

Boss of the Plains: The Hat That Won the West

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Literature based unit study by Celia Hartmann and Wende

Social Studies

Geography -- New Jersey:

New Jersey was one of the Thirteen Colonies. The Thirteen Colonies were divided into three geographical designations. New Jersey was one of the "Middle Colonies," which also included Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania. The other two designations were The New England Colonies, which consisted of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, and the Southern Colonies, which consisted of Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina.)

New Jersey was named for the Isle of Jersey in England. New Jersey's capitol is Trenton. The Eastern Goldfinch is its state bird and the Purple Violet is its state flower.

Orange, New Jersey was an industrial city from the beginning. Early settlers found an abundance of hemlock trees there, which provided with the tannic acid necessary to make shoes and boots. Hat-making was an early industry as well.

Geography -- Missouri:

Missouri was 24th state, being admitted to the union in August of 1821. Farming and mining are among its leading industries. The capital of Missouri is Jefferson City. The state bird is the Eastern Bluebird and the state flower is the White Hawthorn. Missouri is one of the Mississippi River States. St. Joseph, Missouri was the last supply point before heading into the "Wild West."

Geography -- Colorado:

In 1876 Colorado was admitted to the Union as the 38th state. It is one of the Rocky Mountain states, which also includes Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. Denver is the capital of Colorado. Its state bird is the Lark Bunting, its state animal is the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, and its state flower is the Rocky Mountain Columbine.

The name Colorado was taken from the Spanish word *Colorado*, meaning red.

Pikes (also seen as Pike's) Peak is a mountain in Colorado's Rocky Mountains. It is over 14,000 ft. high. It was named for Zebulon Pike, an explorer who first documented it in 1806. Edwin James was the first to climb it in 1820. Katherine Lee Bates, a teacher from Massachusetts, climbed to the summit in 1893 and it was there that she became inspired to write the words to the beloved patriotic song, *America, the Beautiful*.

History -- The Colorado Gold Rush

Gold was discovered in the Pikes Peak area in July of 1858, which led to the Pikes Peak Gold Rush (later known as the Colorado Gold Rush). A gold rush is when there is a great migration of gold seekers into an area where gold has been found. The Colorado Gold Rush was the last of the great North American gold rushes and lasted about 2.5 years, peaking in 1859, when about 100,000 gold seekers flocked to the Pikes Peak area and became known as the Fifty-Niners. Most who came to seek their fortune never found any gold.

History-- Life in a Gold Rush Town

A typical gold rush town sprung up very quickly (seemingly overnight) once word spread that gold was discovered. A small town of about 500, might grow to 50,000 in a very short time. As long as the mining business was good, the town thrived. However, once the gold was gone, the town often died and the people moved in search of gold elsewhere. Towns that grew up practically overnight were called "boom towns," and once they were abandoned they became known as "ghost towns."

During the a boom town's heyday, the town had many businesses. Most of the town's occupants lived in tents while panning for gold, while those that provided a service (such as mining supplies, blacksmithing, food, and medical attention) generally built log buildings. While many of those panning or mining for gold returned home penniless, most of the merchants became rich. There was such a need for supplies and things, that miners were willing to pay ridiculous prices for them. Food sold for astronomical prices. A person might pay \$2 for just one egg or apple!

Language Arts

Subtitles:

The title of our book is *Boss of the Plains*. The subtitle is "The Hat that Won the West." A subtitle is often used to give a bit more description of the story. If you did not know that the first Stetson was called the "Boss of the Plains," you would have no idea what the story might be about. Let your child practice making up titles and subtitles this week to either stories he has written or even to books he has read where the title doesn't really tell us the story contents.

Vocabulary:

Damp- slightly wet

Fortune- favorable results that come partly by chance

Tanned- to change an animal hide into leather

Matted- to become tangled

Gamble- take a chance

Decoy- not the real thing; often intended to trick or trap

Canteen- a small container for carrying liquids

Sapling- a young tree

Listmaking:

How many different kinds of hats are there? Make a list with your student. Can you think of at least ten different kinds of hats? Twenty? Do some research and learn about different kinds of hats!

Listmaking:

How many different ways could the Boss of the Plains be used?

