



NAVIGATING IL WATERWAYS

Grade Level

4-8

Length of Lesson

30 minutes

Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will have a better understanding of the geography of Illinois and the importance of our state's waterways.

Materials Needed

- Copies of the Student Worksheet
- Access to the internet

Standards

IL Social Studies

Standards:

SS.G.2.4-5

SS.G.3.4-5

SS.EC.2.4-5

SS.IS.3.6-8

SS.EC.2.6-8.LC

Lesson Summary

This lesson is designed to help students interact with an Illinois map to better understand the state's geography and, specifically, its vital waterways.

Suggested Sequence of Events:

1. Read through the AITC Water Ag Mag to learn more about IL waterways. Online interactive versions of our Ag Mags are available on our website.
2. Complete the activity following the procedures:
 - Pass out the Student Worksheet.
 - If necessary, allow students to access the internet.
3. Whole class discussion and reflection of activity.
 - How do the rivers of Illinois have an impact on our daily life?
 - What impact do Illinois rivers have on agriculture?
 - How have our rivers changed over time?

TEACHER RESOURCES

Extension Ideas:

- Pair this lesson with *Thomas Jefferson Grows a Nation* and *Abraham Lincoln Clears a Path*, both by Peggy Thomas.
- Have students research more about the river systems in the State of Illinois. Here are some research questions to get them started:
 - Who built the Carlyle Lake, and why?
 - Southern Illinois is bordered by three different rivers. What effect does this have on soil in the area? What about the crops that farmers can grow here?
 - The confluence of the Kaskaskia and Mississippi Rivers changed. How did this happen?
 - How are goods shipped up and down the rivers of Illinois? What technologies and infrastructure are in place to allow this to happen?
- Invite a farmer to speak to your students about the impact of river transportation on his farm and his ability to sell his crops.
- Contact your County Ag Literacy Coordinator to get copies of our Ag Mags, including our Illinois History Ag Mag. Find your county coordinator at www.agintheclassroom.org



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STUDENT WORKSHEET

Directions: Using the attached Illinois county map, follow the directions below. You will also need markers or crayons to complete each prompt. For some questions, you may need to use the internet or a geographic map of the state of Illinois.

1. Draw a triangle around the location of your hometown, then label it.
2. Misi-zibi is a word of the Ojibwa, a native people of the Great Lakes region of the U.S., which means “great river.” It is where the Mississippi got its English name. Trace the Mississippi River in green.
3. The Illinois River was an important route for Native Americans and French traders to travel from the area near the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River. Draw the Illinois River in yellow.
4. Very early in their voyage, Lewis and Clark traveled from Ohio, down the Ohio River, and passed where the Wabash and Ohio Rivers meet. Find the location of the Wabash River and draw it in purple. Then, with the color pink, trace the Ohio River.
5. The largest lake that is entirely within the State of Illinois is actually man-made. Find the Carlyle Lake Reservoir and draw it on the map in black.
6. Every year, over 200 million tons of cargo are shipped through the Great Lakes. Much of this leaves or enters Chicago through Lake Michigan. Draw Lake Michigan and color it blue.
7. Some Illinois counties have natural borders that follow rivers. Find some of these counties and color them in orange.
8. The point where the Kaskaskia River meets the Mississippi River (which is called a “confluence”) changed in 1881. Draw the Kaskaskia River in red.



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STUDENT WORKSHEET





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ANSWER KEY

