

Unit One – Countries Around the World, Starting with Our Country

Introduction to the Unit

Essential Questions: *How are various parts of the United States similar to and different from each other? What is life like in the various parts of this country? How can talking to people about far-away places and studying maps, photos, videos, and books help us learn about life in those places?*

We have written this as a one-month unit. You could condense it or even bypass it, if need be. Keep in mind that Unit Two, a study of another country (we've chosen Brazil but you could substitute another) needs to begin close to the start of your second month of school in order that it coincides with the work we've outlined for the Reading Workshop for later in the year, as there is a time when the content area and reading become interdependent. We've also planned this curriculum so that a unit on *Learning about Cultures Around the World Through Literature* is prior to NYS's high stakes test, as that unit can do double-duty to help kids be more ready for that test.

This unit is meant to launch children into a year of studying what life is like in far-away places, and studying the factors are that make life different in one place and another. In the end, the essential question will be expanded to be something like, "How do geography, culture, and natural resources shape how people live their lives in diverse parts of this world?" but for now, you'll be recruiting children to engage in work that feels closer to home intellectually as well as geographically.

All in all, this very short intro unit is intended to immerse children in a burst of thinking about the country where they now live and learn, the United States of America--bringing to the forefront of their minds the ways of life and the land they know best. (Perhaps they even studied urban, suburban and rural communities last year and can bring that learning to bear here too.) This then, will be a springboard for them into in the subsequent units in which they'll be studying places, peoples and cultures more removed from their own.

In the same way that this unit is intended to provide a foundation for children to the content that they'll need for this year of Social Studies, it is also intended to provide a

foundation for the skills of a social scientist or a researcher they'll be building upon this year. (You will want to decide whether you refer to your children as the one term or the other.) For this unit, they'll be focused particularly on ways of taking and organizing various kinds of notes (sketches and lists mostly) from various kinds of sources (interviews, memories, website, articles, maps, books and more).

As you read each bend of the unit, you'll see indications of the kind of teaching methods (from the handful of methods explained in the introduction to the content area units) that we're imagining for this kind of work with children. We've given hints about the method of teaching you might use within a bend so that the workings of that bend (or that section of the unit) is easier to imagine. Don't hesitate, however, to try a different method from the list of possible methods (in the introduction.)

The most important part of this curriculum you won't be able to see from this document. In a way, in the description of this curriculum, we "set the stage," and then we don't show you the play! We've designed it this way on purpose. The work children do, the interactions they'll have, the insights they awaken to and the connections they make are highly individual and class-specific and offering individual accounts is only marginally helpful. Instead, we exhort you to trust us, to modify the work as necessary and let the work the children do--in collaboration, in accountable talk, in synthesis, in transference and in depth of knowledge acquisition--astound you as that work has astounded us.

Getting Ready

- You will need a large-sized world map and US map, both of which can be marked with pin-flags or in some other fashion. Children will identify places (especially in the US) they've lived in, traveled to, or learned about from friends, neighbors, or reading.
- You will also need one or more texts about the United States to read aloud and generate discussion from.
- Formulate a plan and gather materials for the children's note-taking, as this will be a big emphasis throughout this year. One child's notes for this unit will be combined with another child's notes---that is, if three children know about Florida's food, those notes will be set alongside each other, so for this one unit you may suggest children use giant post-its or index cards or some other easily sorted

system. Later, you'll want notes to feel more like a writer's notebook or little portable construction paper bound booklets containing stapled together pages, made for each unit. (The advantage of the latter is that when notes need to be combined, resorted, as will happen, these notebooks can be scissor cut apart and remade more easily than the others. The disadvantage is these will feel less grand.) Sorting is a highly analytical skill - it's important, therefore, NOT to pre-organize children's notes, but to teach them various ways to sort their information.

- Obviously when note-taking is a part of a unit, this means that it will be important for you to have a wide view of note-taking so that children who need accommodations receive them. For example, you may want to partner two students up around one shared container for notes, and you will certainly value sketching as a form of note-taking. You may use technology to help children record their ideas, and then print these, encouraging children to 'write around' the notes that may have originally come from dictation, to star important information, to draw arrows showing links between information.
- Eventually, later in this year, you'll want children to be invested in systems for organizing their notes like double entry notes, or dividing pages into quartiles and labeling each, or writing information in one color and responses to it in another. We are recommending that children do not write on ditto sheets even though there will be times children are working in centers in which you've left task-cards that contain lists of questions. Children will profit from needing to organize their own notes, to create their own titles, and to restate your questions if they are answering a question, etc.

