

Geography

U.S.

SAMPLE





About the Course

Students focus on US geography using maps, illustrations, and historical narratives about travelers during the 19th century.



Placement & Combining Tips

This course is different for each of the historical time periods, but always retains a topical focus on US geography.



Scheduling

GRADE	SCHEDULE INFO.	BOOKS
8	Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.) 2 times/week 30 min	Student World Atlas 6th Ed. United States Atlas 7th Ed. This Strange Wilderness: The Life and Art of John James Audubon Our States Have Crazy Shapes Westward with Fremont: The Story of Solomon Carvalho

Sample Weekly View

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)				
Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)		Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)		



Planning & Prep

Permission to print for non-commercial use. See Alveary group use policy to use lessons in a group context.

LINKS: Click text or scan the QR code in the top corner of the lesson plan pages to view online resources associated with the lessons.

Responsibility for previewing all links rests with the teacher. All links were checked at the time of publication; however, websites change frequently and may contain objectionable content. Please report broken links by contacting us through our website.



Books & Resources

For book rationales and purchase options, click the Book List link or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Book List Details](#)

Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)



Student World Atlas 6th Ed.



United States Atlas 7th Ed.



This Strange Wilderness: The Life and Art of John James Audubon



Our States Have Crazy Shapes



Westward with Fremont: The Story of Solomon Carvalho



Supplies

For supply list details and basic supplies helpful to have on hand, click the links or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Basic Supplies](#)
(No Subject Supplies Assigned)



Quick Links

Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)

- ∞ [Extra Helpings](#)
- ∞ [Student Lessons \(No Answers\)](#)
- ∞ [Foundations \(See Section 16: Geography\)](#)

Click THIS text
or scan the QR
code for links.



Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)

How To Teach



Overview

The steps below are generally true for most geography lessons. Sometimes several lessons might build together or focus on a particular area (like Map Work).



Introduce

Through questions, observations, an activity, or recalling the last lesson, introduce the topic for the day.



Map Questions

Answer questions on the map or on making your own maps.



Read

Read the day's passage out loud or have the student read independently.



Narrate

Have students retell the passage either orally or in writing. They may want to use maps or pictures to tell back.



Map Work

The lesson may contain more map work as students make their own maps or add to ongoing maps.

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Term 1

WEEK 1 30m Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.) - Lesson 1

Solomon Carvalho: Solomon Joins Fremont

Materials: Westward with Fremont, notebook, United States Atlas, blank map

→ PREP

Your geography notebook will be used on both days of the week. You may be asked to make an entry or to tape your printed maps for Map Work. Ensure that each entry is labeled with the date or lesson number. Your notebook should have a minimum of 70 pages. It is suggested to label the first page in your notebook “Solomon Carvalho’s Journey” and set aside the next 5 pages. Place a marker or paper clip, label the page “John Audubon’s Wilderness Travels,” and save 5 pages. Place another marker. This section will be used on the second day for notebooking work; label the title page for that section “The United States of America.”

→ INTRODUCTION

Westward with Fremont: The Story of Solomon Carvalho tells the true story of a dangerous expedition led by explorer John C. Fremont and documented by photographer Solomon Nunes Carvalho. Carvalho was not a mountain man or soldier; he was an ordinary person and an artist. Armed with early photographic equipment, he traveled across the Great Plains, through the towering Rocky Mountains, and into the arid lands of the Great Basin, eventually reaching California. You will particularly study the river systems and mountain ranges traveled by the expedition. During the expedition, not all states were established; there were many regions they traveled through that were still considered territories.

→ LOCATE

Map Resource: United States Atlas p.27

1. In your United States Atlas, locate Washington, D.C., New York City (New York), and Baltimore (Maryland). These are major cities in the Eastern region of the country. Notice that Washington, D.C., is labeled as the District of Columbia on the map.
2. What states border the city of Washington, D.C.? [A: Maryland and Virginia] The city is not part of either state. It is the capital city of the country.

→ READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

Ch.1-2 p.1-11 “I give you” - “their Jewish neighbors.”

→ MAP WORK

Map Resource: geography notebook, blank map of U.S.

Map Link: Country Outline Map

Map Link: Blank Map of U.S.

In your notebook, print and tape the blank map of the United States on the page after your “Solomon Carvalho’s Journey” page. Notice that one map includes all the state outlines while the other does not. If you feel you need the state borders to guide you, then use the Blank Map of U.S. If you feel you want to place your own borders or territory sections, then choose the Country Outline Map.

