Investigating Our Place in the World

Grade Level: Kindergarten
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Length of Unit: Year long

I. ABSTRACT

Investigating Our Place in the World is a year long Geography Unit designed to foster the students' geographical awareness of city, state, country, continent, and world. Our presentation will provide hands-on activities, centers, and literature connections that focus on these concepts. The unit enriches the students' knowledge of their locality while helping to develop an awareness of the larger worlds using maps, globes, flags, vocabulary, and other specific geographical formations. The information presented can easily be integrated into other disciplines or units taught during the school year to complement and extend the students' knowledge.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Overall Goals/Objectives

1. Spatial sense of the world
2. Awareness of the characteristics of specific regions and cultures
3. An awareness of the physical landmasses that relates to the student's environment
4. An awareness of geographic vocabulary
5. Begin to build an understanding about the larger world outside the student's locality

B. Core Content

1. Maps and globes
2. Continents
   a. Identify and locate
   b. Associate with landmarks and wildlife
3. Symbols associated with city, state, country, and world
4. Atlantic and Pacific Oceans
5. Art
6. Music
7. Literature Connections

C. Skills Taught
1. Identifying town, city, state, country, continent, and planet
2. Identification of the seven continents
3. Map skills
4. Oral, written, and pictorial language
5. Listening and speaking Skills

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. Read pages 115-134 in *What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know*.

IV. RESOURCES


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V. LESSONS

A. Lesson One: Introduction

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will:
   a. develop an awareness of their locality
   b. begin to identify geographical locations
   c. be introduced to geographical terms

2. **Materials**
   a. *Me on the Map* by Joan Sweeney
   b. Globe or world map
   c. Seven circles of different colors and sizes labeled: your house, town's name, city's name, state's name, The United States of America, North America, Earth/World
   d. *My Place in the World* books - one per child (Appendix A)
   e. Crayons and pencils

3. **Key Vocabulary**
   a. Town
   b. City
   c. State
   d. Country - The United States of America
   e. Continent - North America
   f. Planet - Earth/World

4. **Procedures/Activities**
   a. *Read Me on the Map* by Joan Sweeney.
   b. Discuss where you live by naming your town, city, state, country, continent, and planet. Use a map or globe to show the children the places you are naming.
c. Use the seven circles to illustrate that where we live can be called many different places. Also demonstrate that each name is representative of different amounts of land with our town being the smallest and the planet being the biggest.

d. Show children the books they will be making about all the places they live. Have them draw themselves on the first page of the My Place in the World books.

5. **Evaluation:** The students will be able to name at least one place in which they live.

### B. Lesson Two: My House

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will
   a. learn their address
   b. learn their city and state

2. **Materials**
   a. *This Is My House* by Arthur Dorros
   b. Each child's address printed on a mailing label
   c. *My Place in the World* book
   d. Crayons and pencils

3. **Key Vocabulary**
   a. address
   b. town
   c. community

4. **Procedures/Activities**
   a. Read *This Is My House* by Arthur Dorros and discuss the different types of housing.
   
   b. Teach and sing "The Address Song"
      
      My name is (first name) (last name)
      
      This is my address.
      
      (Say an address of one of the children)
      
      (Your city, Your state)
      
      Sing the song, humming where the child's name should be, putting in a child's address. See if the children recognize their address. Repeat the song until you have done the address for every child.
      
   c. Have the children draw a picture of their house in their *My Place in the World* book.
      
      Have them write their address on the line using the mailing label as a guide.

5. **Evaluation:** The students will:
   a. be able to say their address
   b. name their city and state

### C. Lesson Three: Our Town - Part 1
1. Objectives/Goals: The students will:
   a. be able to recognize places and landmarks in their community
   b. be able to identify their town or community name

2. Materials
   a. Pictures of places and landmarks in your town or community
   b. Copies of the homework worksheet - Our Town A to Z (Appendix B)

3. Key Vocabulary: landmarks

4. Procedures
   a. Share pictures of places and landmarks in your town or community that will be familiar to the children or take a bus tour of your town and take pictures of the places you see.
   b. Discuss the term landmark. Have children brainstorm landmarks in their town or community as well as other nearby places that they know.
   c. Explain "Our Town A to Z" homework (Appendix B). The children fill in the boxes with places in the community that begin with each letter of the alphabet. You may want to assign each child a letter or box.

