Lesson Plan: Learning Major US Cities

Subject: U.S. Geography

Knowledge: Identifying five of the largest cities in each state

Skills: Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Oral Communication

Grade Levels: 2-8 (Ages 7-14)

Time: 40 minutes (first time); 20-30 minutes (playing time)

Objective: Students will learn five of the largest cities, "top cities", in each state as well as understand why learning this information is important.

Standards: Varies by state

Preparation: One or more boxes of GeoPlunge cards. The number of boxes will depend on the number of students playing and the number of cards being used. Use the GeoPlunge state cards and Power Cards only.

Lesson
Use the "Introduction to GeoPlunge Cards" lesson prior to practicing with these cards. This activity may be done as a whole class or a small group.

Before playing the first time, teacher will engage students by asking probing question(s):
   a. *What is a city?* A city is a place where people live that is larger or more important than a town. It is usually a center for population, commerce, and culture.   In the United States, a city is governed by a mayor or elected official. In some states, the largest city is also the state capital, but not always.
   b. *Have you been to a large city? Live in a large city?* Answers vary. *How did it differ from where you live today? How does it differ from the country?* Answers vary. Teacher may want to show pictures comparing urban and rural areas.
   c. *What is the largest city in our state?* Answers on the GeoPlunge card.
   d. *Why is knowing the major cities in a state important?* Possible answers: It helps us to understand the history behind current and previous events. It helps us identify the location of cultural and commerce centers.
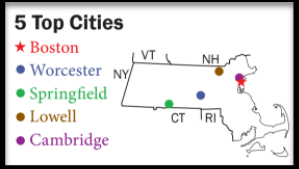
<u>Playing the Game:</u> *We will now play a game learning the major cities within each state*
Remind students where to find the information on the GeoPlunge cards.

Players: Two teams with 1, 2, or 3 players per team

Cards Used: GeoPlunge cards and Power cards. Shuffle the cards before the game begins. Place the used cards at the bottom of their decks.

Objective: This game is a series of contests. For each contest, each team has up to 3 guesses to guess the state held by its opponent. Each team receives one or two new clues before each guess, as determined below**.**   A team earns 2 points for winning a contest, and teams receive 1 point each for a tie. Continue playing contests, one at a time, until one team wins the game. A team needs 10 points to win.

Step 1:   Determine who guesses first. Deal each team one GeoPlunge card face down. Each team may look at its card but should NOT show its card to its opponent.

Power Card

GeoPlunge Card
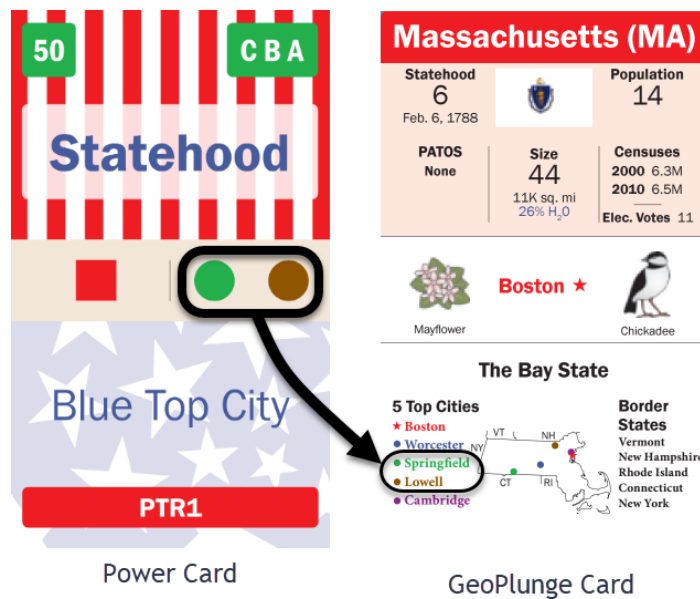
Step 2: Turn face-up the top Power card in the deck.   The first clue giving team uses the color of the **circle(s)** to give one or both of the top five cities on its card. (Some cards have 1 circle and others have 2 circles.) For example, if the circles on the Power card are green and brown (see example), the first clue given would be the Green Top City, shown in green, **and** the Brown Top City, shown in brown.

Step 3: The first guessing team has up to 3 guesses to try to guess the state of the GeoPlunge card in the other team's hand. A new Power card is turned up before each guess and placed next to the previous Power card. **If the same clue is turned over, no additional information is provided, but teams may make another guess**.

Step 4: After the first guessing team correctly guesses the name of the state held by its opponent or has made three incorrect guesses, the teams switch roles. The second guessing team uses the same Power cards on the table in the same order to hear clues. The second guessing team does not continue to guess once it has won or lost even if it has not made all three guesses. Used Power cards are placed at the bottom of the Power card deck. Alternate which team is the first guessing team for the next contest.

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Determining Who Wins: Whichever team guesses the state of the GeoPlunge card in the other team's hand in fewer guesses wins the contest and earns 2 points. If neither team guesses correctly or each team guesses correctly using the same number of guesses, the contest ends in a tie and each team receives one point.

Follow up: After playing the game each time, provide a brief opportunity for students to share their experience.   (Possible prompts: Connections to the real world, improvement in content mastery, learned strategy, error analysis, funny story, self-reflection, etc.)

Adaptations/Extensions
1. If playing as a whole class, the teacher should show the Power cards on the Smartboard or document camera for all students to use.
2. Set a time limit of 10 seconds for students to provide an answer.
3. Have a US map on Smartboard or document camera, or Atlases available for student use.
4. If there are 2 circles on the Power card, the guessing team gets to select which color city it wants to hear.

What's Next?
Introduce another GeoPlunge game or learning activity.

Breaking down the deck: There are four US Regions based on the United States Census Bureau. Different resources, however, identify different regions and states per region. Use the resources that work best for your learning goals.

Northeast (10 states): Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware

South (15 states):
Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee , Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

Midwest (12 states):
Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota

West (13 states):
Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii

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