Art

Signs:

Go through the story with your student and point out the many signs throughout. Note the different fonts (styles of print) used on the signs, the decorations (if any) that are used, the information that is emphasized on the sign. Keys to a successful sign are: the print size should be large enough to see from a distance, the font should be easy to read, there should not be a lot to read, and there should be a good contrast between the background and the wording.

The person creating the sign needs to think about where people are going to see the sign. Have your student look at the illustrations on the first two pages. Let's say you just stepped off the stagecoach into this town; look at the scene. Notice how your eyes are drawn to the store signs. You are viewing the signs from quite a distance, from "across the street" per se.

Notice that the signs are large, with large print, and do not have a lot of words. If these signs had lots of words on them or were smaller, your eye probably wouldn't be drawn to them as readily. It's best to use only a few words or phrases to convey the message desired. On the other hand, if all a sign says is Stan's Store, you really have no idea what Stan sells.

Use of color and contrast are also important in a sign. It's best to choose colors that go well together, that complement one another. At the same time, you don't want a bunch of colors nor do you want the background color of the sign and the color of the letters to be similar. The words need to stand out from the background.

As you drive places this week, point out various signs and discuss whether or not the sign is eye catching. If it's not, ask your student if he can think of ways the sign could be improved. Homemade garage sale or party signs are often good examples of ones that could be improved.

Have your student come up with a business name, then give him the supplies to make his own sign for it. The sign could be made from a large piece of cardboard, which can be painted, or even just a sheet of paper. How big are the letters going to be? Can he write them the same size? Can he center them or arrange them in a way that is attractive? Be sure to think about the colors, too.

If your student is older, he may wish to try out the different fonts in a word processor and try his hand at designing the sign on the computer.

Make a Hat:

Give your child access to basic supplies (newspaper, construction paper, cardboard, felt, glue, sequins, etc.) and let him create a hat of his own design.

Math

Count/Multiply by 5:

The horseman who bought John's hat paid John with a five-dollar gold piece. Make up story problems in which your student needs to count or multiply by 5. Example: If John sold 4 Stetson hats for \$5 each, how much money did he make?

Count/Multiply by 2:

Back in New Jersey, John only received \$2 for a fine homburg hat. Make up story problems in which your student needs to count or multiply by 2. Example: If John sold 4 hats for \$2 each, how much money did he make?

Subtraction and the key words "How much more?":

Introduce or review with your student that if they see the words "how much more" in a word problem, that is their clue to subtract. If John sold his Stetson hats for \$5 and his regular hats for \$2, *how much more* did he receive for the Stetsons than the regular hats? *How much more* money would he make if he sold 10 Stetsons instead of 10 homburgs?

Measuring:

In order to make a hat, a hat maker needs to measure the circumference of the buyer's head. Help your child use a cloth tape measure and show them how the hat maker would measure a person's head. Make a chart that shows each family member and their head measurement.

Science

Respiratory System -- Lungs:

The dampness and steam of the hat shop made John's lungs weak....

Your lungs are organs in your chest cavity and part of your respiratory system. They are each about the size of a football. At the bottom of your chest cavity is a muscle called your diaphragm. As you inhale, the diaphragm moves down and your lungs fill with air. As you exhale, the diaphragm moves up and your lungs release the air. The job of the lungs is to supply the blood with oxygen and rid the blood of carbon dioxide. The separation of oxygen from the air by the lungs is delicate work.

For this reason, the air that comes into the lungs should be as clean as possible. Our bodies do have some built in filters that clean the air before it gets to the lungs. Our noses have fine hairs and a thick layer of fluid to catch dust particles. The epiglottis in your throat protects you from getting larger objects, such as food, go down the "wrong pipe" into your lungs, and causes you to cough out the foreign particles. And then there is yet more fluid in the windpipe to trap dust and particles before they get to the lungs.

Even with all these natural filters in place, in someplace like a hat shop with its poor conditions, some of the lint and germs that are carried in the moist air are bound to get through, causing infection and the possibility of permanent lung damage. Today, people working in this kind of environment often wear a facemask to prevent this from happening. It is good to learn from our past.

Activity: You may wish to have your older students construct a model of a lung. You will need a plastic soda bottle with a lid, a plastic straw, two balloons (one bigger and one smaller), and a bit of clay or wax.

First, punch a hole in the lid and insert a plastic straw in the hole. The straw is the "windpipe". Cut the bottom off the soda bottle. Take the larger balloon, cut off the neck, and stretch it over the bottom of the bottle. Attach it with a rubber band. This is the "diaphragm".

