

## Social Studies Theme: Geography

**Lesson:** *Longitude and Latitude- Letters from Around the World*

**Grade Level:** 1-4

**Overview:** Students will be introduced to the topics of longitude and latitude through studying maps and geography via the postal service.

**Approximate Duration:** one class period

**National Social Studies Standards:** NSS-G.K-12.1 The World in Spatial Terms.  
[http://www.educationworld.com/standards/national/soc\\_sci/geography/k\\_12.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/standards/national/soc_sci/geography/k_12.shtml)

**Objective:** Students will be able to understand a map, decipher longitude and latitude and understand the process of mailing letters as a means to communicate with others in different parts of the world.

### Procedure:

- Describe the process of mailing a letter and talk about the trip it takes from sender to receiver. Point out that the post office helps people stay in touch with others near and far away.
- Read *Greetings From Australia* aloud to the class. Have students trace the route of Kristen's letter on a map. Ask students to help you to list the things Kristen learned about Australia from the package Tracey sent her.
- Explain that during World War II, letters were the primary means of communication because there were no cell phones or email.
- Introduce the concepts of latitude and longitude and explain how this can help us figure out where in the world are letters are going.
- For older students, you can discuss the use in our modern society of GPS systems as a means to understand geography.
  - GPS = Global Positioning System. It is a space-based global navigational satellite system that provides reliable location and time information.

### Assessment:

- Have students role-play a telephone conversation between Kristen and Tracey talking about their letters and packages.
- Have students work in groups to make the contents for two packages - one from the United States and one from Australia. The contents can be cutout pictures. They should reflect what students learned about each country from the lesson.
- **Technology integration:** With older students, the teacher can create a geocache for students to find on school grounds using either a geocache app for smartphones or a GPS

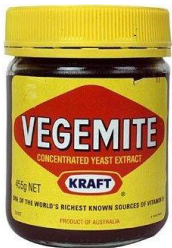


Mini-Navigation map for smartphones and iPads. Or, have students write their own letters back to Tracey in Australia. Then give each student (or small groups of students) the latitude/longitude coordinates of a different Australian city. Project a latitude/longitude map on a smartboard, zoomed in on Australia. Have students use their coordinates to find the city where Tracey lives.

## Greetings from Australia

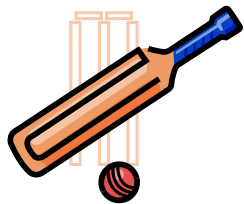
Dear Kristen,

How are you doing? I have not talked to you in a long time and miss you very much since I moved here to Australia. Life here is different from back home, but I like it here so far. Everyone here is nice and friendly, and I have made new friends at school here. Since we moved, my family and I have been very busy experiencing new things. We have spent a great deal of time on the water since we live by the coast. We have been fishing a great deal, and I have even learned how to surf!



The food here is different too. My new favorite snack is vegemite on some toast. It is delicious! I put a jar of it in the package so you can try it too. We have also been eating a lot of seafood. Sometimes we are able to cook the fish we catch while fishing.

I've also included in my package some things that make me think of my new home here in Australia. I've included some pictures for you to look at. There is one of a kangaroo. I actually saw one crossing the highway when we were driving the other day! I also included a picture of the equipment I use to play cricket. This game is kind of like baseball in America. I really enjoy playing it almost every day at school with my friends.



I hope you like my package and can one day visit and learn even more about life here in Australia! I hope to hear back from you soon!

Sincerely,  
Tracey