5. Evaluation: The students will be able to:
   a. name at least three places or landmarks in their community
   b. say the name of their town or community

D. Lesson Four: Our Town - Part 2

1. Objectives/Goals: The students will:
   a. identify places in their town or community
   b. identify the name of their town or community

2. Materials
   a. Children's completed homework "Our Town A to Z" worksheet
   b. Large chart that homework page (Appendix B)
   c. Sharpie pens
   d. My Place in the World books
   e. Crayons and pencils
   f. 12x18 construction paper labeled A through Z
   g. Pictures of places and landmarks in your community

3. Procedures
   a. Children share their "Our Town A to Z" homework. Fill in the large class chart with the places they name and talk about where the places are located. Use pictures of the different places from the previous lessons when appropriate to help children mentally picture where the places are located.
   b. Have children complete the third page in their My Place in the World book by drawing their favorite place or landmark in your town.
   c. Extension: Assign each student a letter of the alphabet. Have them illustrate one place or landmark in your town beginning with that letter. Keep this as
a class big book to use as reference later in the unit or for review.

4. **Evaluation:** The students will:
   a. name at least five places in their town or community
   b. draw a picture of a place in their town or community

E. Lesson Five: Our City - Part 1

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will:
   a. identify their city by name
   b. understand that a city is larger than a town

2. **Materials**
   a. Postcards, books, slides, videos, and other material about your city
   b. Chart paper
   c. Markers
   d. Postcard homework explanation
   e. Index cards (5x8) one per student
   f. Construction paper (9x12) folded in half (9x6) one per student
   g. Center display of pictures, books of your city

3. **Procedures**
   a. Read and/or share books, slides, postcards, videos about the larger city in which you live. Tell the children the name of your city and review that your town/community is a part of the larger city (you may want to use the circles from the first lesson to illustrate this concept). Brainstorm with the children places and landmarks in your city and list on chart paper.

   b. Distribute and explain their Postcard homework. Working with their parents, children select a place in their city that they have visited or would like to visit. They design a postcard depicting their selected place on the index card (send home the index card and construction paper along with the explanation of the assignment). The postcard is glued to the front of the folded construction paper. On the inside they write 2-3 sentences or facts about their place.

4. **Evaluation:** The students will:
   a. name your city
   b. name at least three places or landmarks in your larger city
   c. be able to verbalize that their city is larger than their town or community

F. Lesson Six: Our City - Part 2

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will:
   a. identify places/landmarks in their city
   b. know the name of their city
   c. share information about places/landmarks in their city

2. **Materials**
   a. Children's completed Postcard homework
b. My Place in the World books

c. Crayons and pencils

3. **Procedures**
   a. Children share their postcards and the information and/or facts about their place or landmark.
   b. Display the postcards and information.
   c. Have children complete the fourth page in their My Place in the World book by drawing a place or landmark found in their city. Let the children use the postcards for reference as they are working in their book. As children finish, ask them to name their city and what they drew.

4. **Evaluation:** The students will:
   a. name at least five places in their city
   b. be able to say the name of their city
   c. give facts/information on at least one place in their city

G. Lesson Seven: Our State - Part 1

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will:
   a. identify and name their state
   b. identify state symbols

2. **Materials**
   a. Book From Sea to Shining Sea - Ohio (this series has books for each state)
   b. Map of the United States
   c. Pictures, postcards, etc. depicting places and landmarks in your state
   d. Pictures, objects, etc. depicting your state symbols
   e. Paper
   f. Crayons and pencils
   g. Center display of state symbols, flag, postcards, map

3. **Key Vocabulary**
   a. symbols
   b. map

4. **Procedures**
   a. Display a map of the United States.
   b. Show the children where your state is located within the United States.
   c. Share a book like From Sea to Shining Sea - Ohio or pictures from a travel agency about your state and its symbols. Discuss what symbols are and why we have them.
   d. List and discuss your state's symbols. Some examples are:
      (1) state tree
      (2) state bird
      (3) state flower
      (4) state bug
(5) state capital
(6) state nickname
(7) inventors or other famous people from your state
(8) major products or industry

e. In small groups or individually, have children illustrate one of the state symbols or facts discussed. Compile these illustrations into a class book to be used as a display and as reference.

