Friends Around the Country

Students learn to use maps and atlases while finding locations of classes who sent postcards.

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Grade Level
1-2

Duration
2-3 initial class periods, repeated as appropriate

Overview
Maps, globes and atlases are standard tools people use to locate themselves and others. Students need an understanding of how to use these tools while learning more about the states in the United States.

Purpose
In this lesson students will be able to locate their own city and state, as well as other locations as postcards from various places around the country arrive.

Materials
- A variety of postcards from the Southwest (or from the U.S.), at least one for every 2 students
- Paper US map (with or without state names), or a supply of desktop maps of the Southwest or the U.S. on which children can write and color
- Assessment for Friends Around the Country
- Assessment answer key
- Classroom atlases

Objectives

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 4

CONCEPT 1 World in Spatial Terms
GRADE 1
PO 5 Locate physical and human features using maps, illustrations, images or globes
PO 6 Locate Arizona on a map

GRADE 2
PO 6 Locate physical and human features using maps, illustrations, images or globes

CONCEPT 2 Places and Regions
GRADE 1
PO 3 Identify through images of content studied how places have distinct characteristics.

GRADE 2
PO 1 Identify through images of content studied how places have distinct characteristics.

Arizona Math Standard

STRAND 2 Data Analysis, Probability, and Discrete Mathematics
CONCEPT 1 Data Analysis
GRADE 1
PO 1 Collect, record, organize, and display data using tally charts or pictographs.
PO 2 Ask and answer questions by interpreting simple displays of data, including tally charts or pictographs.

GRADE 2
PO 1 Collect, record, organize, and display data using pictographs, frequency tables, or single bar graphs.
PO 2 Formulate and answer questions by interpreting displays of data, including pictographs, frequency tables, or single bar graphs.
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The student will be able to:

1. Locate on a U.S. map in an atlas those states from which a postcard is received.

2. Locate on state maps in the atlas the towns from where a postcard is received (if they are on the map).

3. Categorize postcards into groups according to the area of the region from which they came.

4. Identify the area of the region from which most of the cards were received.

5. Formulate questions related to math, based on the categories of postcards collected.

Procedures

A collection of 50 or more postcards from a variety of locations within one region (Southwest) is needed.
Pre-requisite: Students should be able to locate their own state and city on a map.

SESSION ONE

1. Distribute atlases, one per two children, depending on availability.

2. Distribute Southwest maps or U.S. map on which children can write and color. Discuss where Arizona is in relation to other states around it. Have children locate Arizona on this map. If the names of the states are not written, ask them to write the name or AZ on the state shape.

4. Have students color the states of the Southwest using different colors for each state. If state names are not printed on the map, have students write the names or the postal codes on each.

5. Bring out an assortment of postcards, or print ones from the website (http://www.desertskyone.com/postcards.html).

Help students locate the states from which the postcards were sent.

6. Have students find the states in their atlas and on their own maps. On their maps, have them make a mark (i.e., an x, a tally mark, or a tiny circle sticker) for each postcard from a particular state. (For younger children, or children with less representational math experience, the postcards themselves can become a pictograph on large chart paper.)

SESSION TWO:

1. When all postcards have been marked on the maps, begin to formulate questions with students. Some possible math questions are:
   - What states sent the least postcards?
   - From which states did we receive the most?
   - Where are states that sent an equal number of postcards?
   - Were there any states from which we received no postcards?

Assessment

Student maps can be graded for correctness of labels on the states (if using an unlabeled map), coloring the states that belong to that region, and X’s marking the states represented on the postcards. Assign points for correct labels =10 points, correct coloring = 5 points, and correct number of X’s = 10 points. Mastery is 20 points or higher (80%).

A final math assessment, involving a pictograph and 5 questions, is provided. Mastery is 80% or higher.

Extensions

Repeat these activities for other regions of the country. Students could map and collect data about the states to which they are sending postcards, and then compare those numbers with
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the final numbers and locations of postcards received.

Some possible geography questions might revolve around the 5 themes of geography (location, place, movement, region, and human-environment interaction):

• Which theme is represented by the most postcards?
• Which theme is least represented?
• Are there any themes that are not represented at all?

Sources
http://pcg.cyberbee.com/
Leni Donlan’s postcard geography project is an excellent source of postcards for this lesson, and many others. There is a deadline each year for this project.

http://www.desertskyone.com/postcards.html is the author’s personal website with many postcards which can be printed and used with this lesson. They are sorted by region already.

http://southwest.fws.gov/regionsmap.html

This site shows the 6 regions of the US, as divided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.