

## Visiting the Regions of the United States~Virtually

### Analysis:

Students will be given a needs assessment with the following questions:

1. Have you ever traveled outside of Massachusetts? (This will be a question asked to the group - "Touch your head if you have traveled outside of MA.") This info will give the teacher a starting point.
2. Using the attached photographs(appendix A), students will name the places that they recognize. They will highlight the places that they have actually visited. Photographs are attached to this document with the names of the locations. When given to students, the photographs will be shown on a large screen using the Internet and a projector. Students will write their answers on a sheet of paper. This will give the teacher information about which places students can identify. A second list was created in order to provide a challenge for students who could identify so many places that there were not 5 for those students to research. This list will be available for those who are already able to meet the state standard. Those students will research locations that are national parks, historic landmarks, and other places (though not specifically listed in the state framework).

The goal of this activity is to allow students in my fourth grade class to take a virtual tour of the United States. The Massachusetts State Curriculum Framework requires students in fourth grade to "identify major monuments and historical sites in and around Washington, D.C (e.g., the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, the Smithsonian Museums, the Library of Congress, the White House, the Capitol, the Washington Monument, the National Archives, Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Iwo Jima Memorial and Mount Vernon)". The students are also required to "identify and describe unique features of the US (e.g. the Everglades, the Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, the Redwood Forest, Yellowstone National Park, and Yosemite National Park.)" Using this activity, all students will learn about the above-mentioned places and recognize a picture of each location. Students will be asked to complete Power Point

presentations, with information on 5 places that they studied. All students will learn about 5 places that they couldn't recognize and/or have not been to in person. If students are able to recognize every place, then the assignment will be to enrich that student with a list of other places (see attached, appendix C)

At the end of the activity, presentations will be shared, and all students will be exposed to all of the information. Students will only research places that they could not recognize and/or haven't visited. In the classroom setting, this project is designed to take place over the course of the unit on the Regions of the United States, with students visiting the technology lab once a week for four to six weeks. For the "test" portion, I expect this to take two to three hours, divided up into small sessions.

### Design and Development

#### *Outcomes:*

After completing this project, students will learn about various important places in the United States. They will have used a variety of websites to "see" the places and facts will be obtained about those places. Students will recognize the places that they have learned about. They will know the "5 W's about the places that they are researching. (**W**hat is it? **W**here is it? **W**hy is it important/**W**hy was it created? **W**hen was it discovered/created? **W**ho discovered/created it?)

#### *Resources/Media:*

There will be many learning strategies used in this project. The project is designed to utilize *Differentiated Instruction*. Students who are able to stretch and complete a more difficult task will do so. Those who recognize fewer of the locations will complete the basic assignment. In addition, students will use *Cooperative Learning*. Although this project is designed to be completed independently, students will have the opportunity to complete research with a peer. Additionally, the students will be sharing the completed Power Point presentations with the class in groups. This will allow students to learn from one another. This learning plan also utilizes the theories of *Constructivism*. Students will reflect on their experiences with the locations listed, and then they will build on that information to adjust their learning. Students also used active, *Inquiry Based Learning* along with *Project-Based Instruction*.

- Students will use a list of websites (attached at the end of this document).
- Students will use Power Point to create presentations.

*Structure and Sequence:*

1. Students will complete the learning assessment. If a student was able to recognize a particular "monument, memorial, or unique feature", he/she will not be researching that place. Each student will be assigned 5 places to research for their project, and the places will be divided up equally, so that the class will be exposed to ALL of the places. If a student has recognized all of the places on this list, he/she will be given a secondary list of places in the US to research.
2. Students will use a list of websites (appendix B) to find photographs and the "5 W's" for each of the locations being researched.
3. Students will create a Power Point Presentation, showcasing what was learned, with at least one photograph, and the "5 W's listed" for each location.
4. Students will share their PPT presentations with each other/the class.

*Assessment*

After sharing and discussing their PPT presentations, students will again be shown pictures of various locations. The goal will be that the students can now name at least 80% of the places, and can list the location and one other fact about that place.

Using technology is essential for the success of students. According to research, when we combine inquiry based learning with technology integration, there is a "synergy created that really boosts students' learning" (Brannigan, 2002). At least two types of technology will be utilized for this project. Students will use the Internet for research and to see photographs of locations. Using the Internet provides real photographs and much more information quickly. Students will feel connected to the places they are studying. Virtual tours and videos available actually make the places real to students. Second, students will be using Power Point to create presentations about those locations. Using Power Point allows students to use the pictures (or videos if advanced) in a way that isn't available to them when using paper and pencil. Students will be sharing the completed PPT presentations with the class using an INFOCUS projector and the "Big Screen". Using this type of sharing will allow for a review of the materials

for all students. In addition, students tend to show more pride in their work when it is going to be shared on the screen in front of the class rather than handed in to the teacher. Some peer pressure is a good thing!

