

# States and Capitals Activities!

Fifty individual states make up the United States of America. Each state is unique in its own way. Help your students to learn the geographical location of the states and capitals and appreciate their many differences. Try some of these activities with your students.

**STATE NAMES** - Have students research the origin of each state name. Some state names can be traced to Indian cultures, such as North and South Dakota. Other states were named for people, such as Pennsylvania for William Penn, the area's first leader. Ask children to write brief paragraphs that can be posted by the state's name on the class bulletin board.

**STATE NICKNAMES** - Each state has an official or unofficial nickname. Florida is "The Sunshine State" and California is "The Golden State." Assign a state to each student and have them find out their state's nickname. Ask them to find out why this name was chosen and whether or not it seems appropriate. Have them to come up with some other nicknames that might be more suitable.

**COLOR THE U.S.** - Give each child a blank map of the United States. Direct them to find various states by listening to your clues, such as "Alabama touches the Gulf of Mexico. Color it green." Or, "The State of Oregon is on the Pacific Coast. Color it blue." This is a fun way to learn the location and names of all fifty states.

**STATE CAPITAL BEE** - Using the same rules as a Spelling Bee, divide your class into teams. Verbally give each participant the name of a state. They must correctly identify the capital or leave the game and be seated. Proceed until one team is the winner. Change the game by giving the capitals and having the students answer with the names of the states. This is a fun way to motivate students to learn their states and capitals.

**STATES AND CAPITALS BINGO** - This is an exciting way to practice memorizing the states and their capitals. Give each child a copy of the states or capitals or write their names on the chalkboard. Ask students to write any 24 names on his or her bingo card. Use the same directions you might use for regular bingo. (List of states and capitals can be found on page 144.)

**STATE FOLDERS** - As a cover for state reports, have students fold a large sheet of construction paper in half and draw an outline of their state on one side. Insert lined paper inside and staple along the folded edge. Cut the booklets along the remaining three sides. Children can then write their state reports inside the folder.

