

America is...

Sandy Wenig
Emerson School
400 West Ave.
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Promoting Geographic Knowledge Through Literature Workshop
July 7-19, 2002

Lesson Overview:

America is... is a wonderful book written about the many aspects of our country. It discusses regions, symbols, landmarks, people and the ideals of our nation. It is a fantastic book that will lend itself to the many aspects of geography.

Purpose of the Lesson:

- *To learn about the many physical aspects of the United States of America.
- *Develop an awareness of mapping skills and features on a map.
- *Compare our city/state to various others in America

Connection to National Geography Standards:

Essential Element: The World in Spatial Terms

Standard #1

Essential Element: Places and Regions

Standard # 4

Essential Element: Physical Systems

Standard # 8

Theme: Human Environment Interaction, Place, Location, and Regions

Suggested grade levels:

Grades 2-4

Materials:

*America is... one or more copies

*One large United States map

*Several copies of desk maps of the United States

*Notebooks (one for each student) or use attached journal pages

Procedure:

*Read America is... to the class as a whole group. Discuss the different aspects of the book –regions, people, symbols, etc. After your discussion, ask the children to take out their journals (could be just a notebook, or you could use attached sheets) and reflect on the story (What did I learn? What did this remind me of? What am I wondering about?) Share responses as a class or with partners.

*On another day, pass out desk maps (and copies of the book if available). Explain that as you read through the book today, you will all be using the map to locate much of what is being discussed in the

story. Prior to beginning to read, point out the compass rose on the map for the children to find and explain how it is used.

*As the book talks about different aspects of America, use the map to direct children's attention to their location. For example, as it talks about the fifty states, stop and locate your state on the map. Discuss what region of the country it is in, and some physical attributes of the land. Instruct the children to locate the legend/key on the map to determine what specific colors and pictures mean.

*As you locate different areas on the map, continue to refer back to your location and how the locations compare to one another. At the completion of this day, have the children once again return to their journal and reflect on the day's discussions. They can write statements of learning, questions, and even concerns. Again, share as a class or in small groups.

*****Reviewing the entire book using the map will take several class sessions.*****

Evaluation:

*Class discussions

* Review of Journal entries

Extensions:

*Create an acrostic poem for America

*Create an alphabet book about America and its different regions, people, cultures, and landforms. You may even want to use the format of the book It Begins with an A. (ISBN 1562826891)

*Have the children research their ancestry(www.ancestry.com

for example) and map out where the families in your classroom originated from. Research the immigration of these various cultures.

*Research your city/town/village and create a book similar to America is... (ie. Elmhurst is...)

Reference:

Borden, Louise, America is...; Margaret K. McElderry Books, New York, ISBN 0-689-83900-6

America is...

Journal

Name: _____

Tell me what you learned today. What did it remind you of? What questions do you have?

Draw a picture of something you remember from today's discussion.