

The Southwest Region

WebQuest Description: Get ready to explore the smallest portion of our big backyard! This WebQuest will allow you to explore the Southwest region of the United States. You will break up into collaborative groups to work with a top secret mission being done by "T. Travel Agency," which has hired the class to assist in helping George Washington decide why he should visit the southwest during his vacation. It is the groups' goal to try and persuade our first president to stay in the Southwest region while he is visiting from the past. Whichever group puts together the best region proposal will become special members of the T. Travel Agency assisting with future time travel trips and will also get to vacation anywhere in the past. Fasten your seatbelts - let's explore our country!

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Curriculum: Social Studies

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Introduction

Okay, here's the deal. I have been contacted by a travel agency named "T. Travel Agency" in Atlanta, Georgia. Everyone has always thought that it stood for Tom's Travel Agency, but it actually stands for TIME Travel Agency! For many years, this agency has been working on a top secret project; constructing the very first actual Time Machine! This is a top secret mission because no one believes that time travel is actually possible, and the agency wants to be the very first to allow people to travel to their dream destinations whether they be from the past, present or future! This amazing invention will change the travel industry forever! Here is where we come in. T. Travel has been so busy planning and constructing the time machine that they have not been able to plan where their guest will be staying! Our first president, George Washington has decided to be the very first to try the time machine, and he has planned a 5 day vacation to the present day United States. Since it has been a long time since he was alive and the country has changed so much since he was here, he is having a hard time deciding where he wants to stay. The agency has asked for our help because they know that we have been learning about the Geography of the United States and I have also told them that you will not tell anyone else about the secret mission! You are going to be divided into five groups. It will be each group's job to research everything there is to know about the southwest and create a presentation that will persuade Mr. President to stay there for his five day visit! You will be learning about the states in this region, the land, the people, the food, the music, the landforms, physical/human characteristics, tourist attractions and unique information that will make George Washington ready to take the first flight out! You will be presenting your case to Mr. President as soon as he steps off of the time machine and he will choose where to spend his vacation. The group that wins has been offered special jobs by T. Time Agency, assisting them with planning other time travel trips. The winning group will also get to go on a vacation to anywhere in the past, present or future. Your job is very important- you are the only class that has been asked to do this! Make sure you get to really know the region and create something that is eye-catching, creative and persuasive! Your main goal is to answer these Essential Questions: What are the specific locations of the states and capitals in the Southwest? What are some of the regions' physical features and what is the climate like? Who helped to shape the Southwest and what are some significant events? What significant features and landmarks represent the southwest? How have natural resources contributed to the economic development of the southwest? Now that I have briefed you for our mission, are you up for the challenge? Great, then let's get started exploring the regions of our country!

Tasks

This mission requires you to complete THREE specific tasks: **TASK ONE:** Your group will create a 5-day suggested itinerary for the President based on the places that you learned about in the southwest region. There is no budget and the president may travel throughout your region by any means necessary. You will highlight the many places and things to see that you feel are important and that the President should experience. Be creative! Add pictures, maps, or whatever your group feels will make him want to visit the region. **TASK TWO:** Your group will construct a poster that displays your region in a colorful and interesting way. This poster will be combined with your oral presentation that will be given at the end of this assignment. The board should include things like maps, descriptions, colorful pictures, drawings, and souvenirs. Let your imagination soar; your poster should be as creative as possible and you should not be afraid to add your own "flair" to what you are doing.

Remember, you want Mr. Washington to choose your team, so you really want to sell it! TASK THREE: You will be asked to bring in food products, souvenirs, and/or music that is particularly unique to the southwest. (Example: for Idaho, which is located in the Western Region, a student may bring in a potato). If students wish to bring in music instead (Example: the Southeast is particularly known for Country Music) they may bring in a cd or mp3 of songs that will be played as part of their presentation. Every student must bring in something to share with their group poster. Most importantly, please remember to have FUN! If you are trying to persuade someone to stay somewhere, they want to see how much enthusiasm you have when you talk about it, and how much creativity and joy you put into creating your final product. If you sell it, they will buy it! Good Luck!

