



Minnesota vs. Alaska



- Objective: The students will research certain aspects of both Minnesota and Alaska and compare and contrast their findings.
- Materials: Encyclopedias, State Reference Books, Atlas, Maps, Globes and Internet (any combination of these resources would be sufficient)
- Time: 25 Minutes
- MN Standard: **Social Studies**—*Geography: Physical Features and Processes*
 The student will identify and locate geographic features associated with the development of Minnesota.
- Students will identify and compare and contrast the landforms, natural vegetation, climate, and systems of rivers and lakes of Minnesota with those of other parts of the United States.
- The student will identify physical characteristics of places and use this knowledge to define regions, their relationships among regions, and their patterns of change.
- Students will describe the major physical features of the United States and the regions of the world they study.
 - Students will describe patterns of vegetation and landforms in the United States and around the world.
- Set Up: Divide the students into small research groups allowing each group to have a variety of the research materials.
- Process: Give each research group a selection of items from the list to research. Determine whether groups will research items from both states or focus on one individual state. After 15 minutes of research have the groups report back their findings. Alternate each item from state to state so the students can make a direct comparison of the two states.
- Review: Using the students' research, have a rapid game-style question and answer session.

Research Items

- 🍃 Highest point?
- 🍃 Name the three major rivers in Alaska/Minnesota.
- 🍃 Where do these major rivers flow (ex: into which ocean)?
- 🍃 Average temperature in June?
- 🍃 Average temperature in January?
- 🍃 Average annual snowfall?
- 🍃 Average annual rainfall?
- 🍃 State tree? What does this say about each state?
- 🍃 State bird? What does this say about each state?
- 🍃 What are the major biomes (ex: prairie, tundra, boreal, mountain etc...)?
- 🍃 What mammals call these regions home?
- 🍃 Major uses of the land (agricultural, forestry, recreation, metro etc...)?
- 🍃 Largest city? Population?
- 🍃 Size, how many square miles?

The above list is a starting point. Based on the students, there is a wide variety of items that could be additionally researched. It may also be beneficial to select a region of Minnesota and Alaska to compare since both states vary greatly depending on the studied location (example: Minnesota's North Shore and Alaska's Interior). The comparison of size is not dealt with in too much detail in this lesson because it is covered more in depth in the lesson: How Big Is It?