

Set in the U.S.A.

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Overview

This unit is designed to supplement what fifth grade students learn about the geography of the United States in social studies class as well as to reinforce what they learn about the element of story setting in language arts classes. As a school librarian, I frequently see blank looks on students' faces when I ask them where a state is located that figures in the story I am reading to them. There is also a lot of general confusion on the differences between a city, a state, and a country.

Unfortunately, social studies seems to be the academic subject that receives the least attention in elementary school. Because of the high stakes testing mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind law, math and reading receive the majority of the attention. Science also is tested district-wide at certain levels. Although social studies is on students' schedules, it doesn't necessarily mean it is taught if other needs are more pressing.

In most elementary schools, students are scheduled one period a week in the library. School librarians have general topics students should be covering at different grade levels, but there is a lot of room for flexibility. The library, with its information resources, is an ideal place to supplement some of the concepts from social studies class.

The fifth grade social studies curriculum encompasses United States history and geography. The library is equipped with many fiction books - both shorter picture books and longer chapter books - that feature settings around the United States. By keying into those locations, I hope to build on students' knowledge of our country. Additionally, there are non-fiction books as well as reference books such as the World Almanac and encyclopedias that students may

use to do research on an assigned state. Ideally, this unit would be taught by the librarian in conjunction with the social studies teacher. However, since the two schools where I am currently the librarian are closing next year, I have no way of knowing who the staff will be at my school and what degree of collaboration will be possible.

Rationale

The setting of a story is one of the elements of literature frequently explored by students along with character, plot, theme, and point of view. The setting includes both the place and time of a story. The author's choice of a place and time in which to set his story is paramount; decisions about character and plot will depend on the setting. The time of a story includes considerations such as time of the year as well as time in history. This unit, however, concentrates on the other aspect of setting, which is place.

In an essay titled "Place in Fiction," Eudora Welty, one of the most celebrated American short story writers, says, "The truth is, fiction depends for its life on place. Location is the crossroads of circumstance"(783). Although she was not specifically writing about children's literature, her assertion rings just as true for a young person's book as an adult's. Take, for instance, The Wizard of Oz. Known to most because of its place in movie history, it is impossible to think of Dorothy and company without also seeing Kansas, the yellow brick road, and the Emerald City. Welty goes on to say that "the very notion of moving a novel brings ruder havoc to the mind and affections than would a century's alteration in its time"(787). Again with Oz - how about California, a purple brick road, and a Sapphire City? Somehow, changing these details of setting would render L. Frank Baum's story a different one altogether. Finally, Welty says that "Being shown how to locate, to place, any account is what does most toward *making* us believe it . . . may the account be the facts or a lie; and that is where place in fiction comes in"(784). Although The Wizard of Oz is pure fiction, the details of its different settings make us believe.

To thoroughly appreciate an author's use of setting in a story - particularly when those settings are actual places and not products of the author's imagination - students need to have some understanding of geography. What does it mean that a story is set in Kansas? Why couldn't the same thing have happened in Oregon? Unfortunately, a basic knowledge of their own country's geography seems to be something that many students are lacking. At one college, only 42 percent of students could name Mexico as the United States' southern neighbor (de Blij 17). In a 2002 National Geographic - Roper Global Geographic Literacy Survey, only 51 percent of the young Americans (age 18 to 24) surveyed could

identify New York, 49 percent could identify Pennsylvania, and 30 percent could identify New Jersey (7). In his book, *Why Geography Matters*, Harm de Blij explains that geography was an important part of American education until about the mid 1960s. At that point, professional educators decided to lump together the disciplines of history, government, and geography into social studies courses. He says that "this set of educational circumstances in little more than a decade produced exactly what geographers had predicted: an evident and worsening national geographic illiteracy" (16).

