AL200 Early Childhood Ideas/Activities (PreK—2nd Grade)

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The following are activities that I have integrated into my current kindergarten classroom curriculum standards. Our school does not have a universal social studies program, so the following was created for our kindergarten teachers to go by.

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**ACTIVITY 1: LIVING TIMELINE**

AL SS COS STANDARD: K. 1: Sequence events using schedules, calendars, and timelines.
Examples: daily classroom activities, significant events in students’ lives
  * Differentiating among broad categories of historical time

During the month of September, our monthly Social Studies Theme is, “What Makes You Special?” The four big ideas for the month are All About Me with Timelines, My Friends, My Family, and the Five Senses. During our “All About Me” study each student brings in 3 pictures (one as a baby, one as a kindergartner, and one from a time in between). We share them whole group and the students try to guess who it is by looking at the 1st and 2nd picture, before showing them the final picture.
Then, we then create a classroom “LIVING TIMELINE” and display it in the hallway.

Throughout the year, we take Polaroid pictures and place it on the timeline to reiterate that we are living history.
**ACTIVITY 2: FACES OF ALABAMA ART PORTRAITS**

AL COS STANDARD: K 11: Identify symbols, customs, famous individuals, and celebrations representative of our state and nation. (Alabama)

During the month of September/October I collaborate with a 2nd grade teacher for an art project. We group a 2nd grader and a kindergartner together and each pair creates a famous Alabamian portrait.

**STEPS:**

1. Second grade teacher selected some “I Am Alabama” people cards and grouped them into the following categories: ATHLETES, ARTISTS/MUSICIANS, SCIENTISTS, HISTORICAL

2. The 2nd graders each chose a person from one of the aforementioned categories and researched their person from the card and from the Encyclopedia of Alabama website.

3. The kindergarten students each painted a 4 x 6 white index card with watercolor paints any way they want to.

4. The second graders met their kindergarten partner and they taught them about their famous Alabamian.

5. Teachers introduced and defined the following characteristic words: DETERMINED, TRUSTWORTHY, GENEROUS, INNOVATIVE, COURAGEOUS. Each partner had to select a characteristic word that they believe described the person.

6. Introduced the artist Pablo Picasso. Googled “Picasso painting kids” and looked at the images. Talked to students about creating a Picasso style painting using a famous person from Alabama.

7. Students were given the opportunity to select from various skin color paper. Then they looked at the shape of the face and selected a stencil to trace the shape of the face onto skin color paper. Second graders helped the kindergartners cut the face out.
8. Students selected the shape of eyes.
9. Students selected the shape of mouth.
10. Students selected the shape of nose.
11. Students chose the font for their characteristic word.
12. Students had to determine, locate and cut out the Alabama county that their person was born in, associated with, etc.
13. All components of the project were glued to the index card.
**ACTIVITY 3: DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN TODAY (PAST AND PRESENT)**

**AL SS COS STANDARD: K. 12:** Describe families and communities of the past, including jobs, education, transportation, communication, and recreation.

- Identifying ways everyday life has both changed and remained the same

Toward the end of September, I introduce these past and present photo learning cards that I bought from Oriental Trading. The goal is to match the photograph from long ago to the photograph that depicts the same image from today. This is a great way to expose what a primary source is without defining it. I use these to start a discussion about observations, asking questions, and critical thinking.

LINK TO PURCHASE: [https://www.orientaltrading.com/past-and-present-photo-learning-cards-a2-13742179.fltr](https://www.orientaltrading.com/past-and-present-photo-learning-cards-a2-13742179.fltr)
ACTIVITY 4: NATURAL HABITATS
AL SS COS STANDARD: K. 9: Differentiate between landforms and bodies of water on maps and globes.

Our school uses AMSTI Investigations to teach science standards. The 1st 9-week period we receive the ‘Plants and Animals’ Kit. After discussing living things, non-living things, plants, and animals, we create a terrarium and talk about habitats. While discussing habitats, I show them photographs of habitats that can be found in Alabama (see photos below) I also show the YouTube video, *The Story Begins in the Land* uploaded by the Alabama Department of Archives and History and narrated by Dr. John Hall. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jebIzs595ac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jebIzs595ac). I usually mute it and show them the photographs of habitats and animals from our state.

*Sipsey River Bankhead National Forest, Alabama*

*Gulf Shores, Alabama*
Alabama Farm

Mobile Delta, Alabama

Tennessee River, Alabama
ACTIVITY 5: SYMBOLS (AMERICAN AND STATE)

AL COS STANDARD: K 11: Identify symbols, customs, famous individuals, and celebrations representative of our state and nation. (Alabama)

During the month of November, our monthly Social Studies Theme is “My Place In America.” The two big ideas for the month are American Symbols and Thanksgiving Traditions. After discussing American Symbols (American flag and bald eagle) we discuss the Alabama flag,

- It is over 220 years old
- The AL flag’s official birth date is February 16, 1895
- White background stands for purity
- A red “X” or cross (The Cross of St. Andrew) stands for courage
- The flag can be a square OR a rectangle
- The flag of Scotland is the same design as the flag of Alabama, but with different colors
**ACTIVITY 6: THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS**

AL COS STANDARD: K 11: Identify symbols, customs, famous individuals, and celebrations representative of our state and nation. (Alabama)

K 12: Describe families and communities of the past, including jobs, education, transportation, communication, and recreation.

- Identifying ways everyday life has both changed and remained the same

During the month of November, our monthly Social Studies Theme is “My Place In America.” The two big ideas for the month are American Symbols and Thanksgiving Traditions. While discussing the Thanksgiving holiday, we discuss the Wampanoag Indians and the role they played; however, we then talk about how they were not the only tribe of Indians. Then we study the Alabama Creek Indians.

**Day 1: Native American Stations Exploration (Students observe and discuss for 3 minutes at each station)**

1. Food/Cooking (artifact pictures and replicated artifact pictures)
2. Clothing (artifact pictures and replicated artifact pictures)
3. Crafts/Canoes (artifact pictures and replicated artifact pictures)
4. Video of Native American Homes
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oU6__m8To4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oU6__m8To4)
Day 2: Roleplay

- Boys roleplayed hunting and fishing (they went around the room and collected paper fish and paper deer/turkeys)
- Girls roleplayed farming and fieldwork (they went around the room with small baskets and collected paper corn, squash, and beans)
  - After gathering, food, they roleplayed taking a nap. Teacher guided discussion that boredom led to developing games to play to pass the time.
- Taught students how to play “BEAN GAME”
  - Materials: Use shallow basket (paper bowl/plate), seven flat sided beans marked with paint or marker on one side only.
  - Play: Objective of the game is to toss and catch beans flipping then from unmarked side up to marked side up. All 7 beans are placed plain side up on the bottom of the basket/bowl. Holding sides of basket/bowl, carefully toss beans up and catch them trying to flip beans over to marked side during the toss. Count the number of beans landing marked side up for score. Use toothpicks as scoring pieces. If any beans fall out of the basket player loses that turn and gets no score. Each child gets one turn for each round. Play as many rounds as you want.

Day 3: Communication

- Oral (played telephone)
- Written (symbol story)
  - Had to interpret a 3-symbol story
Day 4: Created picture of Creek Indian based on what they have learned.

Day 5: Generated a list of information learned about Creek Indians. In partners, the students generated a question about Creek Indians and as a class they interviewed an adult in the school to see if they knew the answer.
ACTIVITY 7: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

During the month of January, our monthly Social Studies Theme is, “Me On The Map” Instead of making “resolutions” we begin by talking about how everyday acts of kindness can change people and can change the world. We begin by reading the book *Ordinary Mary’s Extraordinary Deed*, by Emily Pearson. Then we use the book, *Martin’s Big Words* by Doreen Rappaport and talk about his connection to Alabama, determine how far away Montgomery is from our school/city, and talk about how his extraordinary deeds changed the world. We then read, *The Jelly Donut Difference* by Maria Dismondy and *Teal* by Renee Galvin. We compare and contrast *Ordinary Mary’s Extraordinary Deed* and *The Jelly Donut Difference*. We also compare and contrast *Martin’s Big Words* and *Teal*.

To emphasize that anyone can make a difference in the world, our class collects money and donates it to Heifer International ([www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)) to help end poverty and hunger.
**Activity 8: Maps and Globes**

AL COS Standard: K 8: Recognize maps, globes, and satellite images.

K 11: Identify symbols, customs, famous individuals, and celebrations representative of our state and nation.

During the month of January, our monthly Social Studies Theme is, “Me On The Map”. We begin this theme by reading selected pages of *Maps and Globes* by Harriett Barton and I peel an orange to show how a globe and a map are similar and different. We investigate different types of maps (state, US, world, school, city, neighborhood grid, and Six Flags) and a globe. We use Google Earth to find all of the different types of maps we investigated. To solidify the abstractness of this topic we use “Nesting Boxes” that I created out of nesting Tupperware containers.

![BEFORE: 

The largest container is labeled PLANET, the next largest is labeled CONTINENT, the next is COUNTRY, the next is STATE, the next is COUNTY, the next is CITY, and the smallest is HOUSE.

1. We start by opening the PLANET container and find a picture of the earth.
2. Then we open the CONTINENT container and find a picture of North America, the U.S. flag, the Canadian flag, and the Mexican flag.

3. Then we open the COUNTRY container and find pictures of the president, the White House, a bald eagle, the Statue of Liberty, and a US map.

4. Then we open the STATE container and find pictures of the governor, the AL flag, AL identified on a US map, a camellia, a yellowhammer, the AU logo, and the UA logo.
5. Then we open the COUNTY container and find our city identified on a map of AL that is divided into the 67 counties.

6. Then we open the CITY container and find pictures of the mayor, the city identified on a map of AL, our school, and our school mascot.

7. Last, we open the HOME container and find a picture of a house.

8. To conclude the activity, we read *Me on the Map* by Joan Sweeney and make connections to the nesting boxes.
**ACTIVITY 9: LANDFORMS (AL MAP)**

AL COS STANDARD: K 9: Differentiate between landforms and bodies of water on maps and globes.
K 10: Apply vocabulary related to giving and following directions

During the month of March, our monthly Social Studies Theme is, “Alabama and Me”. The two big ideas for the month are directional vocabulary and landforms/bodies of water. We begin by learning about the following types of land (mountains, hills, valleys, volcanoes, plateaus, and plains) as well as the following types of water (oceans, rivers, lakes). I use the books *Looking at Landforms* by Little World Geography and *Introducing Landforms* by Bobby Kalman. After learning about the types of land and types of water, we use a large laminated map of Alabama (it’s the AL Tabletop map from The Alabama Geographic Alliance) and locate Mt. Cheaha, The Cumberland Plateau, and the city of Auburn and talk about how Auburn is referred to as, “The Plains”. We also trace over all the rivers with blue marker.

Once we locate Auburn, Mt. Cheaha, the Cumberland Plateau, and the rivers we read the story, *Alabama My Home Sweet Home!* by Charles Ghinga. As we read the book, we visit various cities and use directional vocabulary as it relates to Mt. Cheaha, Auburn, and the Cumberland Plateau and record it on the map.
We then take another trip around the state using Aimee Aryal’s books: *Big Al’s Journey Through The Yellowhammer State* and/or *Aubie’s Journey Through The Yellowhammer State* and visit the various cities and use directional vocabulary as it relates to Mt. Cheaha, Auburn, and the Cumberland Plateau. We then compare and contrast the places Camellia visited in *Alabama My Home Sweet Home!* and the places Big Al/Aubie visited in their respective books.