iPod Touch Lesson Plan/ Review
Stack the States

Apps Used: Stack the States - $0.99 - Universal App (works on both iPad and iPod Touch/iPhone) No VPP discounts available

Subjects that can be taught using the app: U.S. History, U.S. Geography, Geometry, Physics
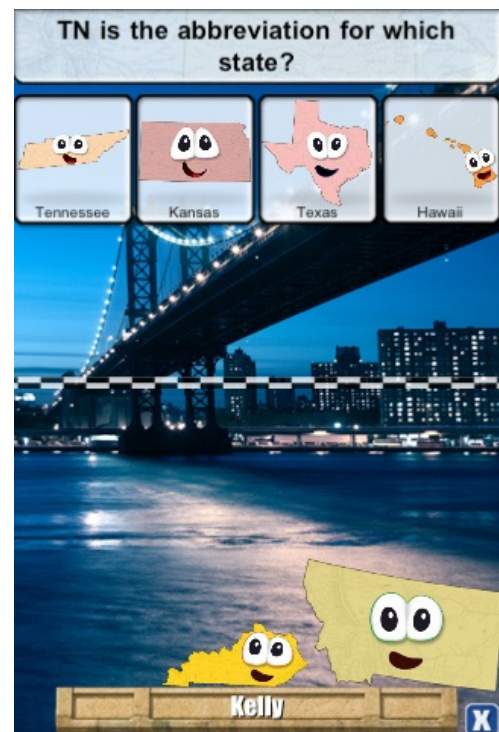
Time: 30-60 minutes depending on how long you give them in the app.

Review -
     Stack the States is a game that allows for a variety of activities. There are a total of 4 games available although you must reach certain milestones to unlock all but the beginning game.

     To begin you enter your name for a profile. There are slots for up to 7 separate profiles. Once you have selected your profile the game begins. The player is asked a question about a state. Questions include capitals, landmarks, bordering states, and abbreviations. If the player selects the correct state, he/she is presented with that state to drop onto a platform.

     The goal is to stack the states above the checkerboard line on the screen. If you accomplish the task you are rewarded with a state. Not quite as easy as it might seem. The states are not all geometrically suited for stacking. Also, when you drop the states they tend to bounce and rock and roll. If a state falls off of the edge of the platform then you have to keep going. Touching the state brings up a white circle with dots around it. With the circle on-screen you can move the state by dragging it. You can rotate the state using the white dots. While not ultra-challenging it is a lot of fun.

As you earn more states you can unlock 3 more bonus games. Having worked with 4th, 5th and 6th graders in this game, I can tell you that students really enjoy it, find some challenge and even learn things they didn't know about the states.

Lesson:
The school where I have taught this has a mobile cart of 30 iPod Touches. I have the students retrieve the iPods from the cart, taking note of the number of the iPod so they remember where to put it back after the activity.

I begin the lesson by talking about relative size. One of the things that I really like about the app is that the states in correct proportional size to each other. Alaska is really big and Rhode Island is really small.

Next we discuss the physics of the game. Gravity is in play as you drop the states, balance comes into play, as does the bouncy nature of the states.

I use a document camera to demonstrate setting up the profiles and the basics of gameplay. (This is probably not necessary as the kids have it figured out in seconds on the own, but just in case.)

At this point I lets the students start playing. I give them about 10 minutes to begin with, before stopping them. When I stop them we take a quick poll to see how who has gained the most states. This seems to be really motivational for the group. In each class that I have tried it, after polling the group, when they start playing again, they get quieter and more focused. I give them another 5-10 minutes to play then take another poll. I found that 2 to 3 rounds seems to be optimal.

I love *Stack the States,* it is one of my favorite apps. I think students really enjoy it as well and learn quite a bit at the same time.