In this world that seems to shrink every day due to technological advances, it is more important than ever for students to increase their geographic literacy. Being able to put a name to a place on a map lets them know what effect news might have on their lives. The authors of the Roper Survey say that "broad and integrated geographic knowledge is . . . critical to understanding and succeeding in a world which has increasingly taken on an international perspective in key arenas" (1). Although the Survey authors are speaking of a knowledge of geography that extends beyond the borders of the United States, at least familiarity with our own country is a place to start. A basic knowledge of geography will also enrich students' pleasure reading because it can help them to more fully envision a story. When they read about something that happens anywhere in their country, students should be able to get at least a mental picture of where that is in relation to where they live. If, for example, a story is set in Texas, and students have no idea of that state's location, they probably cannot also understand how a character's everyday life in that state might differ from their own.

Here in Pittsburgh, social studies seems to have slipped to the bottom of the academic curriculum. My unit will give students opportunities to concentrate on the setting of the story, then tie that knowledge of setting to a map. I have chosen to stick with the United States because that is the area that is studied in social studies in the fifth grade curriculum for the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Although this unit is not part of a social studies course, it is important to have an idea of the way geography is considered in schools. The five central themes in geography, as identified by the Geographic Education National Implementation Project, are location, place, human-environmental relations, movement, and regions (Rogers 2). Of these five themes, the three that have relevance to this unit are location, place, and regions. The Pittsburgh Public Schools' Citizenship Department Website defines **location** as where specific points are located on the earth's surface and where certain points are in relation to others. **Place** identifies the distinctive characteristics of areas that distinguish them from other places. **Regions** classify areas that display similarities of selected features (<http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/AcademicOffice/InstructionalSupport/citizenship/ThemesGrades25>).

asp).

When I first started thinking about this unit and talked to others about tying together setting and geography, almost every person I spoke with immediately mentioned the book *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Author Patricia MacLachlan made the settings of the Kansas plains and the Maine seashore such an integral part of the story that her book epitomizes the types of stories I wanted to use. However, because students already read that book, I did not use it for part of my curriculum. I had thought it would be fairly easy to come up with titles that could be tied to different states using resources such as *A to Zoo, Subject Access to Children's Picture Books*. However, as I went through that reference book state by state, I found that very few states were listed as subjects. I wanted the majority of titles I chose to be picture books because as the school librarian, I generally see the students only once a week. Choosing only chapter books would have severely limited the number of states that students would have been exposed to in stories. Picture books can be valuable for using with older students when they are used with a specific objective in mind, such as examining the setting. Additionally, picture books have the added benefit of illustrations which are very helpful in considering an element such as setting. Some reference books included settings for locations around the world, but not within the United States, while others approached the United States only from a historical perspective. I ended up choosing most of the titles for inclusion in the unit by a subject search of my on-line catalog (OPAC) at M.L.King Elementary School.

My hope was to feature at least one book for each region of the country. The fifth grade curriculum guide (*The United States*, Scott Foresman, 2003) divides the country into these regions: West, Southwest, Midwest; Southeast, and Northeast. It further divides the West into Pacific and Mountain States; the Midwest into Great Plains and Great Lakes States; and the Northeast into New England and Middle Atlantic States. See Appendix A for the breakdown of which states are included in which region.

I think it is important for the students to start their literary trip around the United States with some background about their own state, so for Pennsylvania I will use two non-fiction books: *K is for Keystone: A Pennsylvania Alphabet* and *One for All: A Pennsylvania Number Book*. Although alphabet and number books are usually used with much younger readers, these two are quite appropriate for fifth graders. In addition to a four line verse on each page about the featured letter or number, there is a longer narrative of two or three paragraphs on each page providing additional detail.

For the Midwest, I chose *Climbing Kansas Mountains* by George

Shannon. This is a very simple picture book about a boy whose dad tells him one day that it's time they climbed a Kansas mountain. The boy thinks his dad must be joking, knowing that the state is very flat because he made a flour-dough map of it. His father drives him to the grain elevator where he works, explaining that a high, quiet view is what makes a mountain. The two of them climb to the top and can see the view for miles around, which the boy compares to a table, with the trees in town being the table's centerpiece. Students will have no trouble being able to describe the setting of the Kansas plains in this story that come through in both the boy's words and the illustrations that shimmer with the heat of the Kansas sun.