Assessment

Rather than taking time away from instruction to engage your students in a big, fancy assessment, we suggest you study the actual work that you ask students to do in ways that give you and your students some base line data. To do this, start this unit without directing their note-taking, and then study what they do on their own. You may decide to study the work of four representative students (you choose the number) rather than the whole class, as the real goal is for you to draw insights from what you see and use what you see to inform your teaching.

You may alternatively decide to focus less on note-taking before and after, and more on children's abilities to talk about places before and after the unit. If you make that decision, you can contrast the ways that children talk about a place early in the year with the ways they talk about a place later in the unit, and eventually, in the year. Simply channel students to talk about a place in the US that they know (it will be different for different children) and use an ipad or an iphone to record how they do this work. Then you can later ask them to do this work again, again recording what they do, and to assess the ways in which their conversations and thoughts about places have changed. Presumably, as the curriculum progresses children will come to use the language and concepts of a social scientist (researcher) and a geographer to talk and think about places. The children should be able to see a dramatic contrast.

Social Studies Standards

- 3.10 People living in communities around the world depend on, adapt to, and modify their physical environments in different ways.*
- 3.12 World communities and civilizations change over time. They are influenced by interactions with other cultures.*
- 3.8 Regions form and change as a result of unique physical and environmental conditions, economies, and cultures*
- 3.7 Geographic regions represent areas of Earth's surface that have unifying characteristics.*
- 3.3 Communities from around the world interact with each other and exchange cultural ideas and practices.*

CCSS Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.1** *Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.*
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.4** *Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.3.4a *Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.*

Vocabulary

Guiding Questions:

What do we already know about the United States (and the world)? What is life like-- and what are the places like--in different parts of the US? How do researchers of places learn about (and talk about) places?

Here is some vocabulary suggested by the National Social Studies Curriculum: innovations culture perspective portrayal responsibilities urban rural city surburban	Some Tier Two words may include: ecological expansion analyze concept evidence geography indigenous
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Bend I: Researchers recall all they know and talk with others to organize notes about a topic

Approximately 3 sessions

Guiding Questions:

What do we already know about the United States (and the world)? What is life like--and what are the places like--in different parts of the US? How do researchers of places learn about (and talk about) places?

This unit is designed to build on children's personal knowledge, to be as engaging as possible, and to allow you to collect an initial assessment (if you wish) that can later be contrasted with a post-assessment. The literacy instruction, too, is meant to be something that all children can do well, so that you provide children with foundational skills that are then built upon.

Because this year long curriculum is a study of places, with children inquiring over how the nature of a place affects the life of those who live in that place, it makes sense for the unit to begin by youngsters thinking about the places in their own lives and their own personal history. Where have children lived prior to now? Where have their family members lived? Their friends? Where have they traveled, visited? Where have they traveled vicariously, through books, poems, songs, videos, films (and we do not, in this instance, mean Narnia!)

You might launch this unit by revealing a world map and a United States map and uncapping a tin of toothpick flags or stacks of tiny post it notes and string. Demonstrate marking on the map one or two or three places in the world that you know well--that are a part of who you are. Then, invite students do the same, either on individual and group maps you've given out, or together, as a class. Did they come from another place not near school? Have they lived in and learned to love another place?

Your children's answers to these questions may make you lose heart. They may not have traveled beyond their hometown. That is okay. Every child will have seen movies that are set in different parts of the country, they will have read books that are set in places other than their home town, and they will know people who have traveled to different parts of the country. Also, frankly, this part of the unit can be quick. The point is to begin with what kids know and to share and cumulate that knowledge.

