

Lesson 10: Introduction to the United States

This is the first lesson in the unit “The United States” within the AOHT Travel Geography course.

This lesson focuses on identifying the states and regions of the United States. It also focuses on the points of access for visiting these states and regions. It will require **4** class periods.

Getting Started

This section includes:

- Objectives
- Prerequisites
- Major Topic
- Standard(s)
- Key Concept(s)
- Key Vocabulary
- Key Skills
- Habits of Mind
- Curricular Integration

Objectives

- Identify the location of each state and its key cities.
- Understand how the United States is divided by region.
- Review the time zones of the United States and regional climate profiles.
- Identify the major hubs in the United States and how to travel between them.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for students.

Major Topic

What are the geographic divisions, features, and travel gateways of the United States?

Standard(s)

- Standard 1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective. (National Geography Standards)
 - Standard 5. That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity (National Geography Standards)
 - Standard 15: How physical systems affect human systems (National Geography Standards)
 - Use appropriate resources and techniques to develop and deliver formal and informal presentations. (States Career Clusters, Hospitality & Tourism)
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Key Concept(s)

- Teamwork
 - Planning
 - Analyzing data
 - Mapping
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Key Vocabulary

- Gateway
 - Hub
 - Domestic travel
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Key Skills

- Acquires and uses information
 - Thinks critically and solve problems
 - Communicates successfully with others
 - Works appropriately and productively with others
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Habits of Mind

- Thinking flexibly
- Gathering data through all senses

- Applying past knowledge to new situations
 - Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
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Curricular Integration

- Identify and use information technology tools specific to hospitality and tourism to access, manage, and integrate information. (States Career Clusters, Hospitality & Tourism)
 - Standard III. People, Places, & Environment, f. Use knowledge of physical system changes such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle to explain geographic phenomena. (NCSS, National Council for the Social Studies)
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Materials & Resources

This section includes:

- Reader
 - Workbook
 - Supplies
 - Additional Resources
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Reader

No readings are required for this lesson.

Workbook

- Worksheet 10.1 “The United States”
 - Worksheet 10.2 “United States Regions”
 - Worksheet 10.3 “Physical Geography and Climate Profiles of United States Regions”
 - Worksheet 10.4 “Travel between United States Cities/Regions”
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Supplies

No supplies are required.

Additional Resources

- Teacher Resources
- PowerPoint Presentation 10.1: “The United States”
- Internet access

Assessment

This section lists the student assessment products for this lesson and the criteria by which they should be assessed.

ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
Student Worksheet 10.1 “The United States”	Students grade themselves on identifying the 50 states. Make sure they complete filling in the United States map. Review as a class the accurate placement of the time zone boundaries.
Student Worksheet 10.2 “United States Regions”	Students provide information requested for their assigned regions and enter worksheet information on other regions based on group presentations. Student group presentations of worksheet data are clearly articulated and information is accurate.
Student Worksheet 10.3 “Physical Geography and Climate Profiles of United States Regions”	Students provide concise and accurate summaries for their assigned regions and enter worksheet information on other regions based on group presentations.
Student Worksheet 10.4 “Travel between United States Cities/Regions”	Students provide all information requested; information is accurate.

Lesson Steps

STEP	MIN.	ACTIVITY
1	15	<p>Interactive Activity</p> <p>Are you smarter than a third grader? Can you locate the fifty states?</p> <p>Ask students to use Worksheet 10.1 to identify the fifty states either by full name or two-letter abbreviation. Time students (for example, 50 states in 5 minutes) and then have them grade themselves (All 50: Good work; 45-49: Brush up; Under 44: You know who you are—review!)</p> <p>As an alternative, have students test their knowledge of the location of the fifty states by using the interactive test available at the following websites: http://www.digyourowngrave.com/grade-three-geography-test/ and http://www.pibmug.com/files/map_test.swf. This is a timed test in which you drag the state name onto an outline map.</p>

STEP	MIN.	ACTIVITY
		Teachers may use the PowerPoint slide show for this lesson, which contains U.S. maps showing states, cities, capitals, time zones, and climate.
2	10	<p>Research Activity</p> <p>Using Worksheet 10.1, ask students to draw in the boundaries for the time zones. Students should also name the time zones under each zone.</p>
2	30	<p>Group Research</p> <p>Divide the class into 7 groups. Assign each group one of the 7 United States regions shown in Worksheet 10.2. Each group uses their region's map to create a geographic profile of the region, identifying the major <i>gateways</i>—the ways of entering or accessing a region; including the major <i>hubs</i>—the city centers and major airports that link to other cities.</p> <p>Building on knowledge gained in the previous lesson, groups will also profile the physical geography and climate of their region by using Worksheet 10.3.</p> <p>Student groups should divide the research tasks (identifying the gateways and hubs, describing the physical geography, and profiling the climate) to make efficient use of time.</p> <p>Each group will give an informal presentation (5-8 minutes) of their region in the next class period. At that time, students can fill in the worksheets for the other regions.</p>
		CLASS PERIOD 2
3	45	<p>Presentations</p> <p>Student groups present the research on their regions. Students should take notes during the presentations to complete the worksheet profiles of the other regions.</p>
4	10	<p>Summary Discussion</p> <p>Discuss general impressions and familiarity that students have of these regions. Which states have students visited/not visited/want to visit/have no interest in visiting?</p>
		CLASS PERIODS 3 & 4
6	110	<p>Group Research</p> <p>Assign Worksheet 10.4. Student groups plan domestic travel (define term for the class) between 3 major cities within their regions. They must research and choose from various methods of travel (air, land, water) and routes between the cities.</p> <p>Student groups then plan travel from a key city in their regions to 3 cities in</p>

STEP	MIN.	ACTIVITY
		<p>another region. Assign this other region to student groups or have students pick a region randomly. Students report distance between cities (they can use online tools such as http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/calculate-distance.html or http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/distance.html), time zone differences, and any weather conditions that could affect each trip.</p> <p>Build in time at the end of the fourth period for a class discussion. What made students make certain travel choices? Were they able to find the information they needed? What kinds of resources did they use? Are any of the trips they planned particularly appealing? What was the most important thing they learned about having to plan these trips?</p>

Extending the Lesson

This section indicates possible supports for students with special needs, as well as enrichment extensions for advanced students.

Additional Student Supports

Cooperative learning techniques will help students with special needs succeed through peer teaching and division tasks and responsibilities.

Enrichment Extensions

- Ask students to find fun facts and trivia about the United States, such as, which state has the longest coastline (Alaska, with 6,640 miles of coastline, greater than that of all other states combined), which has the tallest building (Illinois, with the Sears Tower in Chicago), which has the highest literacy rate (Seattle, Washington). The website [infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com) is a good source for this information.
- Have students research how extreme weather conditions (hurricanes, tornados, flooding, etc.) have impacted tourism for some U.S. cities, and what the risks are for the future if climate changes continue due to global warming.