Where in the USA is……?

A Lesson for elementary grades (Social Studies)

Introduction

This is a fun and exciting lesson in which students develop a tri-fold brochure about their favorite state. Students will work with a partner in order to complete the desktop publishing project using the checklist provided as a guide. Students will use available desktop publishing software. This lesson is interdisciplinary with emphasis on United States Geography. Through completion of this project students will:

- learn how to use the Internet and available resources to compile needed information
- learn facts and information about a state
- use composition skills
- work collaboratively with a partner
- learn to work with desktop publishing software
- use other technology tools combined with Internet usage

Student Outcomes

Upon completion of this desktop publishing unit, the student will:

- understand the importance of the Internet as a resource of information
- recognize the importance of gathering information from many resources
- know interesting and important facts about a state
- understand the role of brochures for advertisement
- understand the importance of creating a preliminary layout in desktop publishing
- use desktop publishing software to design a letterhead and brochure successfully
- use a spreadsheet to develop a chart
- recognize the importance of collaboration, compromise, and creativity

Content Area and Grade Levels

This unit is appropriate for elementary age students. This is an interdisciplinary unit involving skills of composition, geography, reading, and research. Basic computer skills would be helpful, but are not necessary.
Technology Usage

The teacher can use a large screen to show students how to search the Internet or use specific sites provided to gather information to use within their document. Next, the teacher can use the Microsoft Publisher program to create a quick sample letterhead and tri-fold brochure, or use a word processing program to display the formatting steps in the creation of the tri-fold. A simple spreadsheet can be constructed to create a chart with the chart wizard. In small groups, instruct students in the operation of the digital camera and the scanner.

Technology tools used in this unit are:

- Web browser
- Microsoft Publisher
- Excel spreadsheet and chart wizard
- Printers - both black and white laser and color
- Microsoft Word
- Digital Camera
- Diskettes
- Scanner

Resources

Online

50 States
http://www.50states.com/

United States Geography
http://www.photius.com/wfb/wfb1999/united_states/united_states_geography.html

USA State Flags, Facts, Songs, Maps, Symbols
http://www.imagesoft.net/flags/flags.html

Color Landform Atlas of the United States
http://fermi.jahuapl.edu/states/states.html

United States – General Search
http://directory.netscape.com/Recreation/Roads_and_Highways/United_States

Net State.Com – Symbols and more
http://www.netstate.com/states/states.html

The United States Research Informational Site
http://edtech.kennesay.edu/web/unitstat.html

United States Climate Page

Where Are the Endangered Species? (by state)
http://www.nesarc.org/stlsts.htm
The Official U.S. Time
http://www.time.gov/

Know the Pledge of Allegiance
http://www.neosplice.com/~troop67/pledge.htm

National Parks Service: ParkNet
http://www.nps.gov/

View State Flags For:
http://www.law.ou.edu/stflag.html

The Presidents of the United States of America

Post Cards Form.com
http://www.postcardsfrom.com/

State and County Demographic and Economic Profiles
http://www.census.gov/datamap/www/indes.html

Native American Population as a Percentage of Total Population
http://www.lmic.state.nm.us/dnet/maplib/demogs/race/us/page/nativeu.htm

