

Collaborate to Make a Map of the United States

Carmen Sandiego uses maps to help her track down VILE and stay a step ahead of ACME as she travels the world. Students can help Carmen by learning cartography—map making—skills! Have them work together to make a map of the United States. Each student should draw and cut out a few individual states, then put them all together on a bulletin board to make a class map.

Estimated Time: 30–45 minutes

Materials Needed: Construction paper, scissors, bulletin board, pins

1. As a class, look at a map of the United States. Talk about the idea of scale—a certain distance on a map represents a larger distance in the real world. Point out that all the areas on an individual map have to be drawn at the same scale for the map to be accurate.
2. Give students a reference map of the United States, and assign each student several states. Make sure all fifty states are covered!
3. Have students draw their assigned states on construction paper as accurately as they can, to the same approximate scale. They can use different colors for each state and draw and label any features they want to before cutting them out.
4. Let students take turns as they pin each state to a bulletin board and build out a group map of the United States. How accurate does it look?



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