Lesson Plan: Learning Abbreviations, Border States and Capitals

Subject: U.S. Geography

Knowledge: Identifying state capitals, state abbreviations, and border states

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 analyze information about states by drawing connections among abbreviations (postal codes), capitals, and/or border states by region as well as understand and analyze 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, the teacher will engage students by asking probing question(s):
   a.   What is the capital of our state? *Answers vary*
   b.   Why is the capital important? *Our state capital is where the laws and policies of our state are developed and implemented. Our state legislature and governor make and sign bills into law at our state capital which affects everyone in our state.*
   c.   What is our state abbreviation? *Answers vary*
   d.   Why is knowing the state abbreviation important? *We use it to identify our state on forms, official documents, to send letters, etc.*
   e.   What states border us? *Answers vary*
   f.   Why is it important to know our border states? Ask students to turn and talk with a shoulder/face partner first. *Accept all valid answers. So we know our relative location to other states, to know some of the states it may be easy to visit, to help us understand our relationship to changes in society and environment, to identify different regions of our*

country, to know where our state ends and another begins (even though we are all a part of the United States, our individual states may have different laws) etc.

Playing the Game: *We will now play a game learning state capitals, abbreviations, and border states.* Remind students where to find the information on the GeoPlunge cards.

Cards Used: GeoPlunge Cards and Power Cards

Create teams of 1-3 students. Two teams play against each other.   If there is an odd number of teams, that team becomes the teacher helpers for the game and rotate in the next round. **The goal is for each team to use clues such as capital, postal code, and list of bordering states to guess the name of the state held by its opponents.**

> **Step 1:** Determine who guesses first. (A fun way to do this: Say: "Whichever team has a player whose birthday is closest to today guesses first." or "Whichever team has the tallest/shortest player guesses first." or "Whichever team has a player with the longest/shortest feet/hair." etc.) Deal each team one GeoPlunge card face down. Teams may look at their card but should NOT show their opponent.

> **Step 2:** Turn over the top Power card in the deck face-up in the center of the playing area. If playing as a whole class, the teacher should show the Power card to the entire class by holding it up or showing it on a Smartboard. Use the sequence of the letters A, B, and C in the upper right corner to give clues.
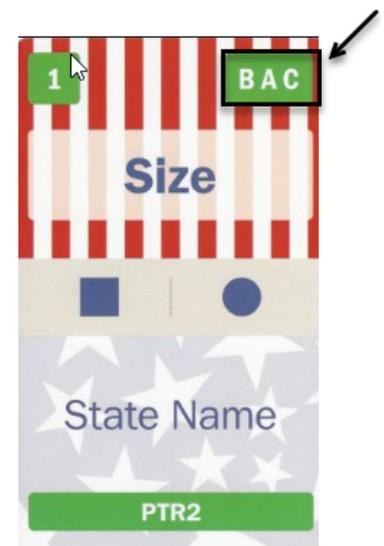> A - **A**bbreviation (Postal Code)
> B - **B**order States
> C - **C**apital
> Note: If the card has AAA, BBB, or CCC, start with that clue and then the clue-giving team chooses the order of the remaining clues.

> **Step 3:** The first guessing team has up to three guesses to correctly identify the state of the GeoPlunge card held by its opponent. Using the sample power card, right, the first clue would be the border states. If the guessing team can't identify the state, then the next clue would be state abbreviation. If needed, the third clue would be the state capital.

> **Step 4:** After the first guessing team correctly guesses the name of the state held by its opponent or has made 3 incorrect guesses, the teams switch roles. **Use the same Power card for both teams.** The second guessing team does not continue to guess once it has won or lost even if it has not made all three guesses.

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Step 5: After playing, collect the GeoPlunge cards. Hand out new GeoPlunge cards to each team and play again, using a different Power card.   Play the game for a designated time period.

Determining a Winner: Whichever team guesses the state of the GeoPlunge card in the other team's hand in the fewest 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. Play until a team earns 10 points.

Follow up: After playing the game each time, provide a brief opportunity for students to share their experience. Use the "GeoPlunge Self Assessment" resource. Or have a quick class discussion with possible. (Connections to the real world, improvement in content mastery, learned strategy, error analysis, funny story, self-reflection, etc.)

Adaptations/Extensions
1. Project an image of the U.S. map or have Atlases available for student use.
2. Use a subset of the GeoPlunge deck (i.e. use just states in your area or region).
3. Instead of playing the same team until a team wins 10 points, rotate opponents in between each contest
4. Teams may *take turns* providing clues until all 3 clues have been given or a team guesses the name of the state held by its opponent.
5. As students memorize the information, change the rules:
    a. Provide only 2 of the border states
    b. Provide only the first or second letter of the state abbreviation
    c. Provide only the first letter of the capital

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

State	Abr.	Capital
Alabama	AL	Montgomery
Alaska	AK	Juneau
Arizona	AZ	Phoenix
Arkansas	AR	Little Rock
California	CA	Sacramento
Colorado	CO	Denver
Connecticut	CT	Hartford
Delaware	DE	Dover
Florida	FL	Tallahassee
Georgia	GA	Atlanta
Hawaii	HI	Honolulu
Idaho	ID	Boise
Illinois	IL	Springfield
Indiana	IN	Indianapolis
Iowa	IA	Des Moines
Kansas	KS	Topeka
Kentucky	KY	Frankfort
Louisiana	LA	Baton Rouge
Maine	ME	Augusta
Maryland	MD	Annapolis
Massachusetts	MA	Boston
Michigan	MI	Lansing
Minnesota	MN	St. Paul
Mississippi	MS	Jackson
Missouri	MO	Jefferson City
Montana	MT	Helena
Nebraska	NE	Lincoln
Nevada	NV	Carson City
New Hampshire	NH	Concord
New Jersey	NJ	Trenton
New Mexico	NM	Santa Fe
New York	NY	Albany
North Carolina	NC	Raleigh
North Dakota	ND	Bismarck
Ohio	OH	Columbus
Oklahoma	OK	Oklahoma City
Oregon	OR	Salem
Pennsylvania	PA	Harrisburg
Rhode Island	RI	Providence
South Carolina	SC	Columbia
South Dakota	SD	Pierre
Tennessee	TN	Nashville
Texas	TX	Austin
Utah	UT	Salt Lake City
Vermont	VT	Montpelier
Virginia	VA	Richmond
Washington	WA	Olympia
West Virginia	WV	Charleston
Wisconsin	WI	Madison
Wyoming	WY	Cheyenne

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