



QUESTIONS for Beginning Map Readers *

1. What is a state?
2. Which is the smallest state? Just using your eyes, how many of the smallest state do you think would fit into the largest state?
3. Which states border Mexico? Canada?
4. Which state has a shoreline on four of the Great Lakes?
5. Do you know what a capital is?
6. What is the capital of your state?
7. Can you find the capital of the United States? Of Canada? Of Cuba?
8. Can you trace your state from the map? What shape is it? Can you tell anything from the shape of the state?

QUESTIONS for Secondary or Advanced *

9. Can you find the city you live in on the map? If not, can you locate approximately where your city is on the map?
10. What is an Interstate? Can you find one in your state?
11. Find a large city, far away from where you live, that you might like to visit some day. Trace out the route via major highways that you would probably use to drive there. Make a list of the states you pass through.
12. If the United States of America is a country, and it is composed of fifty states, what's the difference between a state and a country?
13. **EXTRA CREDIT:** Which state has the most other states touching it?

QUESTIONS for Secondary or Advanced *

1. Which do you think gives you the better picture, a map or a globe?
2. Why do we call it the United States of America?
3. Why are the fifty states different sizes?
4. Does a larger area make a state better? Or is one with more people better?
5. If you don't include Hawaii and Alaska, the forty-eight adjoining states all join up into one mass. Do you know what such a grouping of states is called?
6. Why are there so many more states bordering the Atlantic Ocean than the Pacific Ocean?

QUESTIONS for Secondary or Advanced *

7. Do you think borders are a smart idea? Are they necessary to preserve order? Do they make governing people easier?
8. Why do you think there are so few cities along our borders with Canada and Mexico?
9. Which is more important to the USA, the rivers or the Interstates?
10. Think about the shapes of the Interstates, of the rivers, of the lake and ocean shores. Are any of them straight lines? Why or why not?
11. Do you think it's important to know the capitals of states you don't live in? Why might someone outside of S. Dakota care that its capital is Pierre? Why not?

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS *

1. What's left off the map & why?
2. Look at the oceans: are they part of countries? Or are they outside countries?
3. Does the land end at "land's end"?
4. If the oceans aren't part of the countries, what about the sky? If the air above our heads is part of our country, is it also part of our states? Our counties? Is there such a thing as "county air space"? How about the space over your home: is it yours?
5. Is the air above our heads part of our country? If so, how high or far out is this true? A little way? Ten miles? Ten light years?

THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS *

6. Satellites from other countries pass over our country. Are these satellites invading our space? Are ours invading their space?
7. What about under the ground? We think about the space under our houses as ours: how far down is it ours? To the center of the planet? Or all the way through to the other side?
8. Do the borders shown on our map mean anything in cyberspace? Does cyberspace stop at state or national borders? If you were online right now, how many clicks would it take you to cross all these borders?

Highly recommended reading for understanding the USA:

A Young People's History of the United States (2 volumes) by Howard Zinn with Rebecca Stefoff
This young adult version of the best-selling *People's History of the United States* is ideal for middle school and for high school students. Covers the full span of US history right up to the current war in Iraq. Available from local bookstores or from www.sevenstories.com
Library Journal calls it "a brilliant and moving history of the American people."

Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your High School History Textbook Got Wrong by Jim Loewen.
Marred by blind nationalism, mindless optimism, sheer misinformation, and outright lies, most high school American history textbooks omit the ambiguity, passion, conflict, and drama from our past. Over one million copies sold. Available from local bookstores or from www.simonsays.com

The Black and White side of this map is copyright-free and may be reproduced by teachers wishing to drill students on the content. The B&W image is available as a free download at www.ODTmaps.com (see left-hand side under FREE MAPS AND MORE) at an 11x17" size and 8.5x11" size.