

**National Council for Geographic Education
Curriculum & Instruction Committee
Geography Club**

Submitted by: Steve Pierce
stevepierce@charter.net

Seventh Month Activities

Geography for Life: National Geography Standards

The World in Spatial Terms

Standard 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information

Places and Regions

Standard 4: The physical and human characteristics of places

Human Systems

Standard 12: The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement

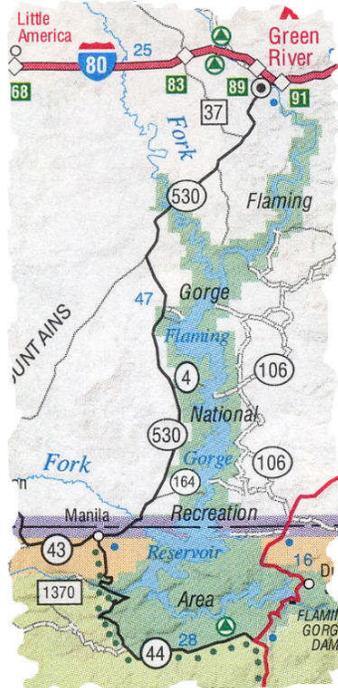
Environment and Society

Standard 14: How human actions modify the physical environment

I. Warm-up Activity: Map Scraps

Examine each “Map Scrap” and try to determine the locations. Use an atlas and other reference materials to answer the questions.

Map Scrap 7-1



Questions:

1. Which two U.S. states are shown on the map?
2. On what river is the reservoir located?
3. If you traveled west on Interstate 80, which state capital would you reach first?
4. What are two national parks that lie in the northwestern corner of one of these states?
5. Besides I-80, what other interstate highways serve the larger of the two states shown on the map?

Map: American Automobile Association

Map Scrap 7-2



Map: American Automobile Association

Questions:

1. What state capital is just north of this map scrap?
2. Which interstate highway links the capital with Flagstaff?
3. What national park lies in the northwestern part of the state?
4. If you traveled west on I-10, what river would you cross at the state line?
5. If you traveled east on I-10 as far as you could go, where would you be?

II. Activity: U.S. Highways and Interstates

One of the first things you see when you look at a highway map of the United States is the network of roads, highways, and interstates that link places across the country. From narrow, two-lane “blue highways” to multi-lane, high-speed interstates, virtually every place in the United States is connected with other places. Movement of people and goods is accomplished using this vast network of roads and highways.

This activity is about highways that crisscross the United States. From historical roads dating back to the early 20th century to the rise of the Interstate Highway System, students will investigate where these highways go, how they keep up connected with one another, and learn about our past.

Materials needed:

1. Highway maps of the United States or a road atlas - (*check with your local AAA for map donations or have students bring in a road atlas from home*)
2. Student Activity Sheet (*see link on the NCGE Geography Club webpage*)
3. Internet access

Websites

The Lincoln Highway

<http://www.ugcs.caltech.edu/~jlin/lincoln/>

The Lincoln Highway Association

<http://www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org/>

Route 66

The Mother Road: Route 66

<http://www.historic66.com/>

National Historic Route 66 Federation

<http://www.national66.com/>

Other U.S. Highways

Road Trip USA

<http://www.roadtripusa.com/index.html>

Interstate Highway System

Department of Transportation: Interstate Highway System

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/routefinder/>

Interstate Highways - Geography at About.com

<http://geography.about.com/library/weekly/aa052499.htm>

Interstate Highways - Commercial Site

<http://www.ihoz.com/ilist.html>

A Little Background about U.S. Highways (Use with Student Activity Sheet)

Ask students about the Westward Movement in the United States. How did most settlers move west in the 1840's? How long did such a journey take? (*Most traveled by covered wagon pulled by oxen on trails such as the Oregon Trail. Such a journey would take four to six months.*) How did the construction of the transcontinental railroad change how people and goods moved across the country? (*Travel time was greatly reduced.*)

The advent of the automobile in the early 20th Century brought about the need for highways to better connect U.S. cities. The earliest of these highways was the **Lincoln Highway**. Using the *student activity sheet*, have them research information about the Lincoln Highway.

The Great Depression and the Dust Bowl of the 1930s sparked the movement of people across the United States. One highway that took people west from the Midwest to California was the famed **Route 66**. Have students research this highway using the questions on the *student activity sheet*.

Other U.S. Routes

There are dozens of numbered U.S. highways. Identify several in your immediate area, making sure not to include interstate highways. Consult a U.S. highway map or road atlas to investigate the highways. What are the terminus points of the U.S. highways in your area? Are any of these highways "coast-to-coast" or "border-to-border"? To what extent is the place where you live connected to other places? Use the website links to explore some U.S. highways.

The Interstate Highway System

After seeing the *autobahns* of Germany during World War II, General Dwight D. Eisenhower was convinced that the United States needed a similar controlled-access highway system. After becoming president, Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, establishing a federal program of road building in the United States, later to be known as the Eisenhower Interstate System.

