

**MANCHESTER COLLEGE**

**Education Department**

**LESSON PLAN by: Lauren Bailey**

**Lesson: The Great Mail Race Length: 1 ½ hours**

**Age or Grade Intended: Fifth Grade Class**

**Source:** <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/geography/lesson-plan/56.html?detoured=1> and Me

**Academic Standards:**

English 5.5.4 – Write persuasive letters or compositions that state a clear position in support of a proposal, support a position with relevant evidence and effective emotional appeals, follow a simple organizational pattern, with the most appealing statements first and the least powerful ones last, and address reader concerns.

English 5.5.5 – Use varied word choices to make writing interesting.

Social Studies 5.3.2 – Name and locate states, major cities, major regions, major rivers, and mountain ranges in the United States.

**Performance Objects:**

- When given a writing topic, the students will create a friendly letter with 100% accuracy.
- When given a writing topic, the students will create a survey with 100% accuracy.
- Using a geographical map, the students will locate a location with 100% accuracy.

**Advanced Preparation by the Teacher:**

- Name of each state on separate slips of paper
- Class set of atlases
- Computer with internet access and a word processing program
- Printer
- United States geographical map

**Procedure:**

**Introduction/Motivation:**

- Introduce “The Great Mail Race” by explaining its purpose and how it is carried out. This is a nationwide activity in which fourth and fifth graders send letters of request to each of the fifty states seeking some sort of reply. The desired outcome is to get a response from all of the states.

**Step-by-Step Plan:**

- Put the names of the states in a hat or container.
- Each student picks the name of two states.
- Using an atlas, the student selects a town in his/her designated states.
- Explain postal codes and zip codes. Using the Internet and with assistance from the teacher, the student will locate

- (**Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence**) another fifth grade classroom to send their letter to by using this website:  
<http://www.schoolmatch.com/search/>
- A short lesson is given discussing the survey (its purpose and size). This survey will be sent to each state.
  - The class creates (**Interpersonal Intelligence**) a survey (**Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence**) by brainstorming possible questions and refining them.
  - While creating (**synthesis question**) the survey the class should: summarize we already know about individual states (**comprehension question**), what would we like to discover about the individual state (**application question**), analysis who will be filling out the survey (**analysis question**), and examine how many questions should be on it (**analysis question**). Keep notes from the brainstorming session on the board or display a chart so students can refer to them during the lesson.
  - Student types the final draft of the survey on a computer using a word processing software program.
  - The teacher will review the format of a friendly letter.
  - The class will brainstorm (**Interpersonal Intelligence**) what characteristics make a letter interesting and informative to the recipient. Summarize these ideas on the board (**comprehension question**).
  - Students will individually (**Intrapersonal Intelligence**) create (**synthesis question**) a letter (**Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence**) to another fifth grade classroom in that state to join the Great Mail Race.
  - Students and teacher will work together to edit the rough drafts.
  - Students will type the letter (**Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence**) in the computer lab using a word processing software program.
  - Students will review how to address envelopes. They will address their envelopes.
  - The class will mail the letters and surveys.

**Closure:**

- As responses are received from each state, students will locate the place the letter is from on the map of the United States in the classroom and post the response on the bulletin board (**Visual/Spatial Intelligence**).

**Adaptations:** Students will create a letter using an outlined format the teacher provides for them. With the format, the student will have to fill in the more specific information they want to relay to the recipients. The teacher can also predetermine a school for the student to use.

**Enrichment:** Students will create their own survey (instead of the using the class survey) to ask more specific questions of their recipients. The students could also try to write to a different type of person from their state, instead of a classroom, like the mayor. If they choose to do so, students can then use the responses they receive to create a project about that particular city.

**Self-Reflection:** I will know the students have successfully learned how to create a friendly letter and survey when I meet with them to edit their rough drafts. The project will hopefully be successful if each student gets a response back from the school they wrote to. I will take note of the schools the students do not get a response from, so in the future I can steer the students away from using those classrooms again.