Off line

• Current encyclopedia or an encyclopedia on CD Rom
• *El Camino Real CD* by NM State Tourism
• Chambers of Commerce from various states
• American Grub Eats for Kids from All Fifty States, by Lynn Kuntz and Jan Fleming.
• State Smart! by John H. Thompson (Over 130 ready to use puzzle activities based on geography and history of the 50 United States.
• My State--- Schneider, Steven 1966 Evan
• More California U.S. Maps and Crosswords--- Finch, Spencer 1999 Scholastic
• New York Regions of the USA--- Mailbox Magazine 1994 Education Center
• Stuck on the USA - Fascinating Fact About the 50 States! ISBN 0-44840179-7
• An Educational Coloring Book of State Birds ---Spizzirri Publishing Company, Inc.ISBN 0-86545-050-1
• USA Brain Teasers--- Teacher Created Materials, Inc. ISBN 1-57690-224-2
• Travel Activities--- by Kathie Billingslea Smith, MJ Studios Inc. ISBN 1-57122-168-9
Process
Tips:
- When forming groups for this activity, it is best not to group a high tech with a low tech. Sometimes, the low ability student will never get to do much of the work. It’s important that all students have equal use of the computer.
- In order to design a good partnership, assign roles to each student. Example: One student can be the “expert” and verbally guide the other student through the beginning steps of the brochure. After a set time, the students switch roles.
- A rubric is useful for both students and teacher. This can be used as developed for this unit or it can be altered to fit the class or teacher needs.
- A checklist (provided) can help the students keep on task and focused. This helps them assume responsibility for the project. For groups that lack motivation or become discouraged with their designs, prompt them for their personal interests and then move the conversation as to how they may display their interests in the form of the tri-fold. (You’ll be surprised to find how quickly the “light bulb” turns on!)
- Question students when they ask for your opinion on their designs. Keep in mind that this is “their” creation, not yours!
- Observe groups by circulating around the room and listening to their discussions making certain to redirect those that stray off track

Materials:
- Brochures of various types
- Paper for rough draft
- Copies of checklist and rubric for each student
- Publishing program
- Heavier weight paper to print the final copy of the brochures

Preparation:
- Check Internet sites for functionality
- Gather brochures from visitor or travel centers
- Be familiar with the Chart Wizard and how to set up the spreadsheet
- Be familiar with your publishing program to ensure successful troubleshooting with the letterhead and brochure components
- Fold a blank sheet of paper so that students can use this to plan their brochure
- Make copies of the checklist and rubric for each student
- Decide which students can work successfully together and form groups of two

Tasks: (actions)
- Discuss and examine sample brochures.
- Decide what makes an inviting and interesting brochure.
- Plan the brochure using the blank tri-fold paper.
- Visit sites on the Internet to gather information and graphics for the brochure.
- Use available off-line resources to do research.
• Use a publishing program to design a letterhead and have students write letters requesting information about their state.
• Use a spreadsheet program to develop a chart showing the population of 5 cities in the state.
• Use a publishing program to design the brochure.
• Proofread and edit the brochure.
• Print out the brochure in black and white to determine any alignment problems and for final editing.
• Following the final adjustments, print the brochure in color using the heavier weight paper.

Presentation
- Have a party to celebrate completion of the brochures. Invite another class to join you and look at the brochures. Multiple black and white copies might be made for distribution among the guests.
- Create a bulletin board showing a map of the US with corresponding brochures.

Assessment
1. Use the Rubric provided or develop one that will fit your needs.
2. If individual grades are required, each student can produce his own brochure.

Extensions
- Design a WEB site for your state
- Design an ABC book about your state
- Produce a PowerPoint presentation about your state
- Using MS Word, keep a “Traveler’s Notebook” while learning about your state
- Publish a 2-page newsletter about your state
- Design a flyer advertising your state

Content Standards

National Educational Technology Standards
(2) Social, ethical, and human issues
(3) Technology productivity tools
(5) Technology research tools
(6) Technology problem-solving and decision-making tools

New Mexico Content Standards

Language Arts
(2) Students will understand and use Language Arts as a learning tool.
(3) Students will listen and read for a variety of purposes.
(5) Students will speak clearly and write effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes.
(6) Students will speak and write clearly, effectively, and correctly.
(10) Students will use state-of-the-art computer and other technology to gather, use and
synthesize information, and to create and communicate knowledge.

Social Studies
(3) Students will know, understand and apply the language, tools, and skills of social studies
(12) Students will know and understand physical environments and their relationships to
ecosystems and human activities.

Credits
Be sure to model correct citation. If students get graphics, photos or charts from a book or the
Web, make sure they cite who created the object and where they got it. A good way to keep
track of this is to use the chart provided.

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