As they mark their spots, start the conversations, encourage children to pour out to one another what they know about these places. You might suggest children ask themselves these questions, finding a way to record this information and link it to the flag. Perhaps each flag is numbered, and a pad contains a page about each of the numbered places. However the information is set up, the important thing will be for them to collect information about that place and jot it down. (Before long you will suggest that children think between maps and whatever they know about places in order to begin to construct a

more complete concept of the places of the world, so the connection between the map and the information must be easy to see.) Remember to return to the guiding question:

You might let children talk about those places, and then give a mini-lecture in which you tell them that there are people in the world who research places, (you can decide if you want to refer to these people and eventually to your children as social scientists or simply as researchers) and let kids know that grown-ups who research places have some topics they often talk about, some questions they ask themselves and each other related to those places. You can tell children what those questions are, or send them off to scan books to collect those sub-topics, those questions. In any case, in the end you will want kids to know that these are some of the questions researchers think about when talking about places and you'll want to set children up to try talking about the places they know in terms of these questions:

Help them also to discover ways to talk as researchers do about questions you posed earlier:

- What is the climate like?
- Is it urban, suburban, or rural?
- What is the vegetation like?
- What do people do, especially? What are the jobs in this place?
- What are the different groups of people who live in this place and how do those different people live differently?
- What is the place known for?
- What is the land like in that place? How do the landforms affect how people live?
- What are the customs or the ways of doing things--even ways of celebrating holidays--of the people?
- What else should people know?

You could, of course, generate a few more questions, but you would probably rather ask children to collect more complete information on fewer questions rather than less complete information on more questions. We imagine you'll want to channel children to go home and collect information from people in their families—learning from them not just the names of the places, but as much as possible about what the places are like. You may also read aloud a few texts on the United States, stopping at strategic points to nudge children into sharing travel experiences and knowledge of various American cities with each other. Read-aloud texts are also one way of introducing vocabulary words (vegetation, coastline, delta, peninsula, prairie, plains etc.) or to acquaint children with the names of the key geographical features and landmarks.

Don't worry whether children are proficient at handling these questions. They may use some of the domain specific vocabulary words a bit incorrectly, for example, and they certainly won't have answers to all these questions. That's okay. You'll be wanting children to have reasons to talk with each other so as to glean information from each other, so letting them hunger for information they don't yet have is a good thing.

After children return with information, you will want them to consolidate what they have discovered. This can be a perfect juncture to form the class's first Inquiry Groups--by region. Remember, the fact that we refer to this group as an inquiry group not a center means that the group is held together by a topic and not a way of researching--in this instance, the unifying topic is the region (or state/location.) If a few of them have information to share about Florida, they'll need to put that information together, reconciling differences, onto one sheet that represents their groups' knowledge about that particular place.

Once children are in inquiry groups, sharing knowledge about places they know in common, you can help them begin to access tools and resources to learn more about those places. One such tool is a map, and you could decide to conduct two or three mini-lessons or to give a mini-lecture on basic map-reading skills. For example, you'll want children to be attentive to various map features, such as legends, keys and symbols. They'll need to understand orientation, not just North and South but also a sense of where countries, states or cities are located with respect to another: Is Denver south of Detroit? What states would someone drive through to visit his Grandma in Mississippi, can they use a finger to trace that road trip? Did they ever take a road trip and can they trace that trip on the map? It may also be helpful to place a map next to a globe to realize that maps are flat representations of an earth's surface (and hence inherently inaccurate). You'll particularly want to teach third graders to notice a map's title and realize that a physical map, population map and climate map give us entirely different information about the same place. You'll deepen children's map-skills in Bend Two. For now, having taught all children to use maps to learn about particular places, children can go back to their inquiry group and study one or more maps to learn more about their places.

Of course, once children have worked a bit on these questions on their own, you can decide to teach into this work, if you want, and if you decide to do so, one of the wisest things to do will be to find and celebrate examples of good work. One can imagine the rest of the class gathering about one group to observe the ways in which it uses terminology to talk about a place. If you do this, of course you will want to emphasize that children are listening to each other in order to learn ways of working they can use in their own Inquiry Groups—and also

to learn more about the United States, because the goal of the unit is to learn not just about one region, but about the many regions of the nation. They can also be thinking about how their region is the same or different.

You could also ramp up the level of children’s work by teaching them to:

- Use the terminology, the fancy words, that people use to talk about places in the world.
- Go from collecting information—facts-- about places, to trying to grow big ideas about the place, saying things like, “So does this suggest that....’
- Try asking ‘why?’ and ‘how come?’ and try to come up with possible explanations for things. “Might this be because....”