At the top of the lid, make sure that the straw is air tight, sealing with clay or a bit of wax. At the bottom of the straw, attach the smaller balloon, securing with string or a rubber band. This smaller balloon is the "lung".

Screw the lid onto the bottle, with the straw and small balloon inside the bottle. Now you are ready to see how your lungs work.

Push the diaphragm at the bottom of the bottle. What do you feel rushing out of the straw? What does the lung do? Watch the lung expand and contract as the diaphragm is pushed in and out. Your lungs work in this same way.

Health -- Tuberculosis:

...and he became sick with tuberculosis.

John became sick with tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is a deadly and contagious disease. The disease is most prevalent in areas of overcrowding and poverty. TB has been around since ancient times, evidenced by lesions found on Egyptians mummies. In the early 1900's tuberculosis was the leading cause of death in the United States and was known as the "white plague". Tuberculosis is caused by bacteria that can destroy the lungs. The bacteria, called *tubercle bacillus*, are transmitted by sputum, either in air-borne droplets or by dust particles, and are very contagious.

People most susceptible to TB are those that are malnourished, tired or strained, or exposed to respiratory irritants in their jobs. The bacteria can stay in the body for a long time before any symptoms of TB are seen. Common symptoms include fever, fatigue, night sweats, loss of appetite, coughing, chest pain, and weight loss. We have come a long way in the diagnosis and treatment of TB since the "white plague," but tuberculosis is still a dangerous, highly contagious disease that affects Americans today.

In the past, in addition to being known as the "white plague," tuberculosis was called consumption because it seemed to consume people from within.

Gold:

Gold is the most wanted element in the world. On the periodic table, its symbol is AU and its atomic number is 79. What makes gold so desirable? Gold is beautiful to look at but it is also quite useful. It is a soft metal, which means it is easy to work with. It melts at a reasonably low temperature (1,948 degrees Fahrenheit) so it can be poured and molded into bars, jewelry, or even tooth fillings. It never tarnishes and can be polished to a high shine. It can conduct electricity so it is often used in electronic equipment. It is easily recognizable, due to its color and density, and can be tested for its purity, so all throughout the world it has been recognized as a symbol of wealth and money.

Gold is mentioned dozens of times in the Bible. In ancient times, gold was used for ornaments and decorations of public buildings. Moses was instructed to cover the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant with gold. Gold was one of the gifts brought to Jesus, by the Three Wise Men. Gold was also used as money, both coined and

uncoined. Uncoined money was usually in the form of jewelry such as bracelets, necklaces, anklets, and earrings that were made to specific weights. These were traded for things people needed, such as Rebekah's dowry (Genesis 24:22). Coined money was uniformly sized gold lumps, flattened and stamped with a certification of weight and fineness by an authority. David paid for a threshing floor and oxen with gold coins (1 Chron.21:25).

The Greeks were especially talented at making coins, and learned to stamp intricate designs. The Romans then began stamping their own gold coins. Sometimes the authorities were dishonest and would stamp them incorrectly. Occasionally, other metals were mixed with the gold, which reduced its value. Other times the edges of the coins were shaved so the weights were inaccurate. God hates an unjust system of weights and measures, and throughout history has destroyed civilizations that did not have honest monetary systems. Rome is one example of that.

One of the interesting things about gold is that, generally speaking, it holds its value over time. The same amount of gold that could buy a new mid-line car 50 years ago can buy a new mid-line car today. A hundred years ago one ounce of gold could buy a nice suit and dinner for two. Today, that same ounce of gold can buy a nice suit and dinner for two. You sure can't say that about paper money!

Health: Sun Protection

In our story, the scorching sun blistered John's face. When he made his first Boss of the Plains, he designed with a wide brim to keep the sun out of his eyes and the rain off of his back. Let's talk about why it's important to protect ourselves from the sun.

The Sun is Earth's source of light and heat, and without it everything would die. But sunlight can be harmful to our skin. Sunlight is made up of different kinds of light, including ultraviolet radiation, or UV Rays. These UV Rays can burn our skin, make it wrinkly, or even cause skin cancer. UV Rays occur all year long, but are strongest in the summer time. We cannot see UV rays, but they can penetrate your skin if you don't protect yourself.

So, how can we protect ourselves?

