

RAFT IDEAS

Topics: U.S. States, Symbols, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking

Materials List

- ✓ Small box or VHS case
- ✓ A variety of materials for students to use creatively (matte board, travel magazines, clay, construction paper, etc.)

This activity can be used to teach:

- U.S. Geography, location and names of the 50 States and their capitals (National Curriculum for Social Studies: Theme 3, People, Places, and Environments)
- Human and physical characteristics of place (National Curriculum for Social Studies: Theme 3, People, Places, and Environments)



State in a Box

State Reports with Chosen, Representative Objects



This presentation format turns state reports into a scavenger hunt for the whole class.

To Do and Notice

1. Working alone or in pairs, students make and/or collect 10 symbols and of their state (either chosen at random or assigned). These symbols can include a picture of the state bird, a souvenir from a tourist attraction, a real or created tour brochure, or an industrial or agricultural product.
2. Students place the items in a box, such as a shoebox or VHS case. All state artifacts should fit inside a designated size box.
3. Optional extension: require each student or team to hand-in with their state box a list of the objects and reasons for choosing each item.

The Content Behind the Activity

This activity not only helps students learn about state facts and symbols, but also provides an opportunity to learn or practice research skills. What 10 objects would provide the best information so that the viewer could determine the subject state? Students or teams also need to make and justify decisions within given constraints (e.g. – all the items must fit inside a given-size box)... an excellent exercise in decision-making.

Taking it Further

Have students present their items to the class in a tabletop, “poster-style” session, where each student or team lays out their artifacts for examination by fellow classmates. Students try to determine the state each box represents.

Align this activities’ difficulty to student ability and skill. Allowing students to use outlines of the state, names of state capitals, and drawings of state flags will make identifying the state during the poster session easier. Disallowing these types of artifacts will present a greater challenge.

Web Resources (Visit www.raft.net/raft-idea?isid=407 for more resources!)

For state symbol and trivia information, visit: <http://www.netstate.com/>, <http://www.theus50.com/>, & <http://www.history.com/topics/us-states>,