5. **Evaluation:** The students will:
   a. name their state
   b. be able to name at least two state symbols

### H. Lesson Eight: Our State - Part 2

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will:
   a. identify their city and state
   b. recognize their state within the United States
   c. identify their state symbols

2. **Materials**
   a. Items in Center Display
   b. Map of The United States
   c. *My Place in the World* books
   d. Tracing patterns of your state
   e. Crayons and pencils
   f. Scissors and glue
   g. Star stickers
   h. Stickers of your state symbols

3. **Procedures**
   a. Review known information, facts, and symbols about your state. Use items in the Display Center to help refresh the children's memory.
   b. Locate your state on the U.S. map. Discuss the shape of your state, any unique land formations, rivers, oceans, etc. to help distinguish your state from the others.
   c. Work on the next page in *My Place in the World* books. Give the children patterns of your state to trace and cut out. Have them locate their city within the state and place a star sticker there.
   d. Give children stickers of state symbols to put on the paper around their state cut-out.
   e. When finished, each child names your city, state, and the state symbols.

4. **Evaluation:** The students will be able:
   a. to name their city and state
   b. to find their state on the U.S. map
   c. to name at least five state symbols
I. Lesson Nine: Our State - Part 3

1. Objectives/Goals: The students will recognize their state flag.

2. Materials
   a. The book *I Know About Flags*
   b. An actual state flag
   c. Description of your state's flag
   d. Photocopies of your state flag - one per child
   e. Crayons and pencils
   f. Scissors
   g. Pipe cleaners
   h. Tape

3. Key Vocabulary: flag

4. Procedure
   a. Review what you have learned about your state.
   b. Read *I Know About Flags* and discuss the importance of flags.
   c. Talk about your state's flag. Discuss the meaning of the colors, the shape, and any other special attributes.
   d. Give each child a copy of your flag to color and cut out. Then tape a pipe cleaner to the back to make a flag pole.
   e. Extension: Children make "Me Flags." Let the children design a flag to tell about themselves.

5. Evaluation: The students will:
   a. recognize their state's flag
   b. dictate a fact about the flag's meaning

J. Lesson Ten: Our Country

1. Objectives/Goals: The students will:
   a. understand our country has several names
   b. identify the United States as our country
   c. identify the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans
   d. identify where their state is within the United States

2. Materials
   a. Book *My Global Address*
   b. United States map
   c. United States floor map
   d. *My Place in the World* books
   e. Crayons and pencils

3. Key Vocabulary
   a. The United States of America, United States, U.S.A, and U.S
   b. Atlantic Ocean
c. Pacific Ocean

4. **Procedure**
   a. Read and discuss *My Global Address*. Review all the places we can call home (i.e. town, city, state).
   b. Show a map of the U.S. and identify your state and other familiar states, such as states that border your state. Explain that all 50 states make up our country, The United States of America.
   c. Discuss the different names we have for our country - The United States of America, The United States, U.S.A., U.S.
   d. As a class, put together a floor puzzle of the U.S. Give each child a piece of the puzzle. Name, describe, and identify the first letter of a state. The child holding the piece places it in the appropriate area. Hint: You may want to start with the child who is holding your state or have the borders already in place.

5. **Evaluation:** The students will be able to:
   a. use different names when referring to the U.S.
   b. find the U.S. on a world map
   c. label the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans
   d. label their state on a map of the U.S.

K. **Lesson Eleven: Our Country's Symbols**

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will:
   a. identify symbols, landmarks, and monuments associated with the U.S.
   b. learn patriotic songs
   c. recognize the American flag

2. **Materials**
   a. Book: *Our National Monuments*
   b. Patriotic symbols bulletin board set
   c. U.S. map
   d. Stickers of U.S. symbols, landmarks, and monuments
   e. Patriotic music (*Wee Sing Patriotic Songs* is a good source)
   f. *The Flag We Love* or *A New True Book: The Flag of the United States*
   g. Photocopies of the American flag
   h. Crayons and pencils
   i. Scissors and tape
   j. Pipe cleaners