To begin, each member of the team will take on a specific role, and will remain in that role for all three tasks. The roles will be: The Manager; the manager's job is to keep everyone on task, to make sure that everything gets done in an appropriate amount of time and also to make sure that everyone is contributing fairly to the group work. The manager also helps to solve problems that might occur with the project or between group members. The Clicker; the clicker's job is to stay in charge of the website browsing. He/She is the only one who can sit in front of the computer and click on the links to find all the information, but must take into consideration the suggestions of the groups members as where to go next and what to click on. The clicker also makes sure that everyone understands the information before moving on. The Writer; the writer records all of the information during the group work. This includes the writing on all the state fact sheets, the itinerary and ideas for the poster board. This person should be someone who is motivated and who has neat handwriting! The Artist; this person will be in charge of deciding which artwork goes along with the presentations and also collects the artwork/pictures from the group and arranges them in an attractive manner on the itinerary and the poster. The Presenter; the presenter is in charge of putting together the presentation at the end of the project. This includes figuring out what is going to be said/done during the oral and visual presentations. The presenter is also in charge of displaying/playing the food and music that will be included in the presentations. Now, figure out a name for your group- be creative! Each specific role is very important, but remember, the most important part about being in a group is working together! Everyone has a role, but the group will not be successful unless every role takes their job seriously and helps each other out. While one person is assigned the "Artist" or the "Presenter," it is important to remember that everyone will be participating in all aspects of the project! Assigning jobs just helps to put one particular person in charge of specific tasks to make sure that everyone stays focused.

Process

Before you dive into your tasks, the first thing you should do is learn everything you can about the states that are in the Southwest! On the bottom of this page is an attachment called "States of Our Region Worksheet" which will bring you to a blank document, already provided for you, where you will be able to fill out information about each individual state. You may fill out the sheets in any way (with complete sentences, in note-form, etc...) as long as you can look back at them to help you put together your itinerary and presentation. These sheets will be handed in at the end of the project. These are your states: SOUTHWEST REGION: Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma (4 states) We are ready to start our TASKS! Remember, T. Travel is counting on us to make sure that George Washington has a fun and memorable stay here in the United States present-day! TASK #1: This first task requires your group to create a 5-day itinerary that Mr. Washington might follow on his vacation. This itinerary should highlight all the important, interesting, fun and possible historical places located in your region. Here are the guidelines for your Itinerary: a. Be sure that your itinerary lasts for 5 days b. Mr. Washington should be busy morning, afternoon and evening, but keep his days limited to 2 or 3 bigger activities or 3-4 smaller activities- do not drive him crazy with too many things to do! c. Make sure that the itinerary is detailed. If he is going to a specific museum, for example, make sure that you talk about the museum, what is located inside, where and when it was built, any interesting information about the museum and (if you can find it) the museum's address and phone number. d. Mr. Washington may use any sort of transportation, but please be realistic according to which region you are in! Examples of transportations may include: car, train, airplane, boat, cable car, by foot, horse, truck, hot air balloon, etc... Remember, the President has to get from one place to another somehow! e. Mr. President may start and end in any cities/state/area that you want him to. Make sure that you include where he is staying every night (hotel, motel, inn, bed & breakfast). He may stay in one place for more than one night, but make sure that he does not stay in one place for too long! g. Mr. Washington has to eat during his trip! Make sure you leave time for breakfast, lunches and dinners. While it is not required for every single day, you may want to include some popular/well-known restaurants, eateries, diners, etc., for him to eat at- I am sure he would appreciate the suggestions! h. Have fun planning the 5-day trip! Think about where you would want to go and what you would want to see if you were visiting your region for the first time. What are the things that stand out most about your region? Where would your traveler have the most fun and experience the most out of your region? i. Please include pictures that you find on your website. Create a "photo album", which could just be a page or two with a collage of pictures and some sort of title on the top of the page. j. Your group may choose whether it wants to complete a written itinerary, a typed itinerary, or a PowerPoint itinerary. All formats will have the same format, it just depends on which one your group agrees on. k. Be creative! If there is anything else that you think should be included in your itinerary, go for it! Below is an example of an itinerary. Before you begin the first task, please take a look so that you have an idea in your head about what yours might look like when you are complete. As always, please ask any questions if anything is unclear to you or your group members. The RUBRIC found on the "Evaluation" page will also guide your group along this process. Check out the resources page to get started! Have FUN!

TASK #2: Now that you have put together a great itinerary for Mr. Washington that will take him around some of the most fascinating spots in your region, it's time to really put together something that will catch his eye! The second task involves assembling a visual poster board that will highlight everything about your region. This board will be presented in front of Mr. Washington, so make sure that it is bright, eye-catching, creative and persuasive! You may paste things on the board, use any materials that are in the classroom, or that you have or bring. Make sure that everyone contributes to the board and that it is a team effort! Everyone will be participating in the presentation at the end of the project, so while you are putting together the board, discuss what each person might want to talk about when the Region is presented. Here are the guidelines to follow for your poster: 1. I will provide each group

with one poster.2. The following categories MUST be included on your poster: Your Region's name and a picture of the regionThe states within the region and pictures of their state flagsMajor LandformsMajor Rivers/Lakes/Oceans that are nearby Popular Tourist AttractionsUnique/Interesting Facts about your RegionCulture (including Music and Food that is specific to your region) Your group's list of sources (which websites you used to help you complete the board) taped to the back of the poster In addition to the required categories above, you may choose what other things to put on your board to make it stand out.3. There should be a variety of pictures on your board and they should be in color, if possible. There should be pictures for each different category listed above. There is no "set" amount of pictures that should be included on your board; you are the designers of your project, so it is up to you to decide what will look the best for your presentation. Part of working with a travel agency means having the freedom to make creative decisions while putting together travel plans and presentations, so have fun with it!Please look at the Rubric on the "Evaluation" page. This also provides a guideline for your poster board.