Oklahoma will be our Southwest destination in *Wingwalker* by Rosemary Wells. This is a short novel with only 63 pages and 16 of those are full-page illustrations, so the book could be covered in two class periods. Reuben's family lives in a small town in Oklahoma where his father teaches dance lessons and his mother cooks at a cafe. Then the Depression hits, and drought turns Oklahoma into a dust bowl. Midway through the book, the setting changes to the Midwest when Reuben's father responds to an advertisement for a carnival wingwalker in Minnesota. Reuben meets the other members of the carnival, his mom cooks for them, and his dad does his dance steps on the wings of a plane. The setting plays a big role in the first half of the book, and is what causes the family to move North. It is not as important in the second half, although the various Midwest states that the carnival goes to are mentioned.

Scott Foresman includes West Virginia in the Southeast, and I have chosen *Shiloh*, a Newbery-medal winning chapter book about a boy and a dog set in the hills of Friendly, West Virginia. Marty is an eleven year old who loves to roam the hills around his home and comes across a lost beagle. He realizes it belongs to a man who he believes mistreats his hunting dogs, and is determined not to return the dog, who he names Shiloh, to him. Marty's family just manages to get by, so although he can hide Shiloh on their land, keeping Shiloh fed presents problems. The setting is very much a part of the story because it enables Marty to keep Shiloh for at least a short while with no one knowing his secret. At 144 pages, this is the longest book I will use for the unit. The setting is pretty well described in Chapter One, so we will be able to discuss it initially, but I will continue reading the book to the students after the unit is over.

We will make our longest literary journey to the West region for Alaska with the picture book *Baby in a Basket* by Gloria Rand. Marie and her two daughters are leaving the bitter cold and dark days of Alaska's winter in 1917. They travel with two other passengers by sleigh pulled by six horses across high mountains and stretches of low land, stopping each night at a roadhouse where

everyone eats a hot dinner and beds down for the night. As they near a bridge by a roadhouse one night, the horses bolt and the sleigh is overturned. They find one of Marie's daughters, but cannot find the baby that was in a basket. Distraught, Marie is taken to the roadhouse. The owner searches for the baby without luck. Two trappers come to the house having picked up what they thought was a basket of furs on the river and found it was a baby. An author's note explains that this is based on a true story of Alaska's first kindergarten teacher who left Fairbanks to stay with relatives in Seattle until spring. Students will get a good feel for the bitter cold and long nights of winter in Alaska from the descriptions and illustrations.

Along with these titles, I will use non-fiction books about the states from the *Hello U.S.A.* series. The purpose of using these books is to provide students with additional background material about the states featured in the fiction books in this unit - Kansas, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Alaska. There are a number of different series available about the states. I like *Hello U.S.A.* for a number of reasons. Each state book in the series has chapters titled The Land, The History, People & Economy and The Environment. The reading level is appropriate for fifth graders and each chapter features a number of captioned photographs. Each book ends with a section titled "All About (State Name)" which has fun facts, the state song, a recipe from the state, historical timeline, outstanding persons from the state, facts-at-a-glance, places to visit, and places to learn more about the state including both books and websites. It also has the various parts that we teach students to use in the library - table of contents, glossary, and index. From this series, here is the background material I will share with students on each state.

Kansas by Charles Fredeen: Kansas is located exactly in the center of the United States. The state is divided into three areas of plains - the great plains, the till plains and the southeastern plains. Because of this geographic feature, farmland covers about 90 percent of Kansas, with the chief crop being wheat. Kansas is sometimes called the Breadbasket of America since it produces more wheat than any other state.