* We can wear a long-sleeve shirt. This will help for a short time, but UV Rays can go through that as well unless they are special ones designed just for sun protection.

* We can also put on sun screen, a special kind of lotion that blocks the UV Rays from entering and harming our skin. To be of the most help, such lotions need to be applied a half hour

before going on in the sun and re-applied after being exposed to the sun for half an hour. After that, it should be reapplied if you swim or sweat a lot.

* We also limit the length of time we are out in the direct sun. The longer we are in the sun, the better the chance of sunburn.

* We can also watch when we are outside. Sunlight is strongest between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., so our time outside during those hours should be limited.

* It is important to protect our eyes from the sun as well, so wear sunglasses while outside (particularly the wrap around kind).

* And, of course, we can wear a hat to help shade our face and neck.

Now, let's talk about what to do if we do get sunburned. Minor sunburns just cause our skin to be red and generally hurt a little. However, severe sunburns--like John in our story--causes blisters, is very painful, and causes the skin to peel as it heals.

Soothing lotions made from the aloe vera plant and Vitamin E can help your skin heal. A home remedy involves soaking a clean cloth (or gauze) in cool (not cold!) milk and gently laying it on the burned areas, then lifting it up and laying on another section of burned area. Repeat until all areas have been coated with a thin layer of the milk, re-soaking the cloth as needed. Be very careful not to rub the skin. Continue for 20 minutes, before rinsing it off. Repeat every 2 or 3 hours. Another home remedy is to mix a cup of white vinegar with a gallon of cool water, and apply the same as the milk. If the burn is a small area, you soak a couple of tea bags in cool water and then lay the wet bags on your skin for half an hour. Repeat two or three times a day. (You can place about 15 bags into lukewarm bath water and submerge the affected area.)

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FORTUNE



favorable results
that come partly
by chance

DAMP



slightly wet

TANNED



to change an
animal hide
into leather

MATTED



to become
tangled or
stuck together

GAMBLE



take a chance

DECOY



not the real
thing; often
intended to trick
or trap

CANTEEN



a small
container for
carrying
liquids

SAPLING

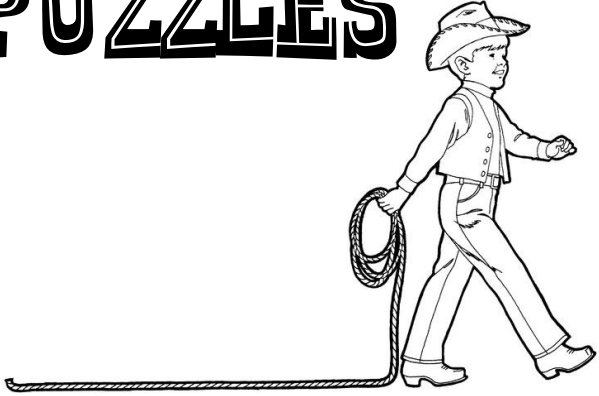


a young tree

Print cards on cardstock. Cut apart. Use to help your student learn the vocabulary words. Store in pocket.

