

# Destination: U.S.A.



- How does this continental jigsaw puzzle fit together?
- Why do the 50 states look the way they do?
- What natural and man-made factors led to today's U.S. map?
- How have historical and political factors influenced the creation and admission of states?
- How does the American map reflect what our nation represents?

YOUR STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Grading 100 points  
Distributed Friday, September 18  
Due Monday, September 28

**Objective** The goal of this project is to examine our own nation, state by state, to:

- compare and contrast political and geographic boundaries
- explore the interrelationship between natural features and man-made borders
- illustrate historical and diplomatic decisions that established state boundaries
- explain why American states look the way they do
- introduce and define *geopolitics*

**Procedures** Part 1: Research  
We will use CFF laptops for at least three days for the research component of this project. You'll gather simple demographic information about your state, explaining who lives there, how they worship, how much money they make, their ethnic composition, etc.

You'll also research the history of your state. How and when was it established? Why does it look the way it does?

Part 2: Cartography  
Display your research visually. You'll make five maps of your state. You may print blank maps and fill them in, but you may not submit maps you simply printed from a website or photocopied from a book.

1. Physical. Mountains, rivers, bodies of water – what defines your state physically?
2. Political. Where are the borders, and what's on the other side? What is the capital, and where are the major cities?
3. Population density. Where do people live? How is the population distributed?
4. Historical. Show something about your state's past to inform our view of its present.
5. Resource. Your choice, manmade or natural, economic, political, industrial, etc.

Part 3: Analysis  
Reflecting on your research, answer the following questions:

1. What were the circumstances that led to statehood? What political and geographic factors dictated the state boundaries? What's the geographic history of your state?
2. Why does it look the way it does?
  - a. Copy the questions on the website to the wiki, and answer them on the wiki.
  - b. Provide an explanation for every state boundary. Maybe it's a river; maybe it's a vestige of a congressional resolution meant to slow the spread of slavery; maybe it was Thomas Jefferson's idea. Explain why the state is where the state is, and why it looks that way.

#### Part 4: Presentation

Take parts one through three, and show us what you've learned.

- Wiki entry. Create a wiki page in the folder named 09-10 Period 4 (Geography) US Project. Here, you'll do a quick three-paragraph write-up of your state's geographical history. You are encouraged to use images, maps, and animation to illustrate your research.
- You must present your study to the class. You may create a video, photo story, PowerPoint, or simply present your wiki and explain why your state looks the way it does. These stories are interesting – your presentation should be, too.

#### Part 5: Submission

Completed research packet: 20 points

Wiki 35 points

Cartography (five maps): 25 points

Presentation: 20 points

TOTAL: 100 points

PEOPLE		
Population	Age distribution	
Population density	Ethnic, religious composition	
GEOGRAPHY		
Total area (square mi or km)	Land area	Capital
Location on the map	Topography	
	Neighboring states/nations	
Highest point (cite elevation)		Lowest point (cite elevation)
Compare it, in size, to another state or foreign country	Coastline (in miles)	Land boundaries (in miles)

Terrain and natural features		
<b>HISTORY, ECONOMY &amp; FINANCE</b>		
When did it become a state?		
Historical Native American occupants	What was its colonial/territorial history before it was a state?	
Five largest cities 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Industries 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Natural resources 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
GDP	Arable land	Crude oil reserves
Breakdown of labor force (How do people make a living?)	Unemployment rate  Urban:  Rural:	Tourism income/attractions

## TRANSPORTATION

Length of railroad

Number of airports

Chief port(s)

Interstates and major roadways

Major rivers and lakes

## OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST
