

# 1: Big Blue Sky

## Based on the Montana quarter reverse



### OBJECTIVE

Students will describe geographical features including landforms and bodies of water.



### MATERIALS

- 1 overhead projector (optional)
- 1 overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the “Montana Quarter Reverse” page
- 1 class map of the United States
- “Big Sky Country” worksheet
- 1 copy of a text that gives information about Montana, such as:
  - *B is for Big Sky Country: A Montana Alphabet* by Sneed B. Collard III
  - *Montana* by Dennis B. Fradin
  - *The United States of America: A State-by-State Guide* by Millie Miller and Cyndi Nelson
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Large white construction paper (1 per student)
- Crayons
- Watercolor paints and brushes



### PREPARATIONS

- Make an overhead transparency (or photocopy) of the “Montana Quarter Reverse” page.
- Locate a text that gives information about Montana (see examples under “Materials”).
- Make copies of the “Big Sky Country” worksheet (1 per student).
- Make a T-chart labeled “Landforms and Bodies of Water”.



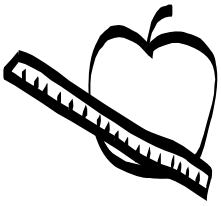
### GROUPINGS

- Whole group
- Individual work



### CLASS TIME

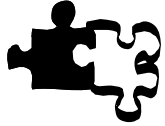
Two 20- to 30-minute sessions



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# Big Blue Sky

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## CONNECTIONS

- Social Studies
- Art



## TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Quarter
- Obverse (front)
- Reverse (back)
- Geographical features
- Landform
- Body of water
- Landscape
- Horizon



## BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Students should have a basic knowledge of:

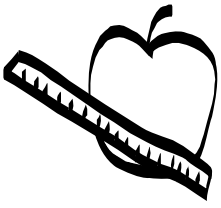
- Land and water
- Mountains, rivers, and plains



## 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 Montana quarter reverse. Locate Montana on a classroom map. Note its position in relation to your school's location.
2. With the students, examine the design on this coin's reverse. Tell the students that the back of the coin is also called the reverse, and obverse is another name for the front of a coin.
3. Explain to the students that the bottom part of the image represents the landscape of Montana. Define "landscape" as a picture of natural scenery seen in one view. Point out to the students the horizon line in the landscape. Define the horizon as the place where the land meets the sky.
4. Identify the main image as a bison skull, and ask the students where they have seen similar images. Connect the skull to what students may know about dinosaurs and how studying



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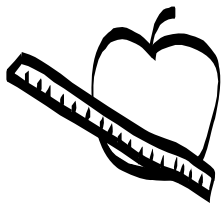
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bones helps scientists learn about the past. Ask the students to brainstorm why the bison skull might be included in the design.

5. Draw students' attention to the words on the Montana quarter reverse and tell them that the words read "Big Sky Country." Ask the students to brainstorm what they think this could represent.
6. Introduce the students to the selected text about Montana. As a group, preview the text. During the reading, students should listen for any descriptions of the landscape of Montana. Display a T-chart labeled "Landforms" and "Bodies of Water." Tell the students that they will listen for these descriptions during the read aloud. Have the students brainstorm some examples of these before reading the text (mountain, river, grassy plain).
7. During the reading, chart facts learned about these geographical features. Attend to unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts. After concluding the selected text, review the charted geographical features.
8. Explain to the students that they will be creating an art project representing the geographical features of Montana in the following session.

## Session 2

1. Display the transparency of the Montana quarter reverse. Review with the students the material covered in the first session, including the chart of geographical features found in Montana.
2. Explain to the students that they will create a landscape drawing similar to the one found on the Montana quarter. Review the state nickname "Big Sky Country."
3. Distribute a large piece of construction paper to each student. Model for the students drawing a horizon line across the middle of the paper, leaving a large space for the sky. Direct the students to draw their own horizon lines.
4. Distribute the "Big Sky Country" worksheets. Review each item on the worksheet. Students should cut out and paste the title "Big Sky Country" at the top of the paper. Tell the students to draw the Montana geographical features they learned about from the text. The students will trace each word on this worksheet, cut the boxes out, and glue them on the landscape drawings as labels. Tell the students that they may choose one additional geographical feature to include in their landscapes. The students will use the blank box on the worksheet to create a label for this feature.
5. Have the students complete their drawings using pencil, then color the geographical features with crayons.

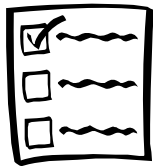


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6. Distribute watercolor paints to each student. Tell the students to paint the “big sky” using blue paint.
7. Display the art projects in the classroom.



## ASSESSMENT

- Use the students’ class participation and art projects to evaluate whether they have met the lesson objectives.
- Use the students drawings and label placements to assess understanding of geographical features.



## ENRICHMENT/EXTENSIONS

Have students create similar art projects displaying the geographical features of their home states.



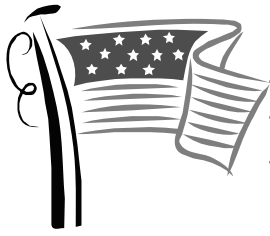
## DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING OPTIONS

- Allow students to work in pairs.
- Provide printed labels for the students to cut out and glue onto their drawings.



## CONNECTION TO [WWW.USMINT.GOV/KIDS](http://WWW.USMINT.GOV/KIDS)

Have students color quarter designs that feature landforms (such as North Dakota, Colorado, Missouri) online with Cents of Color at [www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?fileContents=games](http://www.usmint.gov/kids/index.cfm?fileContents=games).



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Big Sky Country

**Directions:** Trace the words. Then cut out each box and glue it onto your landscape drawing.



River

Mountain

Plain

Big Sky Country



# Montana Quarter Reverse