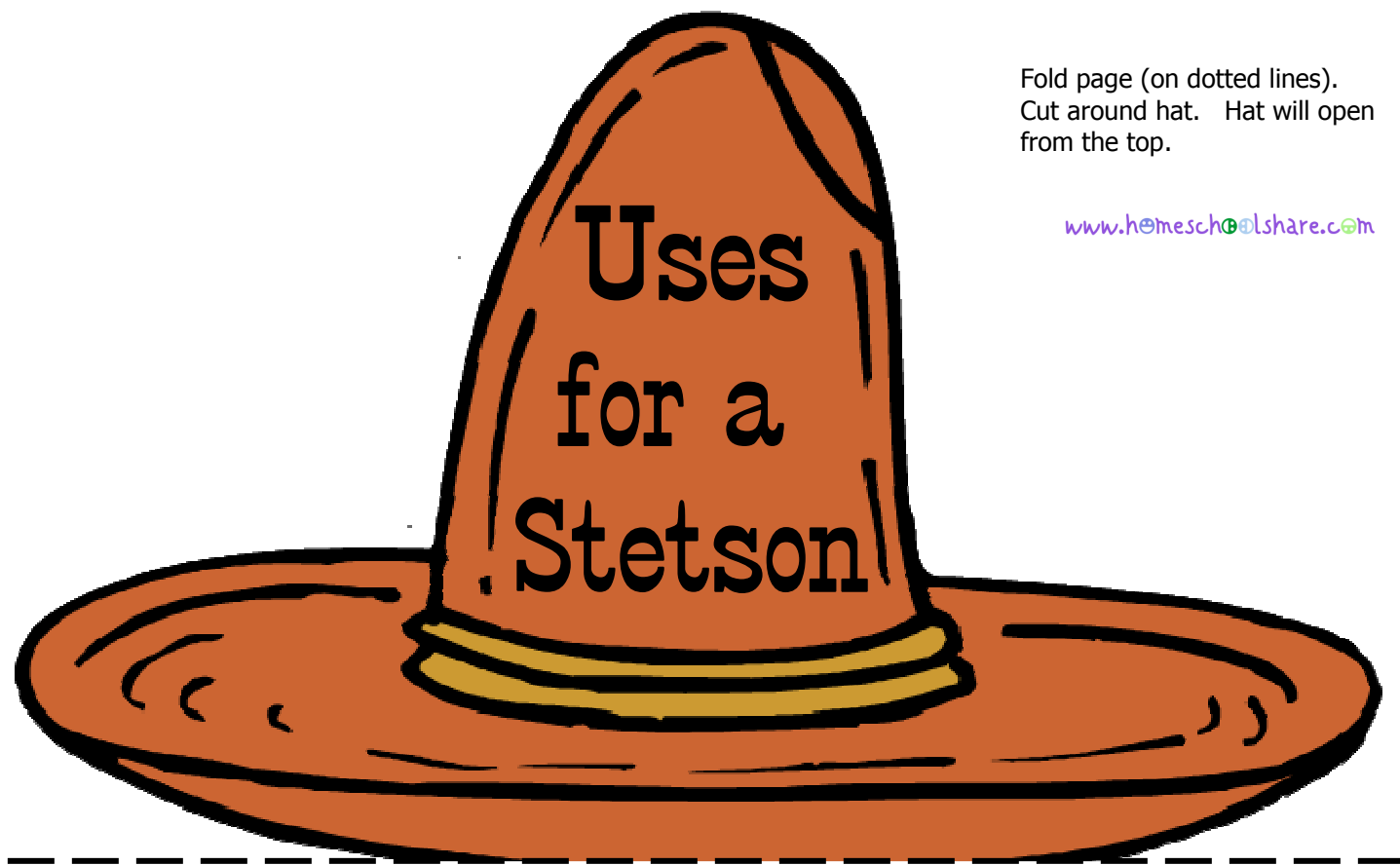
Cut pocket out as one piece. Fold back up. Wrap flaps around the back and glue down.

