



Social  
Studies



Literacy

# BACK TO SCHOOL WITH AG

## Grade Level

3-8

## Length of Lesson

45 minutes

## Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to explain how the United States produces a variety of commodities used in common products.

## Materials Needed

- Copies of student worksheet
- Copies of United States Map
- Colored pencils (optional)

## Standards

### Common Core

CCSS.ELA-

Literacy.RI.2.1- 4.1; RI.2-

6.7; RI.4.2; RI.4.3; RI.4.6;

RI.4.7; RF.4.4; W.4.3;

W.4.7; SL.4.2

### Social Studies

SS.G.1.3-4; G.1.6-8MdC;

G.2.5; G.2.6-8LC; G.3.2-

4; G.3.6-8MdC

## Lesson Summary

This lesson is designed to increase student understanding of the number of agricultural commodities used to produce common products, especially the necessary supplies for school!

## Suggested Sequence of Events:

1. Set Up: Make enough copies of the student worksheet and United States map for each student.
2. Read through the IAITC IL History Ag Mag to learn about Illinois. Interactive online versions can be found on our website.
3. Complete the activity following the procedures:
  - Give each student a copy of the student worksheet and United States map.
  - Read through the first page of the student worksheet together as a class and discuss.
  - Have students work individually or with a partner to work through the bullet points on the back side of the student worksheet, drawing shapes on their maps as instructed.
  - Then, have students answer the questions at the bottom individually.
6. Whole class discussion, share answers, and reflection of activity.

# TEACHER RESOURCES

## Extension Ideas:

- Virtually [visit](https://youtu.be/NPzCZZMnaal) a pencil making factory: <https://youtu.be/NPzCZZMnaal>
- [Watch](https://youtu.be/OiWwzwFAeSM) how paper is made from sustainable forests: <https://youtu.be/OiWwzwFAeSM>
- [Watch](https://youtu.be/ere2F11Y-U0) cotton go from a plant to a t-shirt: <https://youtu.be/ere2F11Y-U0>
- [Meet](https://youtu.be/mDnITSca_gw) an Illinois Dairy Farmer who helps get milk from his farm to your lunch in 48 hours: [https://youtu.be/mDnITSca\\_gw](https://youtu.be/mDnITSca_gw)
- Choose one commodity from the map and have your students do a little more research to create a concept map. What other states and countries farm this commodity? What farming techniques are used? What recipes and products around the world use this commodity?
- Turn this activity into a stations activity to get your students up and moving. Give each station some information about the state being visited in the story. Find information about each state [here](#). This website is available at <https://agclassroom.org/teacher/agfacts/>
- Have students do a gallery walk with these [images](#) of what kids around the world eat for lunch in a week, available at <https://time.com/what-kids-eat-around-the-world-in-one-week/>.
- Watch this school lunches around the world [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Po0O9tRXCyA), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Po0O9tRXCyA>.
- Use this [interactive map](#) from National Geographic to show students the different climate regions around the world and how those impact the food we eat. Map available at [mapmaker.nationalgeographic.org](http://mapmaker.nationalgeographic.org).
- Go to [agintheclassroom.org](http://agintheclassroom.org) to contact your County Ag Literacy Coordinator for free classroom sets of our Ag Mags!



# BACK TO SCHOOL WITH AG

## STUDENT WORKSHEET

As Illinois students head back to school, it might be a perfect time to thank U.S. farmers! Farmers provide more than just the soy biodiesel in the school bus and the ethanol blend in the vehicles in the parent drop off line. Illinois wheat is used for chocolate chip cookies; Illinois specialty growers provide apples, and Prairie Farms Dairy and Illinois dairy farmers provide thousands of ½ pint milk cartons filled with milk! But what about the rest of the back to school supplies? How are they linked to agriculture?

- California cedar trees are most commonly used in pencils due to the non-warping features, and a classroom of 32 students, each carrying 5 new 100 page notebooks use the wood from roughly one tree. The Mead Company (makers of many of those notebooks and the infamous Trapper Keeper) is a part of ACCO (formerly the American Clipper Company, a paperclip company) based in Lake Zurich, Illinois. So even if the trees to make the paper come from the great north woods, an Illinois company still has a hand in providing paper products!
- Spruce, fir, aspen, and maple trees are typically harvested for use in facial tissues because of the thin wood fiber system that provide both softness and durability.
- Of course you can find soybean oil in some crayons, but you'll also find hair from cattle in paintbrushes, and more soy by-products in the cleaning materials to help clean up the art room!
- Hand sanitizer can be made with alcohol produced from Illinois Corn. Many ethanol plants transitioned from making fuel for automobiles to making hand sanitizer in the Spring of 2020 as fewer cars were on the road.
- Teachers will find lanolin from sheep in the lotion they use after grading all the papers and fatty acids from beef cattle are also used in cleaners and sanitizers!
- Corn starch is used in the formation of plastic items to help coat molds to help in the efficiency of plastic production.
- You will find beef by-products in the new bottles of glue, as well as the erasers from those brand new pencils!
- As the marching band starts practice, you will find pork by-products in the drumhead.
- What about your back to school clothes? Those are made from cotton, of course. One bale of cotton makes 1,217 t-shirts, 215 pairs of jeans and 4,321 socks. The extra sock is the one that gets lost in the laundry anyway! And those school fees and school lunches can be paid for in cold hard cash. According to the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing, that cash is printed on 75% cotton and 25% linen fiber.

So, as back to school time starts, slow-down in school zones, thank a hardworking teacher, and remember to thank a farmer!



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## STUDENT WORKSHEET

Different regions of the United States specialize in producing different agricultural products based on what crops can grow in that state's climate and soil in addition to what the market demands.

**Directions:** Read through the check list below to learn about the products produced in various states. Check-off each box once you've completed that task. Then, answer the questions below.

- Illinois ranks 21st in milk production. California, Idaho, and Wisconsin lead the nation in the production of milk. Draw a glass of milk in California, Idaho, and Wisconsin.
- Georgia, California, Alabama, and Mississippi lead the nation in the production of trees used for paper production. Draw a tree in each of those states.
- Find Lake Zurich, Illinois. This is the home of Mead Paper. Draw a piece of paper near Lake Zurich, Illinois.
- The oldest pencil company in the United States is located in New Jersey. Draw a pencil in New Jersey.
- Leading the nation in the production of soybeans are Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. Draw a soybean in those states.
- Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska are the leading corn producing states. Draw an ear of corn in those states.
- Texas, California, and Colorado are the largest sheep producing states. Draw a sheep in those states.
- Nine states have more cattle than people. Draw a cow in each of these states: Oklahoma, Iowa, Idaho, Kansas, Wyoming, North Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, and South Dakota.
- The leading pork producing states are Iowa, North Carolina, and Minnesota. Draw a pig in each.
- The leading cotton growing states are Texas, Georgia, and Mississippi. Draw a cotton boll in each of those states.

1. What do you notice about the states that produce the most agricultural products?

2. What is one new thing you learned about a state and/or commodity?

