

2: What's in a Name?

Based on the Minnesota quarter reverse



OBJECTIVE

Students will examine state names that are derived from American Indian words and phrases. They will effectively communicate ideas through the use of clear descriptive writing.



MATERIALS

- 1 overhead projector (optional)
- “Minnesota Quarter Reverse” page
- 1 class map of the United States
- Index cards
- 1 brown paper bag
- Writing paper
- 1 pen
- An assortment of classroom items such as ruler, chalk, pencil
- “Descriptive Coin” page
- Crayons
- Chart paper/markers



PREPARATIONS

- Make copies of the “Descriptive Coin” page (1 per student).
- Make an overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the “Minnesota Quarter Reverse” page.
- Gather at least six classroom items (such as ruler, chalk, pencil) for the students to describe.



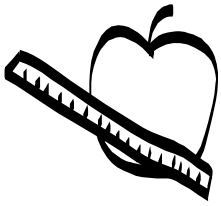
GROUPINGS

- Whole group
- Individual work

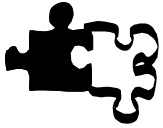


CLASS TIME

One 30- to 45-minute session



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CONNECTIONS

- Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Art



TERMS AND CONCEPTS

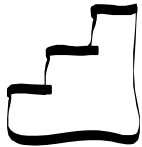
- Quarter
- Reverse (back)
- Descriptive writing



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of:

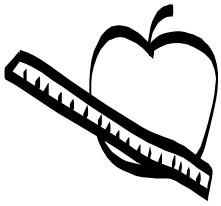
- American Indians
- Written language



STEPS

Session 1

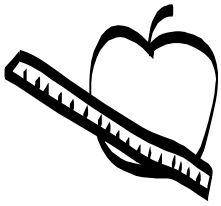
1. Describe the 50 State Quarters® Program for background information, if necessary, using the example of your own state, if available. Then display the transparency or photocopy of the Minnesota quarter reverse. Locate Minnesota on a classroom map. Note its position in relation to your school's location.
2. With the students, examine the coin's reverse. Have the students point out the elements of this design, including the outline of the state of Minnesota, the pine trees, the water, the bird (loon), the individuals fishing, and the words "Land of 10,000 Lakes."
3. As a class, discuss what the students can infer about the state of Minnesota by looking at this coin. They should be able to note that the state has many lakes and that people participate in outdoor activities, including fishing.
4. Direct the students to look closely at the name "Minnesota."
5. Explain that the name of the state doesn't come from an English word. Ask the students where they think this state's name may have come from. Ask the students to consider who may have lived in this part of the country when it became part of the United States. If necessary, explain that this word comes from an American Indian word.
6. Explain that many of our state names come from American Indian words or phrases, and usually these phrases are very descriptive. Ask students what it means to say something is



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descriptive; the students should understand that descriptive writing is written to help the reader see, hear, smell, taste, and feel the concept.

7. Explain that the name “Minnesota” comes from Native American words that mean “Sky-tinted water.” Show students a map of the United States and have them point out Minnesota. Have the students consider the meaning of “sky-tinted water.”
8. Have students expand on the “descriptions” using examples with sensory information. Write responses on chart paper.
9. Explain that the name “Michigan” comes from a word meaning “great water,” “Wyoming” means “large prairie place,” and Wisconsin means “grassy place.” These names give a good description of the state’s landscape. Have the students infer information about these states.
10. Explain to the students that they are going to use descriptive language like the American Indians used to describe classroom items.
11. Hold up a pen and explain that the word “pen” doesn’t tell you what this item does. Ask the students to come up with some more descriptive names for this item. An idea could include “ink-spitting writing tool.”
12. Repeat this activity with a different item found in the classroom, such as chalk, a map, or a book. Record student descriptions on chart paper.
13. Introduce a class game called “verbal charades.” Distribute five index cards to each student.
14. Show the students an item and direct them to write the English word for this item on an index card. Underneath the English word, the students should write a descriptive phrase for this item.
15. Repeat this activity with four more items. Direct the students to write the English word and a descriptive phrase for each item on a different card.
16. Collect the index cards and place them into a paper bag.
17. Pull an index card from the bag and read the descriptive phrase to the students. Direct the students to guess what the item is.
18. Repeat this with the rest of the index cards.
19. Distribute a “Descriptive Coin” page to each student.
20. Direct the students to write their name at the top of the page.
21. At the bottom of the page, the students should write a descriptive phrase about themselves.
22. In the center of the coin outline, allow the students to draw a self-portrait.

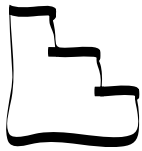


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ENRICHMENT/EXTENSIONS

Encourage your students to explore the history and traditions of the Sioux Indians, who were responsible for the name “Minnesota.”