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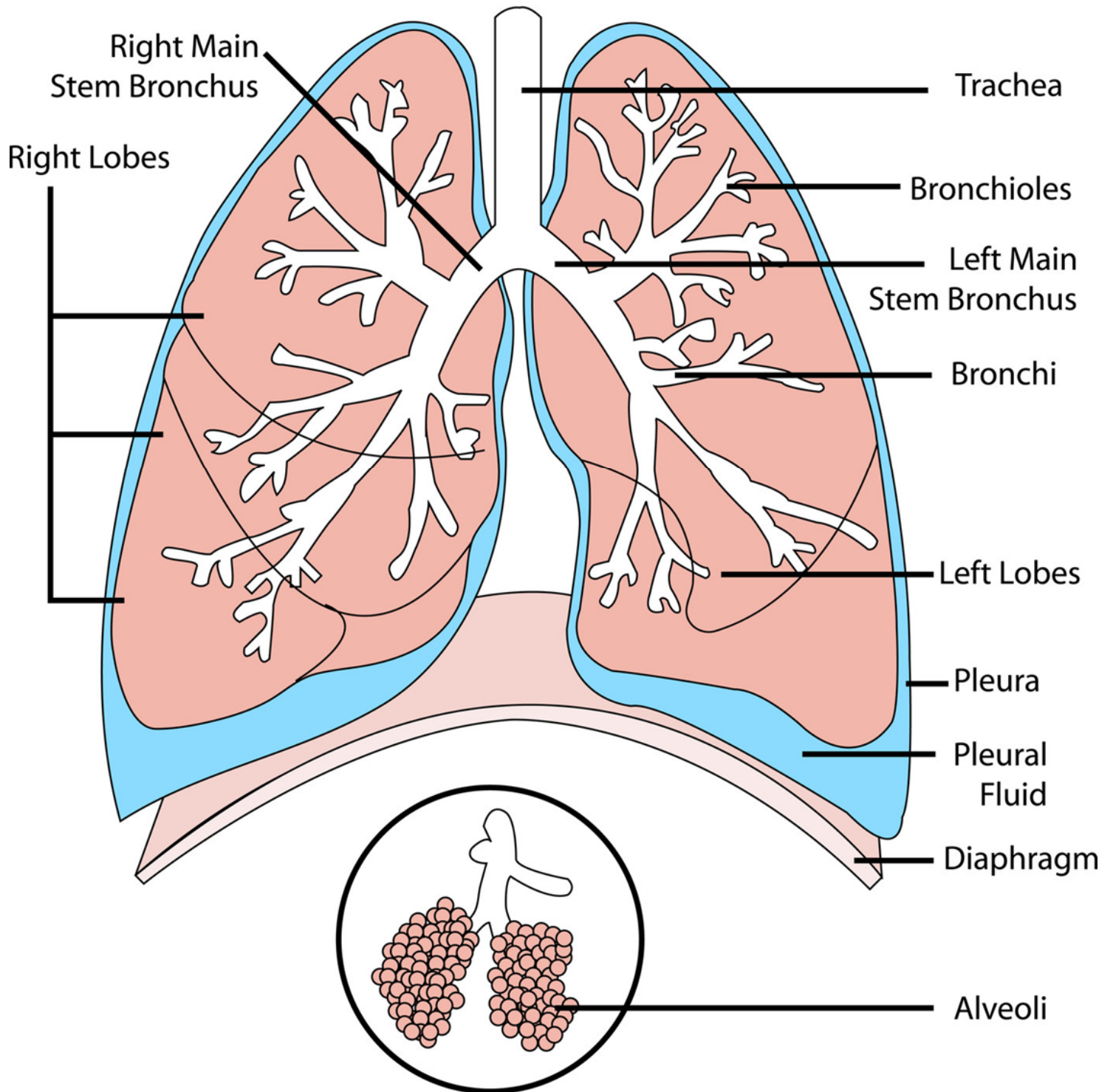
f l a p	<h1>VOCABULARY PUZZLES</h1>  <hr/>	f l a p

Fold page (on dotted lines).
Cut around hat. Hat will open
from the top.