You will use this map to record Solomon’s journey throughout future lessons. Title the map “Solomon’s Journey West.” Locate Baltimore, Maryland. Draw a house to signify Solomon’s hometown. Now, locate the 38th parallel and draw a faint dotted line along the map. This will be the route the group will try to follow.

• DEFINITIONS

expedition: a journey taken for a specific purpose, often exploration

frontier: the edge of settled land

daguerreotype: an early type of photograph made on a metal plate

survey: to measure and map land

38th Parallel in the United States:

passes through California (near San Francisco/Mono Lake), Nevada (Henderson/Hoover Dam), Arizona (Grand Canyon), Oklahoma (Tulsa), Missouri, Kentucky, and Virginia

• EXTRA HELPING

This short video talks about the history of the daguerreotype and who it is named after.

Video Link: History of Daguerreotype

Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)

[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

WEEK 1 ☐ 30m Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.) - Lesson 2

Northeastern U.S.

☐ Materials: Our States Have Crazy Shapes, United States Atlas, blank map, geography notebook

PREP: Print 8 copies of the linked United States blank map, to be used over the next several weeks. One of these is to be placed in your student's geography notebook (leave an opposite page blank for the state capitals). States will be added from week to week, and the map will be used to study each week. The additional maps are used at the beginning of each week's lesson to see what the student remembers.

∞ Map Link: Blank Map of U.S.

→ INTRO

The second lesson each week in Geography will be spent on Map Questions and Map Work/Projects. There is a Read, Narrate, & Discuss portion from Our States Have Crazy Shapes that will cover two states per lesson in order of their acquired statehood. Please work for the time scheduled. There will be days when your state notebook entries might not be possible. Save those entries for another day or when you can return to them. It is recommended that you find a game about the states or follow along with the "Extra Helpings" of video suggestions to enlighten your assigned reading about each state.

→ MAP WORK

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.14-15, 27

1. Our stories this year are about the journey of Solomon Carvalho and the adventures of John James Audubon. They begin in the eastern part of the United States, but we will take you through to the West Coast of the United States. Day two will focus on each region of the United States. We will begin in the northeastern part and will work our way to fill the entire map of the United States.
2. Read p.14-15 about our "giant patchwork quilt."
3. Now turn to p.27 and locate Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Add them to your blank map that you will place in your geography notebook.
4. What country borders these states to the North? [A: Canada] What ocean borders the states to the east? [A: Atlantic Ocean] Add Canada and the Atlantic Ocean to your map.
5. Tape this map into your notebook. On the blank opposite page, start a state capital list. Add the state and capitals for Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont to your list.
6. Spend some time studying the states, their capitals, and the region. Next week, you will fill these in from memory.

→ READ & NOTEBOOK

Delaware and Pennsylvania (pick one state)

Our States Have Crazy Shapes Ch.1-2 p.33-39

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.33, 47

1. Draw an outline of Delaware and Pennsylvania on separate pages in your notebook in "The United States of America" section. Moving forward, any states that you draw will be in this section. Be sure to label each page with the state name at the top. Observe the boundaries, and try to answer the following questions: What geographical features make up the boundaries of the state? Is there anything unique about the borders?
2. Read the pages in the book for each state. You may want to read about each state at a time and work on the map for that state.
3. Add any comments to your maps that you learned about in the reading. Aim to include at least 3 interesting things about the state and its boundaries. See example below.

∞ Image Link: Example of State Map

• EXTRA HELPING

View the video tour of Acadia National Park.

∞ Video Link: ACADIA National Park

Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)

[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

WEEK 2 ☐ 30m Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.) - Lesson 3

Solomon Carvalho: Solomon Joins Fremont

☐ Materials: Westward with Fremont, geography notebook, United States Atlas, Rivers Map

→ RECAP

What did you read last time?

→ LOCATE

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.101

1. Locate St. Louis on p.101.
2. Locate the Missouri River. The river starts in the Rocky Mountains in southwestern Montana and ends just north of St. Louis, Missouri. It runs about 2,341 miles and is the longest river in the U.S.

→ READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

p.12-21 “Baltimore, with its” - “turned everything silver.”

→ MAP WORK

☐ Map Resource: geography notebook

In the Solomon Carvalho section on the map of the U.S., use a color pen or pencil to draw the Missouri River on the blank map. You will be drawing several rivers during the study of this expedition. For reference, you may use the link to the Rivers Map to help you draw your own rivers on the blank map in your notebook. As you continue reading, you will notice how closely the expedition followed the rivers during their journey.