Oklahoma by Rita C. LaDoux: Grassy prairies are probably the landform most associated with Oklahoma, but it is not the only one. Mesas are found throughout the prairies in the western part of the state. The eastern part of the state has two regions that feature rivers - the Arkansas Valley, and the Red River Region. Between these two river regions lie the Ouachita Mountains which have spring-fed rivers running through them and forests along the mountains' high ridges. The weather can be quick to change in Oklahoma because cold air flowing south from Canada collides with warm air flowing north from the Gulf of Mexico. This can cause strong winds or even violent tornadoes.

Alaska by Joyce Johnston: Alaska is the largest state in the country and is more than twice as large as Texas. Two of the land regions in Alaska are mountain ranges: the Pacific Mountains and the Brooks Range. Mount McKinley, the tallest mountain in North America, is part of the Pacific Mountains. The Uplands and Lowlands region of Alaska features rivers, swampy river valleys, and low hills. The Arctic Coastal Plain is the most northern part of the state, and only its top few inches of soil thaw each summer. Alaska has the world's longest chain of active volcanoes.

West Virginia by Domenica Di Piazza: When looking at a map, West Virginia can be identified by its two panhandles to the east and north. Mountains cover most of the state. The Blue Ridge Mountains, in the northeastern corner of the state, are one of the state's regions. Another is the Ridge and Valley, which runs along the state's entire eastern border. This region includes the Allegheny Mountains. The Appalachian Plateau, with most of the state's biggest cities in its river valleys, makes up the final region.

Objectives

My main objectives are for students:

1. To be able to locate at least 25 of the states in our country. Although we will be visiting far fewer than that via the settings of books that we read, I hope that some of the activities we do, such as discussing what states we would have to go through to get to a book's setting and designing a travel brochure, will help students in being able to name additional states.
2. To be able to describe the setting of a story and be able to explain why it is important to the story's plot.
3. To research one state and create a travel brochure about it.

Strategies

It is important to assess students' initial knowledge of the identities of the states. On the first day of the unit, students will be given a blank map of the United States with the borders of the states drawn in and no other information. They will be asked to label any states whose names they know. They will be told that at the end of the unit, they will do this again as one way of seeing how much they have learned.

After completing this activity, the class will look at a large map of the United States and locate Pennsylvania. As our home state, this will be the starting point for all of our literary travels. To give students a little background on our state, I will share with them *One for All - A Pennsylvania Number Book* and *K is for Keystone - A Pennsylvania Alphabet*. Pennsylvania will be the only state for which we will exclusively use non-fiction books. As I read them, students will locate the various Pennsylvania locales that are described on a large map of the state.

For the remainder of the unit, the basic strategy will be to let the students know the state we will be visiting via a book's setting. Students will do a small amount of research on the state, then listen to the book and discuss the setting. We will discuss why the setting is integral to the story as well as geographical features of the state that are mentioned in the stories.

Another strategy for helping students to identify the various states will be to use web sites with interactive geography quizzes. A number of different sites are available that do a good job in providing various levels of difficulty. I will have these listed on a document in a folder in the school's shared file so students will be able to access them easily any time they are in the computer lab and finish work early. The sites are listed in Annotated Bibliography of United States Geography Web Resources. Several of these actually give the students a score, so they would be able to track their progress as they become more familiar with the locations of the states.

Classroom Activities

Day One

Ask students how many states they think they can identify. Distribute a map of the United States with state borders drawn in, but no labels. Ask students to fill in names of as many states as they can. Emphasize that this is not for a grade, but just to assess their starting knowledge. Discuss the unit topic and the objectives. Assign each student one state on which they will become the class expert. Give each student a map of Pennsylvania to refer to as I read *One for All - A Pennsylvania Number Book* and *K is for Keystone - A Pennsylvania Alphabet*. When I am finished, students should label Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Lancaster, Gettysburg, Harrisburg, Erie, Titusville, Valley Forge, Williamsport, and Easton. If time permits, have students practice using the scale on the map to estimate distances between some of the cities they have located.

