

EXPLORING AMERICA: 3RD GRADERS CONNECT ACROSS 50 STATES THROUGH POSTCARD EXCHANGE

In an era where digital communication often dominates, there's something enchanting about the simplicity of a postcard arriving in the mail. For our third graders, this classic mode of correspondence has become the gateway to a thrilling journey across the United States. Through a postcard campaign connecting them with schools in all 50 states, these young learners are discovering the diversity of communities and cultures that make up our nation.

The idea was born out of a desire to foster curiosity and connection beyond the walls of their own classroom. With the guidance of their teacher, Mrs. Stalboeger, the third graders embarked on a mission: to exchange postcards with fellow third-grade classes from every state in the country.

Each week, the students eagerly check the mailbox, their eyes sparkling with excitement as they retrieve postcards from distant corners of America. From the bustling streets of New York City to the serene landscapes of Montana, each postcard holds within it a sacred narrative—a testament to the beauty and diversity woven into the fabric of God's creation. This week third grade sent out the final batch of postcards. Kurtis shared, *“I enjoy learning about state initials and landmarks.”*

The postcards serve as windows into the lives of their counterparts, offering insights into different communities and schools. Through this exchange, the students are not only learning about geography but also developing empathy and understanding for their peers across the nation. Taylor shared, *“The postcards tell us about their states and what is unique about their state”* *“I enjoy learning about state initials and landmarks,”* remarked Kurtis

One of the most exciting aspects of the project is the visual representation of their progress. Adorning the wall of their classroom is a large United States map, each state waiting to be colored in as a postcard arrives from that location. As the campaign progresses, the students are not only learning about other 3rd grade classes and the states they are in, but also honing their familiarity with the location of each of our 50 states. Skylar shared, *“This postcard exchange helped me to learn my cardinal directions and where the states are located in the country.”*



Beyond the educational benefits, the project has instilled a sense of excitement and wonder in the classroom. Each postcard is met with cheers and enthusiastic discussion as the students eagerly share their discoveries with one another. Abby shared with the class, *“The postcards tell fun facts about the other states. SO far my favorite state was Kentucky because my grandma lives there!”*

As the school year progresses, the students eagerly anticipate the arrival of postcards from the remaining states, eager to complete their map and solidify the connections they've made. What started as a simple idea has blossomed into a transformative experience, one that has broadened their interest in the states and schools we are learning about. We have learned so much about our United States of America.