∞ Map Link: Rivers Map

• DEFINITIONS

provisions: supplies needed for a journey

terrain: physical features of the land

command: authority to lead

Sefardi Jew: Jewish people who trace their historic origins to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal)

WEEK 2 ☐ 30m Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.) - Lesson 4

Northeastern U.S.

☐ Materials: Our States Have Crazy Shapes, United States Atlas, blank map, geography notebook

PREP: Make sure you have a blank map of the U.S.

∞ Map Link: Blank Map of U.S.

→ MAP WORK

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.27, blank map of the U.S.

1. Using a fresh blank map, fill out the states, capitals, and other labels you remember from last week.
2. Use the map in your notebook to check your work. Add anything you missed.
3. On p.27, locate the following states: New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Add these to the map in your notebook.
4. Add the states and capitals for New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts on the state capitals page.
5. Spend some time studying the states, their capitals, and the region. Next week, you will fill these in from memory.

→ MAP QUESTIONS

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.10-11

1. Looking at the northeastern region of the United States, what is the predominant climate zone? [A: Cold Wet in the far north and the lower states in the region are Temperate Wet]
2. Based on the Warming Up map on p.11, is the region experiencing a warming trend? [A: Yes, the Northeast is well above its usual temperatures for 2021.]

→ READ & NOTEBOOK

New Jersey and Georgia (pick one state)



Term 1

Our States Have Crazy Shapes Ch.3-4 p.41-48

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.43, 65

1. Draw an outline of New Jersey and Georgia, observe the boundaries, and try to answer the following questions: What geographical features make up the boundaries of the state? Is there anything unique about the borders?
 2. Read the pages in the book for each state. You may want to read about each state at a time and work on the map for that state.
 3. Add any comments to your maps that you learned about in the reading. Aim to include at least 3 interesting things about the state and its boundaries. See example below.
- ∞ Image Link: Example of State Map

WEEK 3 ☐ 30m Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.) - Lesson 5

Solomon Carvalho: Westward from St. Louis

☐ Materials: Westward with Fremont, geography notebook, United States Atlas

→ RECAP

What did you read last time?

→ LOCATE

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.89, 101

1. Locate Kansas City (Westport), MO, p.101. Westport was a trading post town during the time of the expedition. It was later annexed to be part of modern-day Kansas City, MO, in 1897.
2. Locate the Illinois River p.89. The river is part of the Illinois Waterway, connecting the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River, serving as a major commercial navigation route. It is about 273 miles long.

→ READ, NARRATE, & DISCUSS

Westward with Fremont Ch.4-5 p.22-35 “Father sniffed at” - “he said.”

→ MAP WORK

☐ Map Resource: geography notebook

On your map in the Solomon Carvalho section, use a color pen or pencil to draw the Illinois River. Now find Westport, MI, draw a dot, and label “Start of Expedition.”

• IMPORTANT DATES

Westward migration peak 1840s–1850s

• DEFINITIONS

territory: an organized division of a country that is not yet admitted to the full rights of a state

river basin: land drained by a river

WEEK 3 ☐ 30m Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.) - Lesson 6

Northeastern U.S.

☐ Materials: Our States Have Crazy Shapes, United States Atlas, blank map, geography notebook

PREP: Make sure you have a blank map of the U.S.

∞ Map Link: Blank Map of U.S.

→ MAP WORK

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.27

1. Using a fresh blank map, fill in the states, capitals, and other labels you remember from last week.
2. Use the map in your notebook to check your work. Add anything you missed.
3. On p.27, locate the following states: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. Add these to your map in your notebook.
4. Add the states and capitals for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland on the state capitals page.
5. Spend some time studying the states, their capitals, and the region. Next week, you will fill these in from memory.

→ READ & NOTEBOOK

Geography: Grade 8 (U.S.)

[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

Connecticut and Massachusetts (pick one state)

Our States Have Crazy Shapes Ch.5-6 p.49-56

☐ Map Resource: United States Atlas p.31, 39

1. Draw an outline of Connecticut and Massachusetts on separate pages. Observe the boundaries, and try to answer the following questions: What geographical features make up the boundaries of the state? Is there anything unique about the borders?
2. Read the pages in the book for each state. You may want to read about each state at a time and work on the map for that state.
3. Add any comments to your maps that you learned about in the reading. Aim to include at least 3 interesting things about the state and its boundaries.

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