

## Lesson Plan: Analyzing GeoPlunge State Cards

**Subject:** U.S. Geography

**Skills:** Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Oral Communication, Non-fiction reading

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

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Objective:** Students will use the basic GeoPlunge game cards to identify important features, look for similarities and differences, and generate ideas as they gain exposure to the GeoPlunge game.

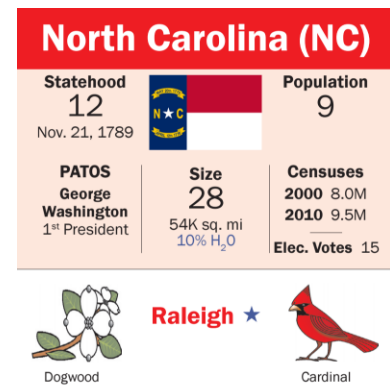
**Standards:** Varies by state

**Overview:** GeoPlunge is a geography-based game that teaches United States Geography and history along with critical thinking skills, collaboration, communication, and creativity. It may be played in small groups, entire classrooms, or in teams at the tournament level. This lesson focuses on teaching students how to analyze the information found on the GeoPlunge state cards to identify important information.

**Preparation:** Access to one set of GeoPlunge cards. Only use the 50 GeoPlunge state cards, example right.

### Lesson

1. Teacher will engage students by asking probing question(s):
  - a. *How many of you have traveled outside of our state? Country? (Show of hands.)*
  - b. *How was the place you visited similar/different than where we currently live? (Accept all answers--mountains, bodies of water, temperature, customs, etc.)*
  - c. *What is geography? (Geography is the study of the relationship between earth's people and physical locations. It is about the world we live in!)*
  - d. *Why is learning geography important? (So we know how to get from Point A to Point B. To understand historical events better. To help us understand our political system and events. So we know where current events take place. To help us identify why someone may have a different perspective/opinion than us.)*



2. Teacher announces that they will learn several new games that involve US geography. Before learning the games, students must be able to “read” the GeoPlunge state cards. Being able to read the cards will provide important background knowledge as students learn the actual GeoPlunge games.
3. The activity will require students to move around the class. The movement around the class is Kagan strategy called Stand up-Hand up-Pair up: Students will stand up, push in their chair, and raise a hand. They will locate another student with his/her hand up and the two will pair up. Once paired, students must remain quiet to get the next instructions from teacher. *(Hints for success: If there is an odd number, the teacher may play or make one group of 3. Students must find a new partner EACH time they pair up. Students should pair up with someone nearby i.e. do not pass 4 other students trying to find a friend across the room! Be on the lookout for students who have trouble pairing up and facilitate.)*
4. Hand out one card to each student. Teacher should show a card on the Smartboard or document camera during this activity.
5. Stand up. Push in chair. Hand up. Pair up. Eyes on teacher/mouth closed once paired.
6. Once quiet, ask the question: *Compare your cards. What is similar and what is different? Give students talk time. Ask for volunteers to share. (Accept all correct answers.)*
7. The activity will continue like this for several rounds of questions. Select any or all of the questions depending on time and need. Next, **exchange cards**, put hand up, move, and pair up with a new partner. Students will continue to exchange cards, move, and pair up before each new question. The transitions should be quick with little down time. Both partners should share their ideas before asking for someone to share with the entire class.
8. Questions to consider:
  - a. *There are 2 letters after the state name on your card. What are these called? (State Abbreviation/Postal Code) What do you notice about them? (Only 2 letters, both letters capitalized, no punctuation, always begins with the letter of the state and includes one other letter in the state name.) When do we use these? (Addressing letters, filling out forms, documents with our address) What is the postal code of our state? (Answers vary.)*
  - b. *What is the capital on your state? Students share answers with each other. The capital is listed in the center of the GeoPlunge card. Make sure students know that state capitals are always shown with a star on U.S. maps. Locate the star in the map outline of the state at the bottom of the GeoPlunge card. (Note: some stars on the GeoPlunge cards are gray and others have a color. A colored star identifies it as one of the 5 largest cities in the state. A gray star indicates that the capital is a smaller city.)*
  - c. *On the top left of your card, what does your card say for PATOS? What do you think PATOS means? (President at the time of statehood.) Look at the word Statehood above it. This number corresponds to when your state became a*

*state! Who has the highest ranking state (Delaware=1) Who has the lowest ranking state Statehood? (Hawaii = 50)*

- d. On the top right, compare your population rankings, census, and Elec Votes information. Any questions? (What is a census? Answer: A survey of how many people live in the state at a certain time. What does Elec. Votes mean? It stands for electoral votes. Answer: This is the number of votes that the state has when electing a President.) Who has the highest ranking state for population? Lowest ranking? Ranking closest to 30 going up only?*
  - e. Compare your state sizes. Whoever has the larger state should do 5 jumping jacks while the person with the smaller state rank does 5 toe touches. Any other questions about the information near state size?*
  - f. Ask students to group themselves based on the color at the top of each state card. Once together, ask "Why do you think you are grouped together?" (Answer: Colors correspond to U.S. time zones.)*
  - g. Look at the images on your cards. What do you see? How are you and your partner's images similar/different? (Answer: State flower, state bird, state flag. Every state has one of each!) Questions?*
  - h. On the bottom third of the card, you will find the state's nickname. (Get one or two students to share.) In addition, you will see an outline of the state and a list of the 5 top cities and border states. Based on your state and border state, what part of the country is your state located in? (Answers vary. If known, have students use cardinal and intermediate directions as they describe it to their partner (i.e. Maine is in the northeast part of the United States), or use relative directions i.e. Virginia is northeast from Texas.) GeoPlunge cards may be used for mapping activities too!*
9. Follow up: After completing the activity, collect the cards. Provide a brief opportunity for students to share their experience. *(Possible prompts: Any additional questions about how to read the GeoPlunge cards? How might these cards help you learn about our state/country? Why is knowing this information valuable?)*

### **Adaptations/Extensions**

1. Have a U.S. map on the Smartboard or document camera, or Atlases available for student use.
2. Ask students to group themselves by U.S. regions (Northeast, Midwest, etc.)
3. Have students get into groups based on characteristics of the state bird or state flower (color, markings, etc.), colors in the state flag etc.
4. 5-10 minute activity: Once students have their state card, have them line up *without talking* based on state rank for...statehood, size, or population. When finished, review the list. Use a classroom map to point out the states and identify similarities/differences of the top 5 or the bottom 5 for each rank.

### **What's Next?**

Introduce another GeoPlunge game or learning activity.