

**Name/Title:** Playing Card Warm-ups

**Academic content:** Social Studies

**Purpose of Event:** To provide students with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge about subject matter across the curriculum while engaging in a fun warm-up activity.

**Prerequisites:** In order to participate in this warm-up activity, students will need to be able to:  
1) Identify suits and ranks of playing cards  
2) Perform a given exercise when s/he sees the name of that exercise.

**Suggested Grade Level:** 5-12

**Materials Needed:** 1) One (or more if you wish) deck of playing cards, 2) Two milk crates (or boxes), 3) Four - Eight sheets of paper set up around the gym to indicate stations, 4) One sheet of paper set up as the "key", 5) Scotch tape, 6) Pencil/marker.

**Physical activity:** Fitness

## Description of Idea

The only limit to what you can do with this activity is your own (and your students') imagination! I like to use geography to start with.

I make several photocopies of a U.S. map. On each map I will highlight a different state. Along the bottom of the page I will write the name of the state, the state capital, and an activity. i.e. "Trenton, New Jersey. 15 Pushups." "Albany, New York. 25 Jumping Jacks." I will then tape the maps up around the gym. If I can, I will tape up east coast states on one wall, west coast states on the opposing wall, etc.

Somewhere on the sidelines, I will place two milk crates next to each other. One will be upside down with the playing cards scattered face up on it. Along the wall here I will tape the key. The key will tell the students which station to go to. "2 or 3 - New Jersey" "4 or 5 - New York", etc.

To begin the activity, assign your students to squads. Teachers should determine how many squads to have and how many students should be in each one based on your gym's size (the possibilities for stations really are limitless).

When the teacher says "go", one person in each squad will lead his/her squad up to the black line by the key. (All squads may move at once.) The squad leader will draw a card, read the key

to see which station the squad must go to, put the card in the other milk crate, and lead the squad to that station. When the squad gets there, they must read the map to find out the state capital and then perform whatever exercise is indicated on the map right there. When that exercise is finished, they return to the black line together and the squad leader draws another card.

This can be repeated either for a set time limit or until all of the cards are used. I leave the cards face up so that students can choose to go to each area. When the cards are face down, the luck of the draw sometimes keeps squads from visiting some stations at all.

### **Variations:**

In addition to states and capitals, I've used continents, countries, U.S. Presidents, elements of the periodic chart, characters from books being read in class, and more. You can tailor it to your students' cognitive level. Physically, you can add/subtract the number of push ups/sit ups/etc that the students must do at each station.

### **Assessment Ideas:**

At the end of the warm-up, I call the students back to their squads. While they catch their breath, I might say something like "Raise your hand if you went to New Jersey during warmups. Chris, what's the capital of New Jersey?"

### **Adaptations for Students with Disabilities:**

Students who have special needs can do modified versions of the exercises if they cannot do the standard version. It depends on what warm-ups you use in class. Wheelchair bound students could potentially do pull/chin ups at the bar. Blind students could be led with their squads to each station, could have their classmates read the information to them if brail is unavailable, and could still do push ups/sit ups/etc. with the squad.

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Submitted by **Michael Harnett** in Jamesburg , NJ . Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 6/6/2001**. Printed 1496 times since 8/24/2001.

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