Note-taking

We suggest you spotlight note-taking during both this unit and Unit Two. (By Unit Three we suggest you spotlight information reading, using the note-taking without stressing it.) We focus on writing for now more than on reading in acknowledgement that you may not have yet had a chance to collect and organize a lot of resources that your students can actually read. At the start of the year, instruction in your reading and writing ELA classroom will be so complicated and many-faceted that it seems important to us to simplify your social studies curriculum as much as possible. Then, too, the data is overwhelming that writing in the content areas makes an absolutely gigantic difference, accelerating students’ progress in every dimension of their reading (see Reeves’ 90/90/90 research especially.) In order for students to write in *any* content area—social studies, science, reading, math—it is important for them to know strategies for taking and learning from notes, and for doing this efficiently.

We also have found that when students write, this changes teaching. If students sketch or jot what they notice when looking at a map of the United States, for example, and you encourage them to use the terminology that accompanies map-reading, all of a sudden you are given a window onto what your students grasp and can do—and what they don’t grasp, can’t do. This assessment of your students’ work will help you shape your instruction. When you are eyeball to eyeball with writing that suggests your students do not know the difference between a town, a city, or a state, you are much more apt to gear your teaching to your students, and to take the time to see if your teaching is getting through enough to make a palpable difference.

Finally, teaching note-taking matters because it is a way of supporting engagement and engagement is the sine qua non of education. Without it, there is no learning. And the truth is that sometimes teachers have been so intent on dumping information on top of students that students have watched a film or conducted an experiment or listened to the teacher talk about a map, but the students themselves have made no representations of what they have learned from this. Watching a film without collecting notes on it and sharing those notes and writing off from those notes doesn't amount to much education. The literacy portion of your teaching during the first two months of your curriculum is designed to put a premium on students' shaping and organizing the information that comes their way.

As your children are working to assemble and mark down the information they've collected, let them know that researchers use note-taking too--that they use lists and sketches and maps and diagrams and flash-drafts as a means of holding what they are finding.

At this point, in some of the centers or in conferences or even in a mini-lecture, you might show as models some images of notebook pages from famous researchers. Lewis and Clark, Mark Twain, Thomas Edison, Leonardo Da Vinci all sketched often, and wrote lists of their observations and questions (Google any of these people and notebooks.) The notebooks for da Vinci are in the archives of the British Library (www.imagesonline.bl.uk). If you wish to find notes that can be used as mentor texts, you may want to go to www.notebookstories.com. We appreciate the *The Tree of Life*, an introduction to Darwin and his notes by Peter Sis, although it may be challenging for many third graders, the sample notes are useful.

You can also show children your own notes. In order to teach note-taking, spy on yourself taking notes (do your best note-taking work for ten minutes, for the sake of this research) and then notice what the main work is that you do as a note-taker, and think about how that work is different from the work that students tend to do. Think, "What am I doing that I could teach students to do?"

Raise the Level of Note-Taking

As the work progresses, you can talk to your students about the fact that this year, as third graders, it will be important for them to not just collect information, but to be able to hold onto that information. When some of them visited the ocean over the summer and collected

seashells, chances are good that the work went better if they collected their treasures in buckets. Well, researchers need buckets, too, and usually they use paper and pens as buckets. Part of the job for anyone trying to research a place is that person needs to think, "What will I do with the information? How should I collect it?"

The important thing is that the researcher thinks about how to set up the notes. Maybe there are sketches (or lists) of what the people in that place are like, and what the land in that place is like. The note taker thinks, "How should my notes go?" and comes up with a structure, a design. If the student wanted to convey what a place is like at different times of the year or at different times in his visit there, the student might make a series of sketches that are lined up like in a cartoon strip, perhaps with arrows between. If the student wants to show the whole place—perhaps with a sketched map—and then to enlarge sections of the whole place—that can be done as well.

All of this could be done using lists not sketches. A student could make headings across his or her page: "Miami at night," "Miami in the day." Or, "What I Saw First," "What I Learned Later." Or "Weather," "Land," "Jobs," "Problems."

Of course, whether researchers are listing or are sketching, it is important that they work efficiently, and yet capture enough information that their notes are useful later. Headings make the world of difference, and captions for sketches. In fact, you will want to suggest that any writing around the central notes can help. Labels can infuse a sketch with tons of information. Into the sketch about Miami in the day, the student can insert the temperature, and the time it took to drive from Miami to the beach. Later, when students are given maps to study and to integrate into what they already know about a place, they will have a lot more information to insert, but the act of layering ones notes can start now.

