

RESOURCE LIBRARY  
ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

## Mapping Your State

Students research political, physical, and cultural features of their own state or district and work collaboratively to create a state tourism map.

### GRADES

2 - 4

### SUBJECTS

*Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography*

### CONTENTS

4 Links, 1 PDF

## OVERVIEW

Students research political, physical, and cultural features of their own state or district and work collaboratively to create a state tourism map.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/mapping-your-state/>

## Program



## DIRECTIONS

**1. Have students assemble a large outline map of your state or district.**

Explain that in this activity students will be mapmakers as they create a tourist map for their state. Print and have students assemble the tile map for your state from the National

Geographic State MapMaker Kits, or print the poster version on a large format printer if available.

**2. Have a whole-class discussion about tourism maps and what information might be most useful.**

As a whole class, talk about the kinds of information that could be included on a state tourism map, and list these on the board. Ideally the list will be long, similar to the “Features” column on the Political, Physical, and Cultural Features worksheet. Talk about how anything that exists in the world can be mapped, and how mapmakers always have a purpose for creating a map. Explain that students will create a map for potential visitors to their state—one that showcases places and activities that might attract tourists. Talk about how tourism can help to keep a state’s economy strong.

**3. Have small groups research specific features of your state or district’s history.**

Divide students into small groups. Give each small group a copy of the worksheet Political, Physical, and Cultural Features. Assign each group a different set of features of each type to research. Have the groups use atlases, your state government’s tourism information, National Geographic’s travel website, and other online resources to research your state or district. Have students record the information they find on the worksheet. Together as a class, fill in the capital city, its location, and its symbol on the worksheet. Also, help students to use atlases, online maps, and the grid on the outline map to determine and list on the worksheet the location for each feature.

**4. Choose symbols for each feature as a class.**

As a class, determine symbols and colors students can use to represent different information, for example, gold stars for capital cities, gray triangles for mountains, and blue markers to delineate rivers on the map. Guide students in creating one map legend on butcher paper for the large outline map. Tape the legend to the map. Give groups time to discuss the information that they would like to include on the map. Then challenge each group to reduce the number of items a certain amount based on content they found. For example, if a group has ten locations to include, have them reduce that number by two. Students need to keep in mind their maps’ purpose when they make decisions about what to include and what to leave out.

## 5. Have groups add their information to the map and have a wrap-up discussion.

Have each small group add their information to the map using the symbols and colors the class chose. Have a discussion with students about the completed map. Ask: *What about the map would be most useful for tourists? What additional information might be useful?*

# Modification

As an alternative to a tourism-based map, have students research their state's resources and products that are exported to other places. After creating their map, ask students to speculate about the ways these resources and products connect their state to other places in the country or world.

# Modification

Instead of using a grid for location information, have students use latitude/longitude or describe the relative location for a feature.

# Informal Assessment

Have students work on their own to create a tourism map for another state using the same research process. Assess students' use of a grid and legend, and have them explain why they chose to include certain features on their map.

# Extending the Learning

- Have students on their own study the class' map and write a paragraph about how they might further change the content of the map to make it a more useful tourist map. What information would they keep? What would they delete? Why? Talk about how this is the process mapmakers use as they "edit" a map for a particular purpose and audience.
- Have students create a state map/geo-tour using the MapMaker Interactive. See the instruction page and examples in the provided webpage [Creating Content with MapMaker Interactive](#).
- Have students also research the names of famous places or landmarks. Ask: *Where did the names come from? How does this reflect your state or district's history?*

# OBJECTIVES

# Subjects & Disciplines

## Geography

- [Human Geography](#)
- [Physical Geography](#)

# Learning Objectives

Students will:

- research political, physical, and cultural features of their state that are important for tourism
- create a map legend with symbols for each feature
- mark the features on an outline map using a grid

# Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

# Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Research

# Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Themes
  - [Global Awareness](#)
- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Creating
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills

- [Acquiring Geographic Information](#)
- [Organizing Geographic Information](#)

# National Standards, Principles, and Practices

## NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- [Theme 1:](#)

Culture

- [Theme 3:](#)

People, Places, and Environments

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- [Standard 1:](#)

How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

- [Standard 4:](#)

The physical and human characteristics of places

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY

- [Reading Standards for Informational Text K-5:](#)

Key Ideas and Details, RI.3.3

## THE COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

- [D1.5.3-5:](#)

Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration the different opinions people have about how to answer the questions.

- [Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World: D2.Geo.1.3-5:](#)

Construct maps and other graphic representations of both familiar and unfamiliar places.

### Preparation

## What You'll Need

### MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Atlas
- Butcher paper
- Markers
- Scissors
- Transparent tape

### REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per small group, Large format printer, Printer

### PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

### GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

## BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

# Background Information

Geographers use maps to show information to others. Mapmakers always have a purpose for creating a map. You can display physical, political, or cultural information, or use maps to illustrate specific themes and topics.

## Prior Knowledge

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## Recommended Prior Activities

- None

# Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
cultural characteristic	<i>noun</i>	feature of an area or population that identifies it. Cultural characteristics are often defined as food, language, art, clothing, religion and holidays.
district	<i>noun</i>	region or area, sometimes a unit of government smaller than a state or province.
grid	<i>noun</i>	horizontal and vertical lines used to locate objects in relation to one another on a map.
legend	<i>noun</i>	explanation of symbols and abbreviations used on a map, also known as a key.
location	<i>noun</i>	position of a particular point on the surface of the Earth.
map	<i>noun</i>	symbolic representation of selected characteristics of a place, usually drawn on a flat surface.
map skills	<i>noun</i>	skills for reading and interpreting maps, from learning basic map conventions to analyzing and comprehending maps to address higher-order goals.
physical features	<i>noun</i>	naturally occurring geographic characteristics.
state	<i>noun</i>	political unit in a nation, such as the United States, Mexico, or Australia.
tourism	<i>noun</i>	the industry (including food, hotels, and entertainment) of traveling for pleasure.

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## For Further Exploration

### Maps

- [National Geographic Education: Mapping](#)