TASK #3: Often, travel agencies will use certain things to "hook" their customers and make them want to travel to a specific destination. The third task requires you to do the same! Regions are not only different because of the way they look and the people that live there; they are also unique because there are many different food products, recipes and music that belong to that specific area!Each member of the group will be responsible for bringing something in that will be used in their presentation. This could include food products (for example a Potato from Idaho for the West) a recipe (for example Clam Chowder from Maine for the Northeast) or music (for example a cd with Country Music from Tennessee for the Southeast). Bringing in a recipe is perfectly acceptable, but if anyone would like to give us an authentic experience and make their recipe to share with the class, that would be excellent!In addition to bringing in a food product, recipe or music, if anyone has postcards or souvenirs from the states located in their region they may include that in their presentation as well. This task is a great way for everyone to "visit" your region and will also be helpful while trying to persuade Mr. Washington to visit!

Here are some resources to help you discover your states (Make sure to visit most-if not ALL-of the websites; there are some really awesome sites to explore!)At this point, you should have completed your "States of Our Region" worksheets and should now be thinking....How are my states the same/different from each other?Why do we think that the states in our Region were grouped together?What are some things that may set our Region apart from the others?Why would someone want to travel to the Southwest? The Writer should write/record the answers to these questions on a separate piece of paper.

Evaluation

Category and Score	You Almost Got it... 1	Just About There! 2	Way To Go! 3	WOW! 4	Score
Southwest Paper Packet	Number of worksheets does not match number of states in group's region (missing 3 or more); very little evidence of research and careful planning	Number of worksheets does not match number of states in group's region (missing 1-2); some evidence of research and careful planning	Number of worksheets completed matches the number of states in group's region; some evidence of research and careful planning	Number of worksheets completed matches the number of states in group's region; evidence of research and careful planning	%15
5-day Itinerary	Itinerary does not contain all 5 days; day plans lack detail; missing more than 3 of the following: transportation, lodging, attractions to visit; missing some or all photos	Itinerary contains 5 somewhat-full, detailed days; missing 2-3 of the following: transportation, lodging, attractions to visit; missing some photos	Itinerary contains 5 full, detailed days; missing only one of the following: transportation, lodging, attractions to visit; must include photos	Itinerary contains 5 full, detailed days; includes: transportation, lodging, attractions to visit descriptions and photos	%20
Poster Board	Board is missing more than one required guideline listed on Process page; not very creative or eye-catching; very few pictures or descriptions	Board missing only one of the required guidelines listed on Process page; is somewhat creative and eye-catching; lacks pictures and descriptions	Board contains all required guidelines listed Process page; is creative and eye-catching; contains fair amount of pictures and descriptions	Board contains all required guidelines listed on Process page; is creative and eye-catching;has many pictures and descriptions	%30
Culminating Performance, including use of food products, recipes or music (and possible souvenirs) items	Oral performance not very persuasive, fun or creative; only one or two members of the group involved; 1 or no items utilized	Oral performance lacks persuasiveness, fun and creativity; most members of the group involved; only 2-4 items utilized	Oral performance is somewhat persuasive, but still fun and creative; all members of group involved; group utilizes most items	Oral performance is persuasive, fun and creative; all members of group involved; group utilizes items	%35
				Total Score	%100

Conclusion

By the end of this lesson, learners should have a firm grasp on the knowledge of the Southwest region as well as the characteristics that make it unique; they should also have a developing knowledge of the tourist attractions in their region that get people to visit, and should also think about the many reasons that people choose to live in different areas. Learners will also have accomplished the goal of being able to orally persuade an audience with additional use of visuals; communication is key for someone in any aspect of life, so the activities will help them to begin to develop their communication skills. Students will learn what it is like to plan a trip itinerary for someone who is planning on taking a vacation. Carefully planning and describing is a skill that will be helpful for students throughout their years of school. Finally, this lesson will give students a better understand and respect for their home and country, the United States of America. Hopefully this will persuade many of the learners to venture out and explore their big back yard!

Teacher Page

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Standards

Credits

Other