In this unit, each researcher will want to collect information in a way that can be combined easily, as the three people who know about Boston will need to add their information together, and eventually the Boston information will be combined with, say, other New England (or other East Coast) information.

You and the class may decide that everyone should collect information on notebook paper or index cards—one page per place—that can be sorted, later, so that the pages or cards that relate to one region are put alongside each other.

The important thing will be to show children that any of these ways of taking notes can be done poorly, or done well. You can demonstrate that a student might decide to sketch different sides of Miami, so that her notes look almost like a collection of snapshots of

Miami. One sketch could show Miami at night, with the city skyline. Another could show Miami in the day, with the blazing sun and stopped traffic to and from the beach.

As children work on their notes, there are certain teaching points that you may decide to use. You could create a chart, little by little to answer the guiding question: How do

Guiding Question: *What is life like--and what are the places like--in different parts of the US?*

researchers talk, think and write about places around the world and how can we do that too? (Remember, the chart itself can't teach--each item on the chart calls for your teaching help so children understand why and how--they aren't just assigned the items on the chart to do!)

How do researchers talk, think and write about places around the world and how can we do that too?

- Think about 'why' they are taking notes, to help organize. (We, for instance, are working towards answering the question: What do we know about our home places? so we can learn about more regions of the United States than we've ever known before!)
- Use many ways to collect their information in notes--including sketches, diagrams and lists
- Use careful headings
- Researchers organize information by using headings and often move the information from one heading to another, if needed
- Agree on common headings, when in teams, so that the information can be put together.
- DON'T necessarily write complete sentences, but DO write whole thoughts

Bend II: Researchers revisit early notes and study maps to build their understanding of a place

Approximately 3-4 sessions

One of the important things about notes--whether sketch notes or lists or paragraphs-- is that researchers use their notes to return to their information. The work of revisiting

information and layering on new information is especially supported in Bend Two. When they meet with each other, they will talk from their notes in order to cumulate what they know about a shared place, and to talk through differences, coming to some consensus about the place, and then they will create one set of master-notes about the place. All the while, they will be guided by the question, “What is life like--and what are the places like--in different parts of the US?” In this bend you will also ramp up students’ map-skills to the point where they are able to look across several different types of maps of the United States to ponder features such as population density, physical features, climate, road and rail networks, noticing that different maps can reveal different aspects of life in the same place. (There will be lots of time throughout the year to illuminate these ways of looking at a place so you needn’t be frantic to cover everything right now.)

We imagine that this work of studying maps and revisiting notes happens simultaneously. That is, children create new notes or add layers of information onto their existing notes in the light of what they notice from maps. All the while, they will be revising and adding so that notes evolve in ways that mirror their evolving understanding of life in various parts of the United States.

Set children up to revisit and develop their notes

Note-taking involves rereading one’s notes for all sorts of reasons, including rethinking them, seeing connections between one part and another. You can be sure your third graders aren’t doing this work yet! But as you channel several children to combine their notes, you will set up a clear concrete reason for them to reread their notes, to prioritize and elaborate on the content. You may, at first, just teach them to tack their own notes alongside another child’s, and refile their information so everything pertaining to the weather (whether collected from one researcher or from another) is in one place. This is not a small deal. Your ‘combine your notes’ challenge is helping them progress, in a step-by-step way, from whatever they did at the very start of the year as note-takers, towards your goals for them. Of course, when you ask children to combine their notes and later to connect their notes to a study of maps, you are teaching them that note-taking is a part of learning. It is not just a way to be accountable to the teacher. If there is no expectation that children will return to their notes to reread them, to make something of them, then there is no purpose to note-taking other than to comply with the teacher’s expectations.

You’ll want to build in time for children to reread their notes, deciding which parts they want to share with others. If you have time to do so, you can teach them to reread their notes by elaborating on them in their minds eye. That is, notes can be cryptic, and the writer of notes should be able to think and say a lot more than the few words he or she has

fastened onto the page. Channel students to plan how they will talk from their notes with each other.

