

Lesson Plan: Learning Nicknames, Birds, and Flowers

Subject: U.S. Geography

Knowledge: Identifying state nicknames, state birds, and state flowers, connections to symbolism in literature

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 recall state nicknames, birds, and flowers by region as well as understand why learning this information is important.

Standards: Varies by state

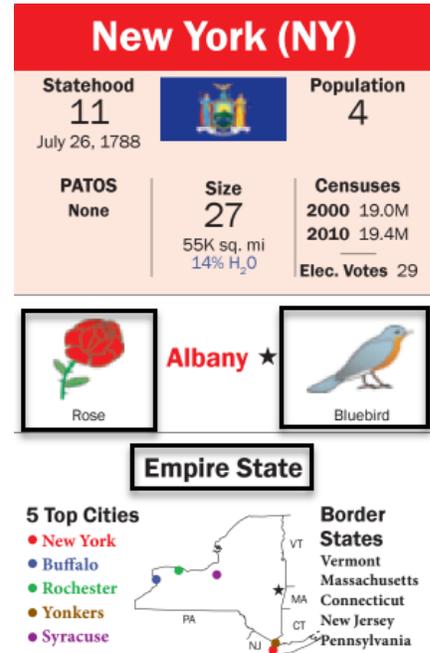
Preparation: One or more boxes of GeoPlunge cards. The number of boxes will depend on the number of students playing and the number of cards being used. Use the GeoPlunge state cards only.

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.

Connection: Before playing the first time, teacher will engage students by asking probing question(s). Use any or all:

1. How many of you have a nickname? *Show of hands and/or students share.* Why do we have them? *Nicknames are either shortened versions of a person's name (Thomas = Tom) or a descriptive name for a person, place or thing. (Provide an example from literature such as Jerry Spinelli's "Maniac" Magee or provide an example that your students will know.)*
2. Does anyone know our state's nickname? *Answers vary*
3. Why does every state have a nickname? *States are unique with different and proud histories. Every state has a nickname based on its own historical information. Example: Alaska is also known as The Last Frontier. Why? Being near the Arctic Circle, it was one of the last states to be explored and settled.*
4. Where can you see state nicknames every day? *A: License plates! The next time you are in a car or walking down the street, how many state nicknames can you find?*



5. What are symbols? *A symbol is simply something that stands for something else. Example: The Stanley Cup or World Series Ring symbolizes a level of achievement. The United States flag **symbolizes** freedom. In literature, writers use symbols to reflect a characteristic, mood or emotion. Example: Oftentimes, a rainy setting in books symbolizes sadness. As you are reading, take note of rainy days and see if the main character is experiencing sadness in some way. (Or provide relevant example from your Program of Studies.)*
6. What is our national bird and what does it symbolize, or represent? *Bald Eagle. The Bald Eagle **symbolizes** the United States because it is a majestic and proud bird, just like our country!*
7. Did you know we have a state bird? Does anyone know what it is? *Answers vary*
8. Why do states have state birds? Have students talk and turn to a shoulder/face partner. Ask for volunteers to share ideas. *Official **symbols** represent the cultural and natural traditions of every state in our nation, just like the Bald Eagle symbolizes our country. Identifying state birds began in 1927. Every state has identified a state bird. Fun fact: Seven states have the Cardinal as its state bird!*
9. We also have another state symbol: a state flower. Many states chose their flowers based on hardiness, medicinal value or historical prominence. Some states asked elementary school children to select the state flower. What is our state flower? *Answers vary.*

Playing the Game: *We will play a game where we will learn the state symbols and nicknames. Remind students where to find the information on the GeoPlunge cards.*

Cards Used: GeoPlunge 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 objective is for each team to use clues such as state nickname, state bird, or state flower to guess the name of the GeoPlunge 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 goes first.” or “Whichever team has the tallest/shortest player goes 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: The first guessing team will have up to three guesses to correctly identify the state of the GeoPlunge card held by its opponent. Before each guess, the clue-giving team provides one clue: state nickname, state bird, or state flower in any order. If the guessing team cannot identify the state held by its opponent, a different second clue is given. If necessary, a different third clue is given. The clue-giving team cannot give the same clue twice.

Step 3: 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 with the first guessing team then providing clues regarding its state. The second guessing team does not continue to guess once it has won or lost even if it has not made all three guesses.

Step 4: After playing, collect the GeoPlunge cards. Hand out new GeoPlunge cards to each team and play again. 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

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