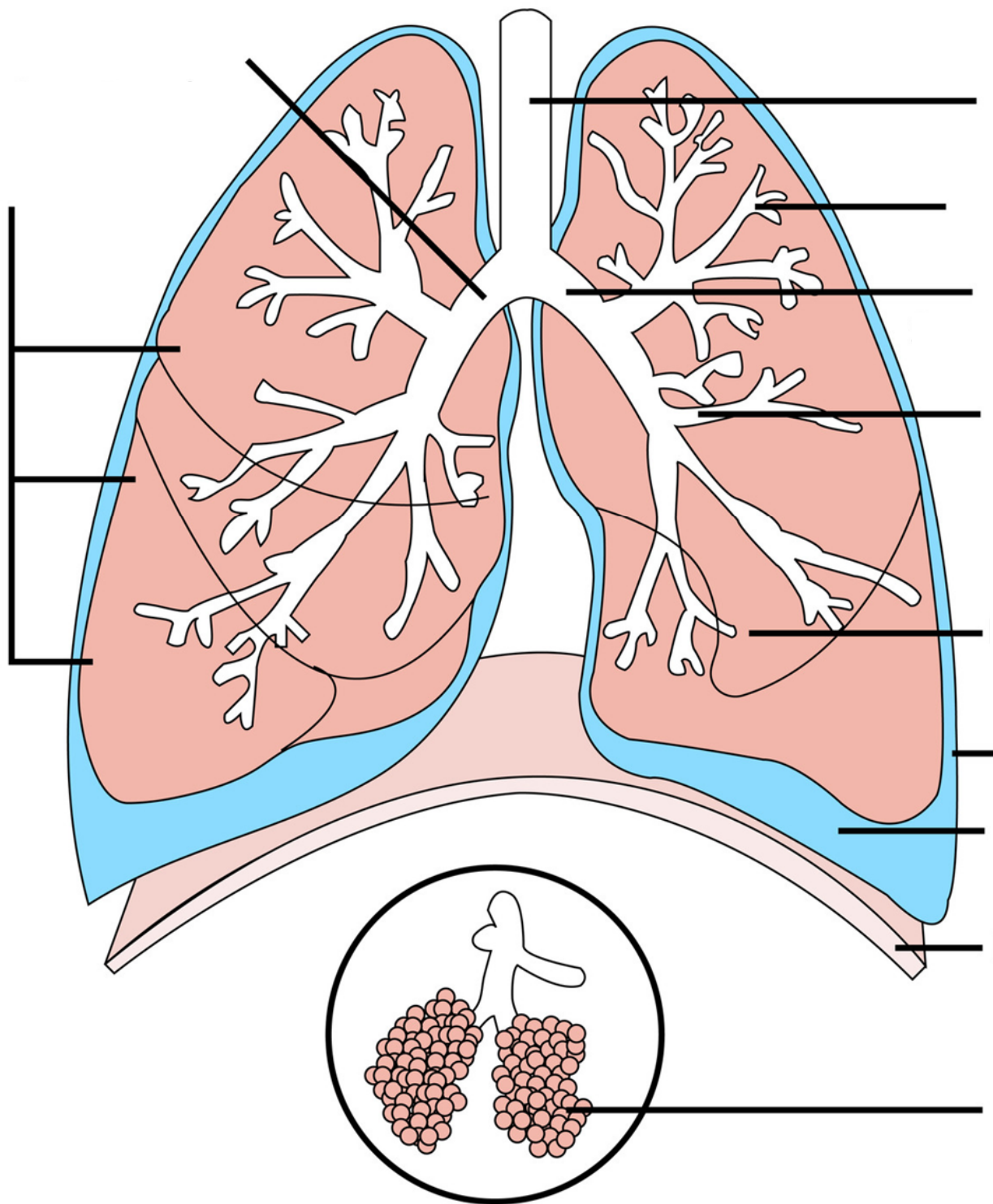
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Human Lungs Diagram



Human Lungs Diagram



Kinds of Hats



Cut out book as one piece. Fold left side in. Fold right side in. Open book. Cut on dotted line to form four flaps. Refold book.

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WHAT?

WHEN?

WHERE?

**THERE'S GOLD
IN THEM
THAR HILLS!**



Cut both pockets out. Fold back flap up and wrap side flaps around the back and glue down. Glue the back of your pocket into your lapbook.