3. **Key Vocabulary**
   a. monuments
   b. landmarks
   c. flag
   d. The United States of America
e. patriotic

4. **Procedure**
   a. Using a book such as *Our National Monuments* or Trend Bulletin Board Set of Patriotic Symbols, introduce symbols, landmarks, and monuments that relate to the U.S., for example, the Statue of Liberty, White House, Mount Rushmore, Liberty Bell, the eagle, and the U.S. flag.

   b. Using stickers representing the symbols, landmarks, and monuments (Instructional Fair has a good selection), locate the places on the U.S. map.

   c. Teach the children some patriotic songs such as, "Yankee Doodle," "The Stars Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful."

   d. Read and discuss the book *The Flag We Love* or paraphrase *A New True Book: The Flag of the United States.*

5. **Evaluation:** The students will:
   a. name at least three symbols, landmarks, or monuments that are associated with the U.S.
   b. be able to recite/sing a patriotic song
   c. recognize the flag of the United States

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**Lesson Twelve: Introduction to the Seven Continents**

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will:
   a. understand the world has seven continents
   b. demonstrate an understanding that continents are landmasses surrounded by water

2. **Materials**
   a. *Where Do I Live?*
   b. World map
   c. Patterns of the seven continents
   d. Crayons and pencils
   e. Scissors and glue
   f. *What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know*
   g. Blue construction paper (12x18)
   h. *My Place in the World* books
   i. Continent stamps and stamp pads

3. **Key Vocabulary:** landmass

4. **Procedure**
   a. Read and discuss the book *Where Do I Live?* using a world map identify the seven continents.

   b. Teach the children "The Continent Song."

   c. Using patterns the children trace, cut out, and color code each continent according to the world map on page 118 in *What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know.*

   d. On a piece of blue construction paper, have children arrange and glue down the continents to represent a world map.
e. Children label the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.  Hint: When discussing world maps, remember to point out the North and South poles.

f. Do the last page in My Place in the World books. Using continent stamps, the children stamp the seven continents in the appropriate places and label.

g. Extension: Make Globe Cookies. Children spread blue and green icing on a round sugar cookie to represent the water and land.

M. Lesson Thirteen: The Individual Continents

1. **Objectives/Goals:** The students will demonstrate knowledge that each continent is unique with its own symbols, landmarks, monuments, and animals

2. **Materials** Will vary depending on the activities you chose to do

3. **Procedure**
   a. Read and discuss a book about the continent (see list of books corresponding to each continent). The New True Books have a book on each of the continents.
   b. Show a collection of pictures and objects representing landmarks, symbols, flags, culture, unique land formations, animals of the continent. Trend has a Multicultural Bulletin Board series that has sets of pictures for most of the continents.
   c. Listed in Appendix D are activities that can be used with any of the continents. Examples presented reflect what we have chosen to do in our classrooms.
   d. When doing North America, do the seventh page in My Place in the World books.

4. **Evaluation:** The student will complete activities that demonstrate understanding of the uniqueness of each continent.

**Appendix A:**

**My Place in the World**

Page 1: This is me. My name is ________________________________.

Page 2: This is my house. I live at ________________________________.

Page 3: My town is called Sharonville. My favorite place in Sharonville is ________________________________.

Page 4: This is my city. It is called Cincinnati. I like ________________________________.

Page 5: Ohio is my state. Here is what I know about Ohio.

Page 6: The United States of America is my country. It has 50 states. I can find Ohio.

Page 7: I live on the continent of North America.

Page 8: This is my planet. It is called Earth. It has 7 continents.
Appendix C: Continent Activities

A. Australian Word Book

Objectives: The students will:

1. become familiar with Australian vocabulary
2. state an American word that relates to an Australian word

Material

1. Visual aides that represent the Australian word (i.e. a package of crackers for biscuits)
2. Australian Word Book (Appendix E)

Key Vocabulary

1. mate - friend
2. lollies - candy
3. mum - mom
4. biscuits - crackers
5. boomer - kangaroo

Procedure

1. Present the Australian key vocabulary by showing examples of each word and state the American word.
2. Introduce the Australian Word Book and read to the class. Allow them to practice the pronunciations of the Australian words.
3. Children illustrate each word to show comprehension of words.
4. Have children practice reading their book to a partner.

