

## The Great American Road Trip

**Name:** Stephanie Viano

**Level of Class:** 5th Grade

- 1. Goals and Objectives of the lesson:** This lesson requires students to apply concepts and skills learned in previous grades. It requires students to recall concepts and skills learned throughout the past year. It also aims to inspire creativity from the students, as well as critical thinking about where they would like to go; and calls for effective research skills.
- 2. Standards incorporated into the lesson:** United States geography, United States topography, using map skills, United States history, and identifying historic sites
- 3. Materials used in the lesson:** textbook, Internet sources (including research sources, as well as Prezi, if creating an online presentation), maps, projector (to be controlled by the teacher) or poster board display (students' choice)
- 4. Techniques used to introduce material to guide the students through the lesson with time allotted for each segment of the lesson:** This project will be worked on in class over three days, and then students will have the weekend to complete the assignment.

### DAY 1

**(:25)** Present power point presentations about road trips that I have done, highlighting geographical locations, major cities, highway routes, natural monuments and attributes (mountains, deserts, rivers, lakes, etc.), historical locations, tourist attractions, etc. to get the students thinking about where they might like to go and what kinds of things they can highlight in their projects. Discuss ways to research options and execute the project.

**(:30)** Class time to look at maps, research, plan, discuss ideas with the teacher and fellow students, and ask questions.

### DAY 2

**(:55)** Class time to look at maps, research, plan, discuss ideas with the teacher and fellow students, and ask questions.

### DAY 3

**(:20)** Begin the class with an open questions & answer session, allowing students to ask questions and discuss ideas, feelings, concerns about their projects.

**(:35)** Class time to look at maps, research, plan, discuss ideas with the

teacher and fellow students, and ask questions.

The following Monday and Tuesday, students will share their road trip projects to the class in a roughly 5-minute presentation each.

**5. Expected student response:** Students are expected to use the skills they have acquired in the last two years to create a road trip itinerary for themselves. They will enjoy being able to bring their own interests, literacies, and preferences into their projects. The choices are all theirs in where they will go and what they will see, while adhering to certain guidelines that will incorporate historical events, geographic knowledge, and community service into their projects. The assignment should allow them to express themselves and their goals, while also allowing them to think about the larger world that exists outside of their town, county, state, etc.

**6. Comments:** The students should end up having the majority, if not all, of the work and planning done during the three class periods of work time. The weekend should be used to finish compiling everything together, either as a visual poster board display or an electronic interactive map (using Powerpoint, Prezi, etc.) to be projected in class.

By doing this project at the end of the school year, the students are being encouraged to utilize the skills and concepts they have learned over the last year regarding United States history and geography. They are also being allowed to incorporate their own interests into their location stops, encouraging them to ask themselves questions about what interests them and where they would like to go. Building on the concepts they have learned in school will translate into a real world context through this project.

Additionally, the stipulation about making one of your stops on the trip to aid or assist a person, group of people, community, etc. in need encourages students to think about community service and showing kindness to others, perhaps inspiring them to start thinking about ways to help in their own communities.

## The Great American Road Trip

You and your best friends or family are planning an American cross-country road trip by car.

You are starting in Massachusetts, and the goal is to reach the American West Coast **ten** days later. You will be stopping in a different place at the end of every day. The locations of your stops are entirely up to you.

Choose places that you are truly interested in going to. Think about: major cities, the different regions of the country, climate, historical events, and interests. You want to consider things you can do while you are there, as well as along the way. These can include things like: national monuments, national parks, beaches, sports stadiums, amusement parks, tourist attractions, museums, outdoor activities, etc.

Using Google Maps, we will work on planning our routes in class, never driving more than 12 hours in one day. Feel free to plan your route any way you like, *as long as you arrive on the west coast of the United States by the tenth day.*

The road trip **requires** that you make certain kinds of stops and visits along the way. These include:

- at least 4 places of historical significance
- at least 4 natural places, monuments, or attributes (forests, mountains, valleys, plains, deserts, caves, rivers, lakes, gulfs, oceans, etc.)
- at least 2 state capitals
- at least 1 activity that generously aids a person, group of people, or community

\*More than one of these requirements can be incorporated into the same stop - *for example*: visiting Yellowstone National Park for a hike in the forest would cover the guidelines for both a natural place (a forest) and a historically significant place (the first National Park in the United States).

Once you have chosen your stops and route, you will create a visual display showing your journey. You can make your map on poster board, use online resources like Prezi, or use computer programs like PowerPoint.

Each stop should be accompanied by 2-4 facts about the place to be added to your display. It can be about anything: population, famous citizens, historical events, points of interest, fun facts - whatever you think is interesting. Think creatively!

The goal is to get you thinking about the places and history in America that YOU find interesting and would like to explore. You should also be using the 2 to 4 facts about each place to teach your fellow students and I interesting things about the history and geography of that location.