



# Exploring U.S. States and Maps

## Lesson Plan with Kwik Stix

**Grade Level:** 3  
**Subject:** Social Studies  
**Time:** 45-60 minutes

### Objectives:

- Students will identify and locate U.S. states on a map
- Students will learn the names and shapes of several states
- Students will use Kwik Stix to color and label a U.S. state map

### Materials:

- Kwik Stix Solid Tempera Paint Sticks
- U.S. map (large poster or printed handout)
- State flashcards
- Overhead projector or whiteboard (optional)

### Procedure:

1. Introduction (5 minutes): Begin by discussing with students what maps are and why they are important. Mention that maps help us understand the world around us. Show the class a U.S. map and briefly explain that it displays the 50 states that make up the United States.
2. State Identification (15 minutes): Use flashcards or an overhead projector to show students the shapes of several U.S. states. Discuss the names of these states with the class. Have a brief quiz where you show the state flashcards one by one, and students raise their hands to identify the states.
3. Coloring and Labeling U.S. Maps (20 minutes): Distribute blank U.S. state outline maps to each student. Provide students with Kwik Stix paint sticks and instruct them to color in the U.S. map. Encourage them to use different colors for each state to make the map visually appealing. As students complete their maps, ask them to label at least five states by name. For example, they can write "California" inside the California state outline.
4. Sharing and Discussion (5 minutes): Have students share their colored and labeled maps with the class. Ask them to point out the states they labeled and share interesting facts they know about those states.
5. Conclusion (5 minutes): Summarize the lesson by discussing the importance of maps and how knowing the names and locations of states can be useful in understanding geography.

### Evaluation:

- Formatively assess students' understanding of states and the U.S. map
- Assess students ability to identify all fifty states on a map



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### Learning Standards Addressed:

#### 1. Geography Standards:

- **Geographic Location:** Students will identify and locate U.S. states on a map, addressing the standard of understanding the geographic location of places.
- **Human-Environment Interaction:** By labeling and discussing states, students will begin to understand how humans interact with their environment in different regions.
- **Place Names and Features:** Students will learn the names of states, addressing the standard of recognizing and understanding place names and features.

#### 2. Map Skills Standards:

- **Map Reading:** Students will practice reading and interpreting a map, including identifying states and their shapes, fulfilling the standard of map reading.
- **Map Elements:** Through the activity of coloring and labeling maps, students will become familiar with map elements such as legends, symbols, and labels.
- **Map Use:** Students will understand the practical use of maps for geographical understanding, meeting the standard of map use.

#### 3. Content Knowledge Standards:

- **U.S. Geography:** The lesson plan introduces students to the geography of the United States, including the names and locations of several states, aligning with content knowledge standards related to U.S. geography.

#### 4. Language Arts Standards:

- **Vocabulary Development:** Through discussions and labeling on the maps, students will expand their vocabulary by learning the names of states, meeting language arts standards related to vocabulary development.
- **Speaking and Listening:** The lesson promotes speaking and listening skills as students participate in discussions and share their maps with the class, addressing language arts standards related to communication.

#### 5. Visual Arts Standards:

- **Artistic Expression:** Students use Kwik Stix to color and label their maps, promoting artistic expression and creativity, aligning with visual arts standards.
- **Fine Motor Skills:** The use of Kwik Stix enhances fine motor skills as students color and write on the maps.

#### 6. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:

- **Identification and Analysis:** Students identify U.S. states by shape and analyze their positions on the map, encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

*While this lesson plan is adaptable to various state-specific standards, it primarily focuses on geographic and map-related standards. It provides a well-rounded approach to teaching geography and map skills while integrating art and language arts into the learning process. Teachers should align the lesson plan with their specific state or district standards as needed.*