Evaluation: The student will:

1. state five Australian words
2. state the American word that relates to the Australian word.

B. China Fact Sheet

Objectives: The students will be able to:

1. state facts about a specific continent/country
2. show comprehension of facts through illustration

Materials

1. Chart paper
2. Markers
3. China Fact Sheet
**Key Vocabulary**

1. Words that relate to the facts the children compose

**Procedure**

1. Read a variety of books relating to the continent or country over a period of 3-5 days.
2. After reading the collection of books, have students brainstorm a list of facts and record on chart paper.
3. Show brochures that relate to places in the continent/country and discuss how brochures highlight the continent/country.
4. As a class, vote on the top four facts to be represented in a class brochure of the continent/country. Hint: You can also divide the class into small groups and each group can decide on four facts to illustrate in the group brochure.
5. Once the group decides on facts, make the continent/country fact sheet.
6. Place fact sheet/brochure in a center for students to complete independently.

**Evaluation:** The students will state four unique facts about a continent/country and illustrate.

**C. Map Symbols**

**Objectives:** The students will:

1. become familiar with using a map key
2. become familiar with the landforms within a continent

**Materials**

1. Map of continent
2. Continent map worksheet (Appendix F)
3. Crayons

**Key Vocabulary**

1. mountains
2. map key
3. desert
4. rain forest
5. grassland
6. ocean

**Procedure**

1. Introduce the map of the continent and point out the different landforms and bodies of water around or on the continent.
2. Discuss the use of the map key and show the students how to follow the map key using the worksheet (African map).
3. Have the children complete the worksheet independently.

**Evaluation:** The students will:

1. state the different landforms of a specific continent
2. follow a map key by number to complete worksheet

**D. My German Color Book**

**Objectives:** The students will:

1. become familiar with the German color words and state them independently
2. recognize color words in English

**Materials**

1. Pieces of colored construction paper with English and German words on them
2. *My German Color Book* (Appendix G)

**Procedure**

1. Review color words in English using pieces of construction paper.
2. Introduce German color words using first page of *My German Color Book*. Label pieces of construction paper with German color words.
3. Read through book and have children read phrases and identify the color to use on the picture.
4. Have children practice reading the books to a partner or independently.

**Evaluation:** The students will:

1. state German color words
2. color pictures correctly following text

**E. Animal Collage Art**

**Objective:** The students will:

1. state animals that are native to a specific continent/country
2. state characteristics of animal habitats
3. demonstrate knowledge of animal characteristics

**Materials**

1. Pictures of animals that are native to a specific continent/country
2. Construction paper - different colors
3. Glue
4. Scissors

**Key Vocabulary:** names of animals native to specific continent/country.


**Procedure**

1. Read a book or show pictures of a variety of animals that live on a continent/country.

2. Model for children how to use construction paper to create the animal. Encourage children to think about the animal's color, shape, size, and other features (i.e. horns, wings).

3. Using construction paper, have children cut and glue to make a picture of an animal

4. Have them make details of the animal's habitat like grasslands, forest, jungle, etc.

5. Have children share their pictures and let the rest of the class guess what the animal is.

**Evaluation:** The students will:

1. name at least three animals that live on a specific continent

2. state characteristics of a specific animal and give details of its habitat

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**Appendix D: Literature Connections to Continents**

**All Continents:**

Baer, Edith, *This is the Way We Eat our Lunch*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1995.

ISBN 0-590-46887-1

Baer, Edith, *This is the Way We Go To School*. New York: Scholastic Inc.,


ISBN 0-7460-1739-1


New True Book Series on the individual continents

**Africa:**


Antarctica:


Asia:


Australia:

    ISBN 0-440-84651-x

Europe:


North America:

South America:


**Appendix E: My Australian Word Book**

Page 1: Australian Word: Mum

American Word: Mom

Draw a picture of your Mum.

Page 2: Australian Word: Mate

American Word: Friend

Draw a picture of your mate.

Page 3: Australian Word: Lollies

American Word: Candy

Draw a picture of your favorite lollies.

Page 4: Australian Word: Biscuits

American Word: Crackers

Draw a picture of you eating biscuits.

Page 5: Australian Word: Boomer

American Word: Kangaroo

Draw a picture of a boomer.