My Own State

Using knowledge of map-making with an emphasis on scale, students create a map of a fictitious country with five states.

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**Grade Level**
4-5

**Duration**
1-3 class periods

**National Geography Standards**

**Element One: The World in Spatial Terms**
1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

**Arizona Geography Strand**

**CONCEPT 1**
World in Spatial Terms

**GRADE 4**
PO 2. Interpret political and physical maps using the following map elements:
a. title
b. compass rose (cardinal and intermediate directions)
c. symbols
d. legend
e. scale
f. road map index
g. grid (latitude and longitude)

**GRADE 5**
PO 6 Construct maps, charts and graphs to display geographic information.

**Other Arizona Standards**

**Mathematics Common Core Standards**

**Number and Operations in Base Ten**
5.NBT.5. Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm.

**Measurement and Data**
4.MD.2. Use the four operations to solve word problems involving distances, intervals of time, liquid volumes, masses of objects, and money, including problems involving simple fractions or decimals, and problems that require expressing measurements given in a larger unit in terms of a smaller unit. Represent measurement quantities using diagrams such as number line diagrams that feature a measurement scale.
4.MD.3. Apply the area and perimeter formulas for rectangles in real world and mathematical.

**Overview**
The formation of political boundaries is important to our understanding of how the world and its groups interact. The students will learn how geographical landforms separate political entities. This will also be a lesson in cooperative decision-making.

**Purpose**
The students will cooperatively create a map of a new country consisting of 5 states with common boundaries. The map will feature political boundaries, a compass rose, labels, and a mileage scale.

**Materials**

- Colored pencils or crayons in the following recommended colors:
My Own State

- blue
- brown
- green
- black

- Large sheets of cardboard such as posterboard or tagboard, one (22in. x 28in.) for each group of five students OR large white construction paper (12in. x 18in.).
- Chart paper for recording brainstormed ideas
- Tools for measuring such as rulers, yardsticks, meter sticks, and tape measures
- Arizona’s Topography and Rivers map
- Arizona’s Landforms and Rivers map
- Group Performance Assessment Rubric
- Individual Assessment Worksheet and Answer Key

Objectives
The student will be able to:

1. Explain why boundaries are important.

2. How landforms and people contribute to the creation of boundaries.

3. Determine distances on a map using a mileage scale.

4. Make a map including a mileage scale.

Procedures
SESSION ONE
1. Have students examine the Arizona’s Topography and Rivers map and Arizona’s Landforms and Rivers map. As a whole class, brainstorm common features on both maps and write the responses on chart paper.

2. Brainstorm reasons for creating boundaries, with specific emphasis on the Colorado River border with California and Nevada, as well as the Four Corners shared by Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico.

3. Tell students that they are going to make a map of a new country that will incorporate the brainstormed map elements while also keeping in mind the reasons borders are necessary. Explain that each student will make his/her state on the same poster or paper as that of four other students. These 5 states will equal a new country.

4. There will need to be a border around the edge of the poster board for labels, keys, etc. The students may pencil this in before they add color.

5. The students will determine where they want to draw the boundaries of their country. As a group they must decide where and why the boundaries are to be drawn on their collective map. Students’ discussions should also incorporate their personal ideas and feelings for where their boundaries should lie – paralleling political, religious, and cultural beliefs used for drawing boundaries in the real world.

6. Discuss possible restrictions for drawing their state boundaries. For example, the students may notice that a blue line (river) makes a natural boundary such as the Rio Grande and the Colorado. Brown may be a desert or mountains.

7. Students decide which color(s) they will use for their map section and begin coloring boundary lines for their states. Remind them that their five states together will constitute a new country.

8. Once boundaries are decided upon and drawn with a dark marker for each state, the students must decide how large their country is in relation to the world. Possible student prediction: Country A is one-twelfth of the earth’s surface in area. Country A is 600 miles
from east to west and 1000 miles from north
to south. Now have one student look in the
atlas to determine the actual area and
circumference of the earth. (Area= 197,
000,000 square miles and Circumference =
approximately 25,000 miles.) The students
can then multiply their estimated dimensions and
get the area of their country (Country A equals
600,000 square miles).

9. Now they can determine the relative size of
their country by comparing their area to the
earth’s real size.

10. The students work as a group to create a
scale for the mileage on their country map.
Major landforms and water bodies should be
clearly labeled.

11. The students should also include names for
each state as well as the country. The students
should include a key for features not already
labeled on their map. The map should have a
title.

12. Before the formal assessment, assemble as a
whole group to discuss students’ rationales for
drawing their boundaries as well as how they
arrived at their map mileage scale.

Assessment
The students will answer questions on the
Individual Assessment Worksheet. Questions 1-
4 measure geography knowledge. Questions 5-6
measure math knowledge. A score of 80% or
higher is considered mastery.

The students will also be assessed for their
geography skills using the My Own State
Group Performance Assessment Rubric on their
map. Mastery is considered 19 points or higher.

Extensions
Latitude and longitude lines or other grid lines
may be incorporated into the students’ maps.

Students may use Tempera paint thinned to a
2:1 ratio with water to create their maps rather
than colored pencils/crayons. This paint could
be blown threw straws to create landforms,
boundaries, etc. Using this method will take at
least two days for the paint to dry before any
labeling is done.

After the maps are completed the students could
design mottoes, flags, seals, etc., for their state.
They could also create brochures, reports, and
websites, describing in detail aspects of their
state.

Cultural diversity could be addressed as well as
political structure, foreign relations, and legal
structure.