### Implementation

The test group was a group of students entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall, and one student entering 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall. Students working with this activity did as expected. (with the exception of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade student who was able to meet expectations of the assignment prior to instruction). A list of other National Parks, Landmarks, etc. has been created (Appendix C), and this list was given to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade student.

After students completed the Analysis (pretest), they began creating the PowerPoint Presentations. The time this took was less than expected. This is most likely due to the fact that the group consisted of 5 children, rather than 25, so the teacher was able to assist with the PPT as needed. All children in the test group were familiar with PPT and were able to begin independently. I will keep in mind that this may not always be the case.

### Evaluation

- ❖ Did students achieve my objectives?/How do I know?
  - Yes, the students in my "test" group did achieve my objectives. I know this because after the sharing of the PPT presentations, I distributed the original "pretest" and asked them to complete it. All of the students were able to identify the sites with the pictures provided. The only confusion was between Yellowstone and Yosemite.
  - Students were quickly able to identify the locations of all places, again with the exception of Yellowstone and Yosemite.
- ❖ Did students learn anything incidental that was unplanned for?
  - Some students learned more advanced pieces of PPT, with minimal guidance. They were able to use animated text and some sounds.
- ❖ How feasible was the learning activity?
  - I think that this learning activity was correctly geared toward END of fourth grade students. Since the majority of my test subjects were students who will be entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the

fall, and they were able to complete the assignments easily, I would expect that this would also work in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade class.

- ❖ What, if anything, could I change?
  - With the confusion between Yellowstone and Yosemite, I think I would include more pictures of both places, to allow the students to clearly identify these two places (especially since they are listed specifically in the standards).
  - In addition to more pictures, when completing this project with my class, I would use Yosemite and Yellowstone as my models for the project. I would create the slides for these two places, and complete the research needed in an instructional setting. That way, I will be confident that these two locations will be clearly differentiated.
  - Providing a note taking sheet/ a template for the slide, may help with those students who are more comfortable taking notes and then putting the info onto a slide, rather than going directly from the research site to the slide. This will also make it easier to put the information into their own words.
  - Students who are struggling learners may have difficulty with this task. One idea for differentiating, is these students will have a template created in PPT, so that the information learned can be plugged into the slide templates. Additionally, students could work in groups to create one Power Point presentation.
  - Sharing 25 Power Point Presentations has merit, but will be very time consuming. Sharing the presentations will need to be spaced out over several days in order to maintain student interest. One possible modification is students may be placed in smaller groups, sharing the presentations, and then changing groups after a set amount of time. All presentation could be shared in a group way.
  - I have also created a rubric (Appendix D) for the Power Point Presentation. Creating the Power Point was as difficult for some as researching and learning about the locations. Having a rubric up front will allow students in the future to use it as a checklist, to be certain that they have all of the needed information.

- ❖ How will I use this evaluation data?
  - I will make the above mentioned changes prior to using this activity in my classroom next year.
- ❖ What did the use of technology enable that couldn't have been done, or done as well, without it?
  - Students were able to virtually visit the sites. The information, pictures, and some video presentations were things that children could not get quickly and with such clarity using books for research. I feel that the students were able to clearly get a mental picture of the locations studied.
  - Students were able to collect real research and information. In a 2000 study, Henry Becker's research shows that "student work is easier to implement in a technology-rich environment where "students have a rich array of information to work with (rather than only preselected, quality filtered textbook content)". This project allows students the ability to learn from the openness of the Internet, and to gather information from a large number of resources.
- ❖ What are the state standards that my activity is meeting?
  - As discussed above, this activity meets the *Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework* for grade 4. The following are the standards met:
    - 4.12 Identify and describe unique features of the United States (e.g., The Everglades, the Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, the Redwood Forest, Yellowstone National Park, and Yosemite National Park).
    - 4.13 Identify major monuments and historical sites in and around Washington, D.C. (e.g., the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, the Smithsonian Museums, the Library of Congress, the White House, the Capitol, the Washington Monument, the National Archives, Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Iwo Jima Memorial, and Mount Vernon).
  - In addition to the Social Studies Framework, Massachusetts has recently (April, 2008) instituted The Massachusetts Technology Literacy Standards. This new set of standards is addressed in the following ways:

- *Standard 1:* Demonstrate proficiency in the use of computers and applications, as well as an understanding of the concepts underlying hardware, software, and connectivity.
- *Standard 2:* Demonstrate the ability to use technology for research, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

If you recognize any of these monuments, historical sites, and "unique features" in the United States, please write the name on the line next to the picture. Print out the document. Highlight those places you have also visited.