Day Two

Tell students that today we will be visiting Kansas via the book *Climbing Kansas Mountains*. Distribute the handout (Appendix B) for students to complete with information from the World Almanac. Go over the answers together, mapping out the route from Pittsburgh to Kansas on a wall map. Read aloud the book. Discuss the setting. How is it different than what you would see if you went to the top of a tall building in Pittsburgh? Give students a first chance to look up in the encyclopedia the state that was assigned to them last week. They should find five fast facts (i.e. capital, state bird, area, population, state tree, etc.). These will be used later as part of a travel brochure about their state.

Days Three through Six

The same basic procedure as for Day Two will be followed. Day Three's book will be *Baby in a Basket* with an Alaska setting. Day Four and Day Five will be devoted to *Wingwalker*. We will cover chapters one through three, which are set in Oklahoma, on Day Four, and chapter four, which is set in Minnesota and surrounding states on Day Five. On Day Six, we will start *Shiloh* with its West Virginia setting. We will read just chapter one before discussing the setting. This book will be continued during library time as the school year progresses. Because of its length, it is not possible to include it all in this unit.

Day Seven

Students will do research on their assigned state in the encyclopedia or a state book if it is available. In addition to the fast facts they have already located, they will need information about the type of land in the state (i.e. plains, mountains, etc.) as well as two places of interest in the state that they can include in a travel brochure. If the computer lab is available for our use, this information could be presented as a Microsoft Publisher document or a more simple handwritten document with illustrations.

Additional Days or Fillers

As time permits during the unit, other activities will be introduced. Google Earth, a free downloadable internet site that offers satellite images and maps, will be utilized when possible to give students another type of visual image of the stories' settings. Selections from *My America*, *A Poetry Atlas of the United States* will be read and discussed when there are poems that align with settings we are discussing. If the class shows an interest in poetry, students could create a poem about their assigned state as part of their travel brochure or as a separate

assignment.

When computer lab time is available, students will be introduced to the interactive United States geography quizzes that are listed in the Annotated Bibliography of United States Geography Web Resources. Working on these will be another way for students to familiarize themselves with states' names. I also have a number of United States jigsaw puzzles that will be available for students to work on as they complete assignments.

To help judge how successful this unit has been, students will again be given the blank United States map and asked to label any states that they can after all the activities have been completed. Although the unit will be officially concluded at this point, I would hope to continue making reference to the United States map as the school year progresses and states are mentioned in books I read to students in the library. As students return books they have borrowed from the library, I will also look for titles that I know have ties to particular states and ask students to locate them.

Annotated Teacher Reference Bibliography

de Blij, Harm. *Why Geography Matters*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Written by a geography professor who is a former National Geographic Society editor, this book makes a plea to restore geography to America's educational curriculum. The first two chapters, "Why Geography Matters" and "Reading Maps and Facing Threats" would be of most use to someone teaching a unit such as Set in the USA. The rest of the book goes on to discuss, as indicated in its subtitle, three challenges facing America: climate change, the rise of China, and global terrorism.

Di Piazza, Dominica. *West Virginia (Hello U.S.A.)*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Company, 2002.

This is a non-fiction book about West Virginia for students aged 9 - 12 with chapters on the land, the history, people and economy, and the environment. Final section includes many fast facts about the state.

Dorn, Ronald I, et al. "Learning Geography Promotes Learning Math: Results and Implications of Arizona's GeoMath Grade K-8 Program," *Journal of Geography* 104: 151-160.

An interesting article detailing how the state of Arizona worked to tie together geography learning with math skills to combat the declining geography

instruction time that resulted from NCLB legislation. A National Geographic Society Grosvenor grant enabled 28 teachers to create a package of more than 80 lessons combining geography with math skills that are tested on Arizona's state mandated test.

Fredeen, Charles. *Kansas (Hello U.S.A.)*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Company, 2002.