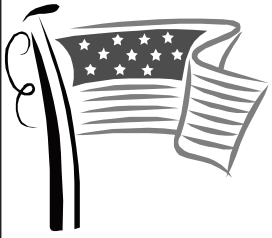
DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTION

Let students with special needs dictate their descriptions of the classroom items, rather than writing them independently.



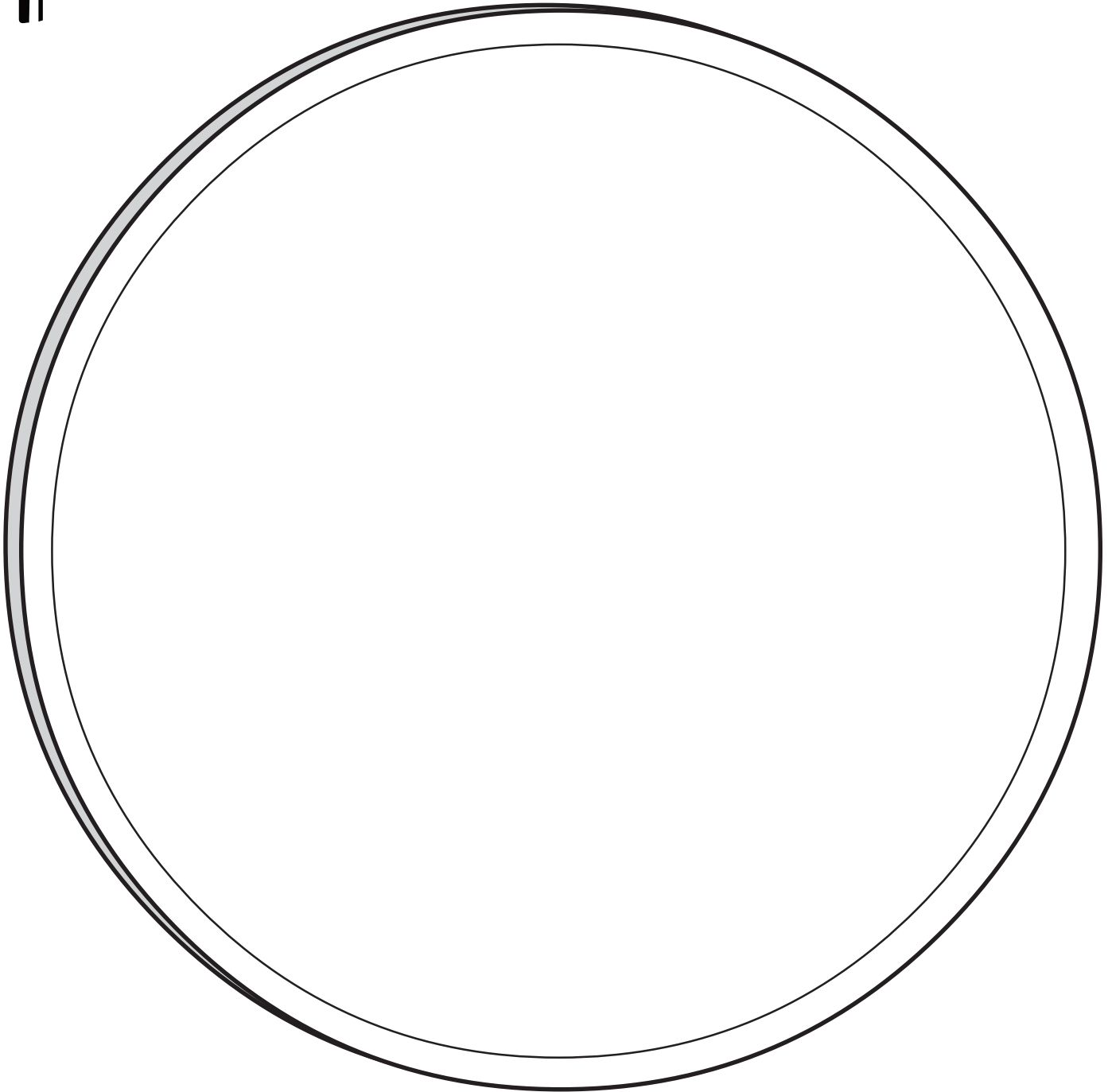
CONNECTION TO WWW.USMINT.GOV/KIDS

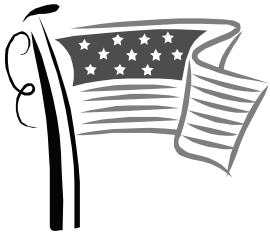
Let your students get more practice with deciphering descriptions by letting them try their hands at the United States Mint H.I.P. Pocket Change™ game, Collector’s Crossword. (www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?fileContents=games)



NAME _____

Descriptive Coin





Minnesota Quarter Reverse

