

# SIMON SAYS ... EXPLORE!

**RECOMMENDED GRADES: K-8**



**TIME NEEDED: 15 MINUTES OR MORE**

(activity is flexible as to grade level, size of group, and amount of time)

### Description

Students play this popular and fun game while exploring North America.

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- explore both the physical and human geography of North America
- utilize movement and knowledge of cardinal directions to locate and identify major physical and political features in North America

### Materials

- Lanyards (40 total, 10 of each color: red, blue, yellow and green) (optional)
- Hourglass timer (optional)

### Preparation

*5 minutes*

- Review the “Simon Says” statements for your group size and familiarize yourself with the statements, including locating the solutions to any Simon Says commands that are unfamiliar.

### Tips/Modifications

*Tip*

- This activity can also be used as a pre-assessment or post-assessment tool.

*Modification*

- This activity can be tailored to grade level, group size, and amount of time. “Simon Says” commands for large groups and small groups are provided.

### Rules



Have students remove shoes before walking on the map.

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Depending on experience and prior knowledge, students may need a general introduction or tour of the North America map. This teacher-led activity can serve as an introduction or review of some of the major physical or political features that students will visit during the game. Walk over the map and show (or have selected students locate and stand on) the following:

**U.S.A. (Alaska & Hawaii)  
Central America (7 countries)  
Caribbean Sea & Islands  
Rocky Mountains  
Appalachian Mountains  
Tropic of Cancer**

**Canada  
Atlantic Ocean  
Gulf of Mexico  
Mississippi River  
Great Lakes  
Cardinal Directions**

**Mexico  
Pacific Ocean  
Great Plains  
Greenland  
Arctic Circle  
[Your State]**

Note the colors on the map that represent countries, elevation (or relief), and water. Have students face north on the map and then turn and face each of the other three cardinal directions (south, east, west) before starting the first game.

2. Divide the class into 4 teams—red, blue, yellow, and green—and instruct each team to gather behind their “Base Camp” (the colored circles in the corners of the map). Make the teams as even as possible. Give each student a lanyard corresponding to the color of his or her team.
3. Review the rules of “Simon Says” with students. No running is allowed. Students who run, touch, or impede other students will be “out.” Remind students if they move toward a location that did not begin with the direction “Simon Says,” or they choose an incorrect place, they will be “out.” When a student is out, he or she will walk off the map and sit on the border of the map near his or her team’s corner until the start of a new game. Use the hourglass timer (optional) to signal the end of each game. The team with the most team members still on the map will be declared the winner of that game. Assure students that each game will have a time limit of 5 to 10 minutes to keep “out time” to a minimum. (This time is governed by the timer.)
4. Using “Simon Says” statements provided, direct students to visit various locations in North America. Allow students a few seconds to get to each location that Simon Says.

Mix up the game and control traffic with qualifiers like these:

- Simon Says **everybody ...**
- Simon Says **red team ...**
- Simon Says **all girls ...**
- Simon Says **all boys ...**

Remember to mix in statements without saying “Simon Says” to catch students who are not paying close attention.

Feel free to create and use your own “Simon Says” statements.

5. When the timer is up, the game is over. Have students gather at their “Base Camp” for the start of a new game. Repeat as many times as you’d like!

## **“SIMON SAYS” STATEMENTS FOR LARGE GROUPS**

“Simon Says” statements for the start of the game or with larger numbers of students:

➤ Simon Says ...

- Lay down in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Kneel on one knee in Canada.
- Put a toe on the Mississippi River.
- Stand on any mountain range. [Examples: Brooks Range, Alaska Range, Aleutian Range, Rocky Mountains, Sierra Nevada, Appalachian Mountains]
- Sit in Mexico.
- Stand above the Arctic Circle.
- Put your left foot in the Caribbean Sea.
- Stand in a U.S. state that starts with an M. [Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, or Montana]
- Stand on one foot in the Pacific Ocean.
- Place a foot on the west coast of North America.
- Stand east of the United States and face south.
- Stand in Canada and face north.
- Sit in the Great Plains.
- Stand on any island.
- Stand in the Atlantic Ocean and face west.
- Sit below the Tropic of Cancer.
- Stand in a U.S. state that starts with an N. [Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, or North Dakota]
- Stand on 100° west longitude.
- Sit in the 49th U.S. state. [Alaska]
- Stand in a U.S. state that borders Canada. [Alaska, Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine]

## **“SIMON SAYS” STATEMENTS FOR SMALL GROUPS**

“Simon Says” statements for the end of the game or with smaller numbers of students:

➤ Simon Says ...

- Stand on a U.S. state that borders Mexico. [California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas]
- Sit in the Rocky Mountains.
- Put a toe on any of the seven countries of Central America. [Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama]
- Stand on any peninsula. [Baja California, Florida, others?]
- Stand in a U.S. state that starts with an A. [Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, or Arkansas]
- Put a toe in one of the Great Lakes. [Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario]
- Stand on the Gulf Coast of the United States.
- Sit in one of Canada’s three territories. [Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut]
- Put a toe on any tributary of the Mississippi River.
- Stand in Mexico and face west.
- Put a toe on [your state].
- Place a finger on any Caribbean island.
- Put one toe in the Appalachian Mountains.
- Stand in a U.S. state that starts with a W. [Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming]
- Put a hand in one of the original Colonies of the United States.
- Stand in one of Canada’s Prairie Provinces.
- Form a circle around Hawaii.
- Stand on 60 degrees north latitude.
- Sit in one of the U.S. states that form the “four corners.” [Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico]
- Stand in the largest U.S. state by area. [Alaska]
- Stand in the U.S. state with the largest population. [California]

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