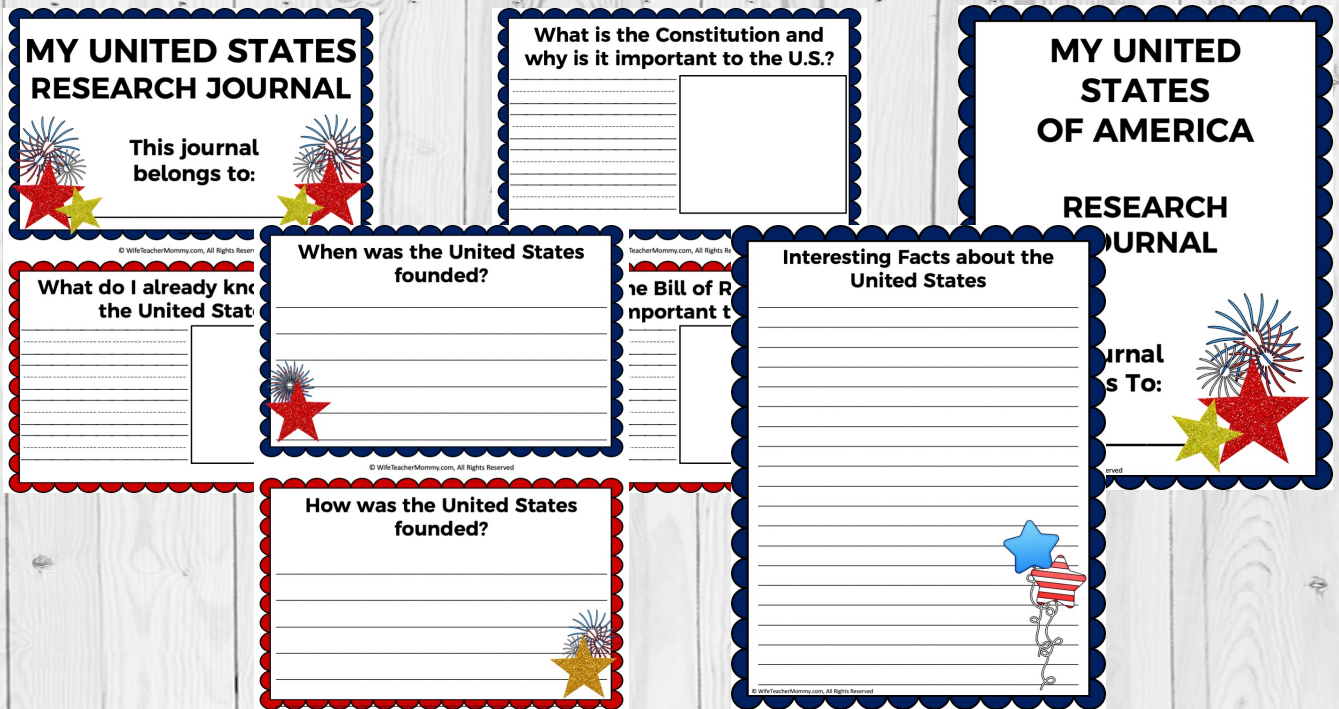
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State Cards to Randomly Assign a State to Each Student to Research



We have created cards spotlighting each of the 50 states for you to print, cut, and mix in a basket. Students will randomly choose which state they will research.

Multiple ½ Page and Full Sheet Student Research Journal Pages to Reach all Levels of Learners



The student research journal pages include differentiated pages of research prompts for students covering their state. We have also included blank pages to create your own prompts.

A decorative border consisting of a horizontal row of 25 colored circles. The colors are red, green, and blue, arranged in a repeating pattern. The circles are slightly overlapping and have a soft shadow.

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