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Gold Coins



\$2 Bills





TITLE

AUTHOR

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I THOUGHT THIS BOOK WAS

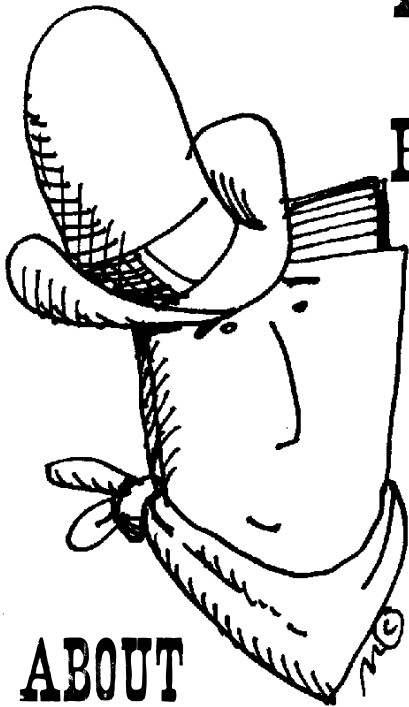
TITLE

AUTHOR

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I THOUGHT THIS BOOK WAS

**BOOKS
I
READ**



**ABOUT
COWBOYS**

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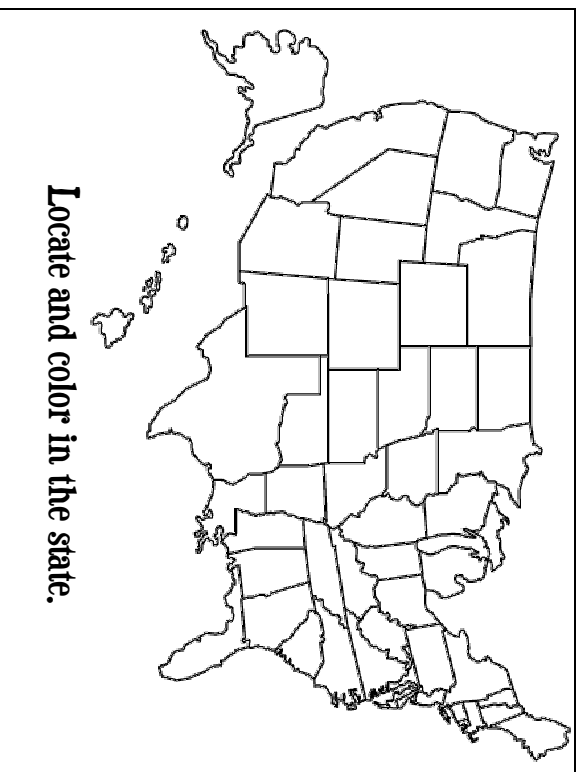
I THOUGHT THIS BOOK WAS

Cut pages out. Stack together with cover on top. Staple at the top of the book.



**New
Jersey**

**Where in the
United States
is...**

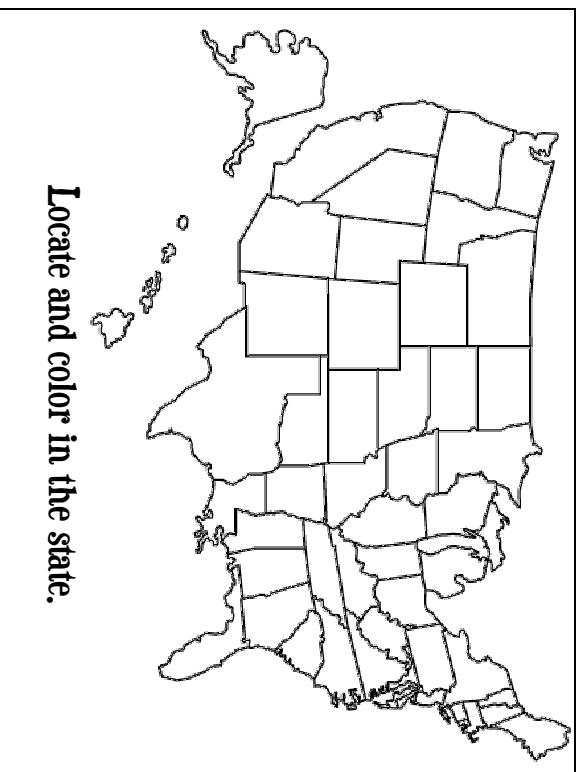


Locate and color in the state.

Cut out book as one piece on solid lines. Fold on dotted lines.
Cut out map on solid lines and glue under shutters.

Missouri

**Where in the
United States
is...**



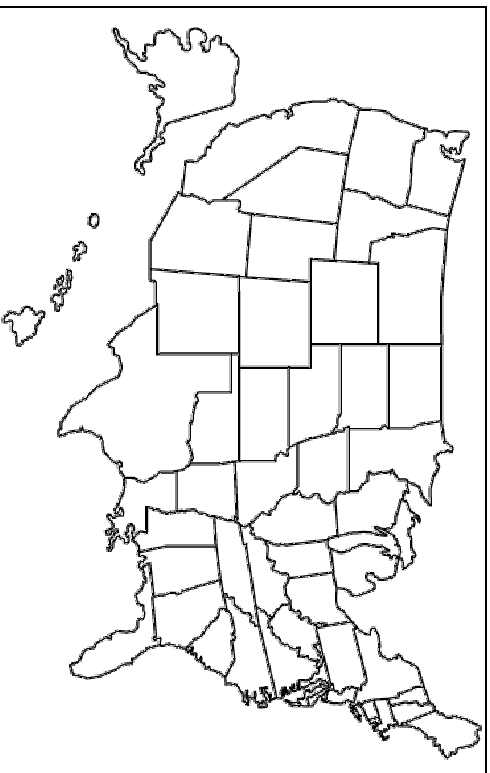
Locate and color in the state.

Cut out book as one piece on solid lines. Fold on dotted lines.

Cut out map on solid lines and glue under shutters.

Colorado

**Where in the
United States
is...**



Locate and color in the state.

Cut out book as one piece on solid lines. Fold on dotted lines.
Cut out map on solid lines and glue under shutters.