

# **Life In The Amazing States of America**

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## **Brief description:**

**Students will use Microsoft Publisher to create postcards about their state for a nation-wide postcard exchange.**

## **Unit Overview**

Students will learn age appropriate facts about Texas through either whole class teacher led instruction or student conducted research. They will compose an expository paragraph about their new learning for the back of their postcard. Students will use Microsoft Publisher and pictures provided by the teacher to produce the front of their postcard. Student postcards will be sent to participating classrooms across the nation. As incoming postcards arrive the teacher will read the text and share the postcards with the class and the state will be found on the map.

## **TEKS**

### **Language Arts**

- 2.1 The student listens attentively
- 2.4 The student communicates clearly by putting thoughts into spoken words
- 2.9 The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend selections read aloud
- 2.10 The student responds to a variety of tests.

### **Social Studies**

- 2.5 The student uses simple geographic tools.
- 2.6 The student understands the locations and characteristics of places and regions.
- 2.7 The student understands how the physical characteristics of places and regions affect people's activities.
- 2.17 The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology.
- 2.18 The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

### **Technology Applications**

- 126.2 (1 & 2) Use of hardware, software, and data input skills
- 126.2 (4 & 5) Acquires information from a variety of electronic sources
- 126.2 (8) Research skill using a variety of electronic sources
- 126.2 (10) Formats digital information for effective communication

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## Objectives

- The student will be able to verbalize 7-10 facts about the state of Texas.
- The student will write an expository paragraph about the state of Texas.
- The student will use Microsoft Publisher to create a state postcard with pictures and text.
- The student will find and learn about other states in our nation through participation in a nation-wide postcard exchange.

## Time Required

This lesson takes approximately four to five 20 minute sessions for teacher led instruction about the state. One to two 20 minute class periods are needed for composing the expository paragraph as a shared writing activity. One 60 minute session is needed for the creation of the postcard. As the incoming postcards arrive the teacher will need to use small units of time (five to ten minutes depending on how many postcards are reviewed at one time) to share the postcard with the class and locate the state on the map. If desired the teacher can use Google Earth on a classroom computer to find the school's actual location.

## Materials Required

- Resources for research such as T is for Texas by Anne Bustard, L Is for Lonestar by Carol Crane, and Round Up: A Texas Number Book by Carol Crane.
- Postcard paper-Postcards/Index Cards 400 cards 4 cards/sheet Avery 8577
- Pictures of Texas landmarks and symbols placed in a folder for students to copy and paste on the front of their postcard.
- Chart paper and markers for Shared Writing
- Stamps for sending postcards
- Teacher participation in a nation-wide postcard exchange

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- **Computers with Microsoft Publisher and Microsoft Word for student use**
- **Computer with large screen monitor or projector loaded with Microsoft Publisher and Microsoft Word for teacher to demonstrate the steps of making the postcard**

## **Procedure**

- 1. Teacher joins or organizes a postcard exchange with other teachers across the nation. This is best done over the summer utilizing teacher chat boards (Ex. [www.proteacher.net](http://www.proteacher.net), [www.teachers.net](http://www.teachers.net)). The goal is to get one class from each of the fifty states, but students will learn even if this is not accomplished.**
- 2. Research Texas symbols, landmarks, and culture through independent student led research or read alouds.**
- 3. Write an expository paragraph about Texas. This can be done in a variety of ways based upon the skills and needs of your students. Options include: Shared Writing; independent writing by each student; independent writing by partners; or student dictated and teacher scribed (This would be most effective with the computer connected to a projector or large monitor.).**
- 4. Decide if you wish to have student type the paragraph on the postcard (necessary if each student or pair of students writes their own paragraph) or if you wish to have students copy and paste the paragraph onto their postcard. If you wish to have students copy and paste the paragraph you must first put the text in a usable format on the network.**
- 5. Collect pictures of Texas symbols, landmarks and culture and place them in an accessible folder on the network for student use.**
- 6. Purchase Postcard Paper (Avery 8577) and practice making a postcard following directions with postcard paper.**
- 7. Model how to use the pictures and text to create a Texas postcard using a computer connected to a large monitor or a projector. Provide support as needed during student production of postcards.**

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**8. Print and mail postcards.**

**9. Share incoming postcards with students as they arrive. If you choose to use Google Earth you will need to download it (It's FREE!)**

## Closure

- **Permit students to share their postcards with their classmates.**
- **As incoming postcards arrive show students where the state is on a large classroom map. Read the informational text on the postcard and discuss the similarities and differences to our own state.**
- **Use Google Earth to find each school's actual location as the postcards arrive. Compare each surrounding community to your own noting the similarities and differences.**

## Evaluation

**See attached scoring rubric.**

## Extension Activity

- **Extension:**
- **Permit students to research and write their paragraphs on their own or in pairs.**
- **Place received postcards and a United States Atlas at a classroom center for students reread and expand on their knowledge.**
- **Provide students with a United States map and have them color in the states as the postcards arrive.**
- **Remediation: Permit students to work in pairs on the computer to create postcards.**
- **Differentiation: Utilize all three instructional techniques within the same classroom. Have some students research, write and produce independently while others do so in pairs and the teacher works with a small group to do the same.**