- Researchers reexamine their notes, sketches, and lists. This is more than just rereading-- researchers reread their notes with a purpose. By doing this, researchers get in mind the big picture of what they are studying. Rereading what they have collected so far can also help them find gaps in their research, thinking, 'Oh, I left stuff out!' Sometimes writing around or writing long about notes can help a researcher see things in a differently or grow bigger ideas.
- When researching as part of a research group, sharing the information and trying to make connections between each person's information is a big deal. For example, if people in one group all have notes about something similar, such as things to do in Miami, they could combine the information to have more powerful research. One way teams can do this is to pick a heading and share what information they have that goes with that heading. Then all of this information can be combined.

As children keep notes, then return to their notes to use and share them, the way they take notes in the first place should improve

Your hope is that this will be a cycle. Your instruction for children to think about a system for collecting notes and to reread their notes as a way to rethink their topic and to talk off from their notes should lead children to ramp up the level of their notes so that the notes children take on day one will not hold a candle to the notes they take by day three. Of course, their first notes will be on places they know about already, so those notes won't be as important, and their later notes will be on places their family members have told them about, so notes will become even more important. Invite children to lay their notes from these different days alongside each other and to see if they have gotten better as note takers, and see if they can name what 'better notes' entails. If they haven't improved, set them up to do so post haste. You will want to convey the general expectation that as a teacher, you expect to see that kids are getting better visibly, before your eyes.

Raise the level of the Inquiry Groups By Channeling Them To Ask a More Analytical Question, Relating What They Know about an Area to How Life is Lived There

Once children have begun to collect information about places in the world (and especially in the United States,) you will want to ramp up the nature of this work by adding another layer to their inquiries about places. Now you will teach students that researchers who want to understand the United States ask: What is life like in different parts of the United States? How is it different in one part of the US and another, and what are the factors that make life different in those different places?

The inquiry groups that you initiated in bend one will be invited to tackle these questions. That is, if three children have visited Florida or have ties to someone who has and they have been accumulating their information about Florida, they'll now be channeled to children speculate over what they can generalize about what it is that contributes to how life is lived in Florida, and how is that life similar and different from that which they know best.

Teach Youngsters That When Growing Ideas, Researchers Draw on Whatever Information They Have: Rural Suburban, Urban; City, State, Country, Continent; Climate

Children won't be able to do much with these questions until you add some content knowledge into the discussion. You'll first want to remind them to draw on what they know about how researchers go about thinking about life in different parts of the world. For example, in many of your classrooms, children studied urban, suburban and rural communities during second grade. With reminders, they can think about the part of the United States that they are focusing on by thinking about whether it is a city, a suburban area, or a rural area. Does it have the other areas nearby? Children can discuss differences between those areas (and if you want to extend this, they could interview people who have moved from one of these to another to hear how life was different when they lived in another sort of an area.

Children will have other knowledge that you can channel them to draw upon. For example, some of them will have a sense for talking about places by positioning those places within larger structures. Remember when you were little and signed your address by progressing from your town, to your state, to your region, to your nation, to your continent, to your hemisphere? Some children will be able to do that now, and you'll want to try to make it likely that children learn from each other, so that one youngster's knowledge gets shared with others in his or her inquiry group. You can, of course, use the teaching structure of mid-workshop interruptions to broadcast the cool things you see members of one inquiry group or another doing, so that in this way you lift the level of the whole class' work. For instance, if a group of your students is talking about Chicago and about how cold it is in the

city in the winter, you'll want them to imagine how the weather impacts life in the city -- people need to have lots of warm clothing, people need to have tools to remove snow, people need to have housing that provides heat and protection from the outdoors. That is, when you nudge students to use their knowledge to explain the way people in an area live their lives, be sure that you encourage them to draw conclusions about the relationship between the weather (or climate) in an area and the ways people live in that place.

While you want to tap on knowledge that children already bring from before, for the class to come together to build on each other's knowledge and experiences of the United States, some of your children may have quite specific, unanswered questions about their place of interest. You'll want to show them how to research their answers through an internet search engine and/or set up a few books on the United States prominently in the room for them to refer to. You may want to teach them to search with precision and accuracy by identifying keywords for a search--and show them that this keyword may be hunted in a Table of Contents or in the alphabetical index of a reference book.

Lift the Level of the Inquiry Groups' Thinking By Teaching Them to Read Maps and Relate What They Learn from Maps to Knowledge of the Place and of Life Within the Place

The children will need help being able to think and talk well about places in the US and to answer the questions you have posed, and so you will soon want to provide them with resources they can draw upon, and the most obvious will be maps.

We envision that you start this work by guiding the class through the study of a map so that they have an understanding of the kinds of information that can be gathered from maps and the ways that researchers use that information to interpret what life is like in a particular place based on the climate or geographic features. Below you will see a list of sample questions that you can use to guide your demonstrations and your students' practice. We don't expect that you would attempt to address all of these points in a single demonstration, but instead that this can serve as a sort of cheat-sheet for you with regard to possible teaching.

Questions Researchers Ask When Learning about Places from Studying Maps:

- What can I learn from this kind of map? Does the title or the key help me know the kind of map this is, and know what sorts of information and ideas I can get from it?

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Content Area Curricular Calendar, Third Grade, 2013-2014
Unit One - Starting with Our Country: The USA

- How does the information that I see on this map explain things I know about this place? How does the information go with (or contradict) what I already knew (or thought I knew) about this place? (After studying a map, researchers often add to notes they had already started making.)
- What new questions does this map generate? How will you begin to think about those questions? You will want to record your wonderings, and your 'could it be that...' hunches.
- When researchers look between several different maps, they see connections. They notice the land forms on one map, the density of the population on another map, and they put things together, growing ideas about the place by doing this.

Next, we imagine that you will want to extend this work by giving each inquiry group 2-3 maps (perhaps these are the same maps, across the class, and perhaps you tailor the maps to the groups) and then you teach children to see if a close study of the maps can help them to grow ideas about what shapes life in particular parts of the United States. You may give each inquiry group a task card.

For example, you may provide each group with a card that says:

Researchers use maps to learn about different parts of the world. Study these maps closely to collect information. Just as you interviewed your family and friends about different places around the world, you can use these maps to collect information. Remember to record the information you collect because you will share and revise your notes with your classmates.

We expect you will decide to continue to teach your students about maps by delivering a mini-lecture, leading a seminar, or reading aloud to your students in order to provide children with information in the most efficient possible way. Alternatively, you could give them a one-page fact sheet, asking them to read it aloud to each other, to take notes, to discuss it.

Consider Giving a Mini-lecture to Lift the Level of Students' Knowledge about Maps

When doing this, you probably would want to include some instruction in the very basic terminology that map readers use, if necessary. For example, most maps include a compass rose, which indicates the cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west). They often

include a scale that is used to estimate distances, and a key, which tells what the symbols on the map mean. One way to read a map is to think about an area's distance from the equator or from the poles. Countries have geographic features, and maps can tell a researcher about the bodies of water (oceans, rivers, lakes) that are in or near a place, about the mountain ranges that are in or near a place.

You might also want to teach your students that there are different kinds of maps that are used for different purposes. A list of kinds of maps is the sort of information that children are apt to learn and forget before they stand up from their desks, so you'll want to make sure that children have a reason to know about these different types of maps. Perhaps you'll explain the different kinds of maps and you'll tell each group that they can let you know which kind of map their inquiry group most needs in order to further its research, towards the goal of being able to teach another group all about their area within two days. In any case, this is information that might help you.

Political Maps:

- Show the location of countries.
- Show the borders between countries and between each state inside a country.
- You can usually find capitals and cities on a political map.

Physical Maps:

- Show the natural features of the land such as mountains, lakes, and river
- Bodies of water are shown in blue on the map.
- Land is usually shown in green on the map.

Weather and Climate Maps:

- Weather maps tell what the temperature is going to be for the day.
- Show where it will be sunny, cloudy or stormy.
- Climate maps use color to show the different climates in an area.

Economic or Resource Maps:

- Show the types of natural resources (like crops, energy)
- Can also show economic activity in an area.

Other:

- Population maps: Show the population in different colors.
- Election maps: Show election outcomes based on geographic region.

Meanwhile, continue to embed instruction in note taking into Bend Two

Whereas in the first bend, students used sketch notes and lists to record impressions of a place, including doing this in ways that answered questions you posed about those places, and they reread those notes to share them with each other and to combine their notes with the notes from others in their inquiry group, in this second bend, students will now draw from a second (and perhaps third, and fourth) resource (that is, maps) in order to harvest more information about the same place, and they'll use this new information to begin layering their original notes with a new layer of notes.

You'll want to show children that they can reread their notes---and these will now tend to be the cumulative shared notes that the inquiry group has produced after combining all they know—and add new layers of information to them. You will teach them that once a person has jotted some notes, that person needs to hold those notes in hand, or put those notes at the center of the table, and then pull in to reread and rethink those notes. That is, note-taking helps a person to 'have second thoughts.'

The most obvious way for students to have second thoughts will be to 'write around' their original notes. So, if an inquiry group began with the observation that Florida has 'lots of beaches,' they might now add information about the names of the bodies of water -- The Gulf of Mexico on the western shore and The Atlantic Ocean on the eastern shore. They may also use the scale in order to record and reflect on the length of the coastline.

To promote this work, you may distribute scissors and chart paper and suggest that children take apart their original notes on an area, and now add in some of the related observations they can cull from a study of the maps. If children find this difficult, you can show examples from whichever group has a bit of success with this because, for example, if one group adds information about an area's geological features (mountains, say) to their write up, then other groups can be nudged to do similar work.

The step that you really hope students also start to take is for them to go from recording facts to growing ideas. Alternate example: Are the beaches all the same? How are the beaches on the Gulf of Mexico different from the beaches on the Atlantic Ocean? Are some beaches better for tourists and some better for fishing? The goal here is for your students to use the information they have gathered to think, to 'have second thoughts.'

Bend III: The *UNITED* States of America: Thinking not Just about Parts of the US, But about How Those Parts Do (and Do not) Go Together

Guiding Questions:

How do all the different places and parts of the United States go together into one nation? What can be said about the whole of the United States—about what life is like, and why it is that way?

In this final bend of the unit, you will create tremendous new energy by combining the social groups—the inquiry groups—into new and larger groups. Think beforehand about how to cluster your students. Will one group be New England, or would it be better to have a group for major cities? You'll find that you need to divide the entire class up into groups before you settle upon a way that feels like it will work—and of course, if you like and you have time, you can add a whole new layer by reconfiguring those groups. That is, the first time around you may have cluster by region, the next time, by urban, rural, suburban configurations.

Your point here will be to help children grow ideas not just about their chosen focal area (i.e. Florida) but about the region that the entire cluster of children represent (ie the Eastern coast). As children do this, they will be moving towards more generalizations about their place. You may find that this is hard for them to do, and you may want to help them out by providing a mentor text, or by role playing what you hope they might do by having the sort of conversation with another teacher that you hope the children will have with each other. You may also want to show children a video clip of a group of children talking about a common topic. On the TCRWP website, under videos, you will see Common Core videos and there are two that might pertain--one shows children talking about Colonial America, another, about sea life (or octopus.) The topics aren't the same and the Colonial American kids are older, but either video will show children grow ideas together, agreeing and disagreeing with each other, standing on the shoulders of each other's ideas, making use of domain specific vocabulary, and incorporating knowledge of the field into their discussion.

As a way to wrap-up this unit, you may consider a few possibilities. To begin, you may want to bring out the before and after nature of the unit. That is, as you have taught your students about gathering information and note-taking you have focused on the ways that researchers are always on the push to gather more information and to think new thoughts as a result of their research. From the very start of the year, you want children to be able to sense and keep some track of their own process as learners, to note the 'before and after' nature of their work and be able to identify factors that pushed this work to the next level. In advertising, 'before and after' is a common tool -- we see images of people before and after effective diets or we see images of houses before and after remodeling. "Wow," we

think, “That is amazing.” We want our students to have the same feeling of astonishment when looking back at their notes from the first days of the unit.

With this in mind, you can ask students to look across their notes, not to grow new ideas about the United States, but to grow new ideas about themselves as researchers. “Before I took notes by writing down words, now I take notes and I know to use different kinds of notes, like lists with headings and sketches to hold onto information,” students might say. Or others will reflect on the ways they have learned to revise their notes by adding on or by having second thoughts. You may use this moment as an opportunity for students to reflect in writing and to set goals for how they want to continue to grow as researchers in the coming months. You could have students select note-taking samples that show their growth in this unit in order to post these on a real or virtual bulletin board.

You may also want to set your students up to teach others what they have learned. You could collaborate with another teacher your school in order to partner students in different grade levels. Your third graders could teach Kindergartners a few essentials about map study, or your third graders could meet with fifth graders to compare the ways third graders take notes with the ways fifth graders take notes. The point is that you’ll want to find ways to create situations for your students to reflect on their learning -- either through self-assessment or through teaching others.