Arlington National Cemetery



Iwo Jima Memorial



White House



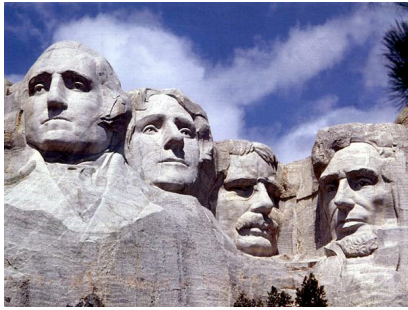
Everglades



5.

Grand Canyon

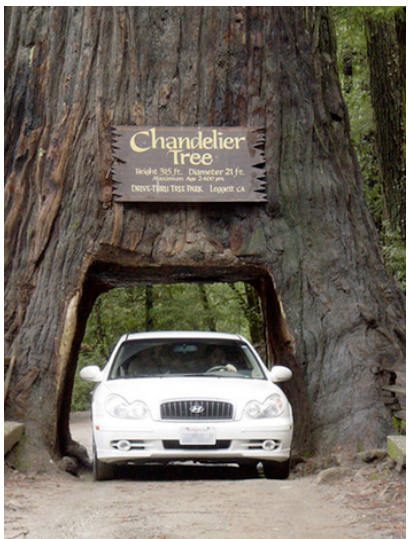
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6.

Mt. Rushmore

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7.

Redwood Forest

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8.

Jefferson Memorial

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9.

Lincoln Memorial

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10.

Mount Vernon

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11.

National Archives

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12.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial

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13.

Washington Monument



14.

US Capitol



15.

Library Of Congress



16.

Yellowstone National Park



17.

Yosemite National Park

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### Tour the US- Use these Websites

- <http://tps.cr.nps.gov/nhl/>
  - This site will help you find historic landmarks by state
- <http://www.theus50.com/>
  - This site has general information about each state. (HINT: Use the Natural Features section)
- <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0004586.html>
  - This is a link to the state and tourism offices of each state in the U.S.
- <http://www.factmonster.com/states.html>
  - This is a site on the 50 states. There is even a link for the National Landmarks. (That may help!)
- <http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/es>
  - Here you need to know what state you want to look at- then you just click. If you want to use the Capital City link, it will take you to information about Washington, D.C., too.
- <http://www.thedistrict.com/placestogo/monumentsandmemorials.html>
  - This is a site to use for places located in Washington, D.C.
- <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/>
  - This is the official White House site-just for kids
- <http://www.tourofdc.org/monuments/>
  - You may find a lot of pictures of the memorials and monuments here
- <http://www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm>
  - Type in the name of your National Park and you will find a list







1. Crazy Horse Memorial, South Dakota



2. The Gateway Arch, St. Louis, Missouri



3. Independence Hall



4. World War II Memorial



5. Women of Vietnam Memorial



6.

The Alamo, Texas



7.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington National Cemetery

**Powerpoint  
Appearance  
and Content :  
The United  
States-**

Teacher Name: Mrs.  
Merten

Student Name:

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Research Information: What is it?	All content throughout the presentation is accurate. There are no factual errors.	Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that might be inaccurate.	The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly flawed or inaccurate.	Content is typically confusing or contains more than one factual error.
Research Information: Where is it?	All content throughout the presentation is accurate. There are no factual errors.	Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that might be inaccurate.	The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly flawed or inaccurate.	Content is typically confusing or contains more than one factual error.
Research Information: Why is it important?	All content throughout the presentation is accurate. There are no factual errors.	Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that might be inaccurate.	The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly flawed or inaccurate.	Content is typically confusing or contains more than one factual error.

Research Information: When was it discovered/created?	All content throughout the presentation is accurate. There are no factual errors.	Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that might be inaccurate.	The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly flawed or inaccurate.	Content is typically confusing or contains more than one factual error.
Research Information: Who discovered or created it?	All content throughout the presentation is accurate. There are no factual errors.	Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that might be inaccurate.	The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly flawed or inaccurate.	Content is typically confusing or contains more than one factual error.
Power Point Information	Powerpoint presentation includes one slide for each of the 5 locations. A photograph is included on each slide.	PPT presentation includes one slide for each of the locations. All 5 locations are included, at least 4 photographs are included.	PPT presentation includes information for each of the locations. All 5 locations are included but not necessarily on individual slides. At least 3 photographs are included.	PPT presentation includes information for each of the locations. All 5 locations are included but not necessarily on individual slides. Some photographs are included.


Date Created: Jul 05,  
2008 08:52 pm (CDT)