Have students examine a *U.S. at Night Map* <http://www.edu-observatory.org/images/badlight.jpg> to identify settlement patterns. Have them identify some cities and look for the strings of light that connect major cities.

Interstate Numbering System

Have students look at a highway map of the United States that shows the interstate highway system. Ask students to locate several east-west interstate highways starting in the southern part of the U.S. and working north. For example, locate an interstate that begins in the east at Jacksonville, Florida and continues west to Los Angeles, California. (*I-10*) Then locate the interstate that begins in the east in North Carolina and continues west to California. (*I-40*) Finally, locate the interstate that links New York City and San Francisco. (*I-80*) What pattern do you notice about the interstate numbers? (*Highways running east-west are even numbered. The lowest numbers are in the south, and the highest numbers are in the north.*)

Repeat this procedure for several north-south interstate highways beginning in the west and working east. For example locate an interstate that begins in San Diego, California and continues north to Seattle, Washington. (*I-5*) Then locate the interstate that links Laredo, Texas with Duluth, Minnesota. (*I-35*) Finally, locate the interstate that links Maine and Florida along the eastern seaboard. (*I-95*) What pattern do you notice about the interstate numbers? (*Highways running north-south are odd numbered. The lowest numbers are in the west, and the highest numbers are in the east.*)

Which interstate highways are the longest, either running coast-to-coast or border-to-border? (*Those interstate highways ending in a 5 or 0 tend to be the longest; running nearly coast-to-coast or border-to-border.*)

Locate Washington, DC and Indianapolis, Indiana. What is different about the number of the interstate highways that go around these cities? How are they numbered? (*Three digit interstate highway numbers represent beltways or loops, attached to a primary interstate highway (represented by the last two numbers of the beltway's number). Washington D.C.'s beltway is numbered 495, because its parent highway is I-95.*)

Getting There on Interstate Highways

Select an interstate highway that passes through your community or state. Identify the interstate and select a direction to travel. List the cities and states that are linked to your state by that interstate. Do the same for the other direction of travel.

Identify some points of interest on or near the interstate highway, such as national or state parks, natural and cultural landmarks, or amusement parks.

Planning a Trip

Plan a trip across the United States starting from your community. Select a route that will take you from your community through at least five other states.

- Describe what highways you would take to get to your destination, and what sights you would see along the way.
- Identify the landform features and major rivers you will cross, as well as large cities you will pass through.
- Figure the mileage between major stops and for the total trip.
- If you average 50 miles per hour on your trip, how long will the trip take?
- If your car gets 25 miles per gallon, how much will it cost to drive to your destination and back? (Use an average price per gallon of gasoline)

III. Geo-Questions

U.S. highways are the theme of this month's questions.

1. The United States Interstate Highway System directly serves all but five state capital cities. Name these five cities.
2. Name the major city near the intersection of I-40 and I-55.
3. Which interstate highway passes through these three cities - Nashville, Little Rock, and Oklahoma City?
4. Which interstate crosses a desert -- I-4 or I-8?
5. Which interstate highway is closest to Big Bend National Park?
6. Which interstate highway passes through California's Central Valley?
7. Which interstate highway passes through these three cities - Columbus, Indianapolis, and Kansas City?
8. Which U.S. highway is closest to both Yellowstone National Park and Glacier National Park?
9. What unique natural feature does I-80 west of Salt Lake City pass through?
10. Which interstate passes east of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado?

Answers

I. Map Scraps

Map 7-1

1. Wyoming and Utah
2. Green River
3. Salt Lake City, Utah
4. Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park
5. I-25 and I-90

Map 7-2

1. Phoenix
2. I-17
3. Grand Canyon National Park
4. Colorado River
5. Jacksonville, Florida

II. U.S. Highways and Interstates

Lincoln Highway

1. Conceived in 1912, construction began in 1913
2. New York City in the east and San Francisco in the west
3. New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada and California
4. U.S. Route 30
5. answers will vary

Route 66

6. 2,448 miles
7. Chicago, Illinois and Santa Monica, California
8. Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California
9. I-40
10. 1985
11. answers will vary

Other U.S. Highways

12. answers will vary
13. answers will vary

How Interstates are Numbered

14. I-10
15. I-40
16. I-80
17. Highways running east-west are even numbered. The lowest numbers are in the south, and the highest numbers are in the north.
18. I-5
19. I-35
20. I-95
21. Highways running north-south are odd numbered. The lowest numbers are in the west, and the highest numbers are in the east.
22. I-10
23. I-95
24. Those interstate highways ending in a 5 or 0 tend to be the longest; running nearly coast-to-coast or border-to-border.
25. The interstates from a beltway around the cities
26. They are numbered with 3 digits
27. The last two numbers are the same as the parent interstate.

III. Geo-Questions

1. Juneau, AK; Dover, DE; Jefferson City, MO; Carson City, NV; Pierre, SD
2. Memphis, Tennessee
3. I-40
4. I-8
5. I-10
6. I-5
7. I-70
8. U.S. Highway 89
9. Bonneville Salt Flats
10. I-25