

**Greetings From America**  
**Lesson Five**  
**Dr. Jacqueline Hansen and Dr. Sharon Gill**  
**Murray State University**

## **THIS LAND IS OUR LAND**

### **Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- Use a table of contents and index to find information.
- Conduct research about a state.
- Use the steps of the writing process to create a travel article.

### **Materials**

- Journals
- Stickpins or sticky notes
- USA map
- State cards: State stamp on one side and facts on the other OR state stamps in individual plastic sleeves (such as baseball card sleeves)
- Minilibrary of state reference books
- *Greetings Across America* poster
- Art supplies for creating travel magazine
- Computers with Internet access and publishing capabilities (optional)
- Index cards (eight per student or team)

### **Set Induction**

1. Quickwrite: Students respond in their journals to this prompt: Owney traveled all across the United States. Describe a trip you have taken. How did you prepare? Where did you go? What did you do?
2. Discussion. Students share their traveling experiences in small groups or as a whole class. Invite students to put a stickpin or removable note on a map of the United States to visually display where they have visited.
3. Transition: If you could travel anywhere in the United States, where would you go? Why? Today we're going to "travel" to another state.

### **Activities**

NOTE: Lesson activities may be done individually or in cooperative teams.

1. Selecting a topic: Students study the state stamps to determine which state they would like to visit. The teacher helps students generate a class list of research questions such as,
  - What do the illustrations on the state's stamp represent?
  - What are some fun things to do in this state?

Students select four to eight research questions. They write each question on a separate index card.

2. Minilesson: Demonstrate how to use the table of contents and the index to find relevant information.
3. Research: Students use the reference books and other materials to find the answers to their questions, recording them on the index cards. Younger students may work in study buddies. Whenever students find relevant information, they should close the book or turn away from the computer screen and write the information in their own words.
4. Writing: Show students examples of travel articles from *Southern Living* or another magazine. Local travel agencies might provide free travel magazines, also. Tell them that as a class, you are going to create a travel magazine with articles about interesting places to visit. This magazine will go home with each student to give parents ideas for summer vacation! Their job is to write an article about the state they chose. Demonstrate how they might write an article by writing one about your own state as a class. Provide further help by providing a structure for the article (see the article worksheet below.)
5. Revising: Students sit in an authors chair to read their article to a small group. Listeners tell something they liked, ask a question, and make a suggestion.
6. Editing: Have students exchange papers and look for specific problems with spelling, grammar or punctuation. Depending on your grade level, you might have them look for paragraph breaks, use of apostrophes, etc.
7. Publishing: Have several committees in the class a) create the magazine cover; b) create a table of contents, or c) create an index. Publish the magazine by making photocopies of students' work or create an online magazine by scanning in the information.

## **Extensions**

Instead of creating a travel magazine, students might present their state information to their peers through formal reports, posters, brochures, or slide shows. Or, students might want to create a "State Fair" where each research team builds a display about their state and classmates travel across the room visiting different STATE-tions.

Students may want to write to the Tourism Office in their state or the Chamber of Commerce of a particular city, asking for information. They will enjoy receiving a big package in the mail!

Thematic units for each state are being prepared by future educators at Murray State University. To find additional lesson ideas for selected states, please visit the *Greetings Across America* website.

## TRAVEL ARTICLE WORKSHEET

**INTRODUCTION:** Get your readers interested in your state!

If you like \_\_\_\_\_, you'll love (state)\_\_\_\_\_.

*Example: If you like the ocean, you'll love ----- . This state is famous for beautiful beaches, scenic lighthouses, and whale-watching.*

**BODY:** Tell about your state. Write the information from each index card in paragraph form. Organize the cards in the order you want to include them in your article. Create transition sentences or subheadings.

**CONCLUSION:** Summarize why the reader should visit your state.

\_\_\_\_\_ (state) \_\_\_\_\_ is a great place for kids who like \_\_\_\_\_, adults who like \_\_\_\_\_, and anyone who likes \_\_\_\_\_.