This is a non-fiction book about Kansas for students aged 9 - 12 with chapters on the land, the history, people and economy, and the environment. Final section includes many fast facts about the state.

Giorgis, Cyndi and Johnson, Nancy. "Finding a Place," *Reading Teacher*. November 2001, 304.

The authors describe ways that settings, be they real or imagined, present challenges or provide enjoyment for readers.

Johnston, Joyce. *Alaska (Hello U.S.A.)*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Company, 2002.

This is a non-fiction book about Alaska for students aged 9 - 12 with chapters on the land, the history, people and economy, and the environment. Final section includes many fast facts about the state.

Kelly, Joanne. *On Location - Settings from Famous Children's Books - #1*. Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press, 1992.

The author provides an in-depth look at the setting of five well-known novels: *Little House in the Big Woods*, *On My Honor*, *Caddie Woodlawn*, *Rascal*, and *Across Five Aprils*. She provides maps and photographs of the locales, as well as extended activities and suggested readings.

LaDoux, Rita C. *Oklahoma (Hello U.S.A.)*. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publications Company, 2003.

This is a non-fiction book about Oklahoma for students aged 9 - 12 with chapters on the land, the history, people and economy, and the environment. Final section includes many fast facts about the state.

Matthew, Kathryn I and Lowe, Joy L. *Guide to Recommended Children's Books and Media for Use with Every Elementary Subject*. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc. 2002.

Chapter 4 of this book recommends resources with social studies ties. Much of the chapter is devoted to American History resources, but there are sections devoted to People and Places and Geography as well.

National Geographic Education Foundation. "National Geographic-Roper 2002 Global Geographic Literacy Survey." November 2002.

This study assessed the geographic knowledge of young adults aged 18 to 24 in nine countries including the United States. It was conducted as a follow-up to a 1988 study. Little to no improvement was found since the original survey. The results are presented both in narrative form and in charts.

Petzold, Donald and Heppen, John. "A Service-Learning Project for Geography: Designing a Painted Playground Map of the United States for Elementary Schools," *Journal of Geography* 104: 203 - 210.

For a school that really wants to incorporate geography into its curriculum, this article provides a very practical guide to painting a United States map onto a school's playground. It is presented as a service project that can be performed by a college's student geography organization. The article includes activities and games that can be used to help students learn geography with the playground map.

Rogers, Linda K. *Geographic Literacy through Children's Literature*. Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press, 1997.

Rogers discusses the five themes of geography as put forth by the Geographic Education National Implementation Project. She presents chapters with ideas on how to use picture books to increase students' understanding of each of these themes and ways that they can be used to incorporate geography into the curriculum. The book contains an extensive annotated bibliography of children's literature. Each entry includes suggestions of possible uses of the book with grades K-3 and 4-6.

Welty, Eudora. "Place in Fiction." *Eudora Welty - Stories, Essays and Memoir*. New York: Literary Classics of the U.S., Inc. 1998.

A thought-provoking article by one of the American masters of the short story on the importance that place plays in fiction.

Annotated Student Bibliography

Hopkins, Lee Bennett, ed. *My America: A Poetry Atlas of the United States*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2000.

The book is arranged by sections of the country. Each section features a map and basic facts about each state followed by six to eight poems about that region.

Kane., Kristen. *K is for Keystone: A Pennsylvania Alphabet*. Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2003.

Each letter is presented with an item related to Pennsylvania history, geography,

or culture with both a four line verse and a longer narrative with more detailed information, so it could be used with both younger and older elementary age students.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Shiloh*. New York: Atheneum, 1991.

When he finds a beagle roaming the hills near his West Virginia home, 11 year old Marty takes it home and keeps it near his house without letting his family or the owner - who he suspects of mistreating the dog - know.

Noble., Trinka Hakes. *One for All: A Pennsylvania Number Book*. Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2005.

Counts Pennsylvania-related items from 1 to 15 by ones and up to 100 by 10s. Each number has a four line verse to quickly give students the idea of what is being portrayed as well as a longer narrative with more detailed information so it is suitable for both younger and older elementary students.

Rand, Gloria. *Baby in a Basket*. New York: Cobblehill Books/Dutton, 1997.

In 1917, a woman is leaving Alaska for the winter when her sleigh overturns and her baby is lost. This is based on a true story of the first kindergarten teacher in Fairbanks.

Shannon, George. *Climbing Kansas Mountains*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1993.

A Kansas boy is surprised when his father tells him it's time to climb a Kansas mountain. Although he is young, he knows there are no mountains in Kansas, but understands when his father drives him to a grain elevator.

Wells, Rosemary. *Wingwalker*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2002.

A boy whose family lives in Oklahoma is hit by the droughts of the Dust Bowl and moves to Minnesota so his father can be a carnival wingwalker.

Annotated Bibliography of United States Geography Web Resources

http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/web_games.htm#Games

A variety of interactive games at various levels testing knowledge on capitals, states, and geography. After completing the game, the player is given a score, items to review, and the time it took to complete. Includes a learning or tutorial level for beginners.

<http://www.funbrain.com/where/index.html>

A Fun Brain game with five different levels. Each game contains 10

identification items, ranging from identifying the correct state highlighted on a map from among four choices to identifying the correct state and then typing in its capital (no choices given).

http://scottbryce.com/us_geo/index.htm

An interactive United States geography quiz where students can choose to identify states, capitals, major cities, rivers and lakes, or major land features as they are identified on a U.S. map.

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/3-5/games/interactive.html>

An interactive game on the Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids published by U.S. Government Printing Office where students can drag a state shape or name to its correct location on the map.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/usa/statesbw/>

This site provides printable maps for each state followed by questions that give students practice in reading the fairly simple maps.

<http://www.nea.org/readacross/resources/statebooks.html>

A state by state booklist of books set in each of the 50 states.

Appendix A

The regional breakdown of states used by Scott Foresman in its 2003 edition of *The United States*, which is used in the fifth grade:

WEST

Alaska*
Hawaii*
Washington*
Oregon*
California*
Montana
Idaho

Wyoming
Nevada
Utah
Colorado

*Pacific States
Others - Mountain States

SOUTHWEST

Arizona

Texas

New Mexico

Oklahoma

MIDWEST

North Dakota*

South Dakota*

Nebraska*

Kansas*

Iowa*

Missouri*

Minnesota

Wisconsin

Illinois

Indiana

Michigan

Ohio

* Great Plains States

Others - Great Lakes States

SOUTHEAST

Arkansas

Louisiana

Mississippi

Alabama

Georgia

Florida

South Carolina

North Carolina

Virginia

Kentucky

Tennessee

West Virginia

NORTHEAST

Maine*

Vermont*

New Hampshire*

Massachusetts*

Connecticut*

Rhode Island*

New York

New Jersey

Delaware

Maryland

Pennsylvania

*New England States

Others - Middle Atlantic States

Appendix B

Setting Handout (to be used prior to listening to each story in this unit)

1. State that is the setting for today's story _____

2. What is its capital? _____

3. What states border it? _____

4. What is its nickname? _____

5. To get there by the most direct path from Pittsburgh, what states would you go through?

6. About how many miles would you travel from Pittsburgh to reach its state capital? _____

Standards

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technology.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of text.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students will write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade, in all subject areas.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.

Mathematics

1. All students use numbers, number systems, and equivalent forms (including numbers, words, objects and graphics) to represent theoretical and practical situations.
2. All students compute, measure and estimate to solve theoretical and practical

problems, using appropriate tools, including modern technology such as calculators and computers.

Citizenship

2. All students demonstrate understanding of themes and patterns of geography, know the location of major bodies of water, land masses and nations, and describe the relationships between geography and historical, economic and cultural development.
7. All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.
8. All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.