

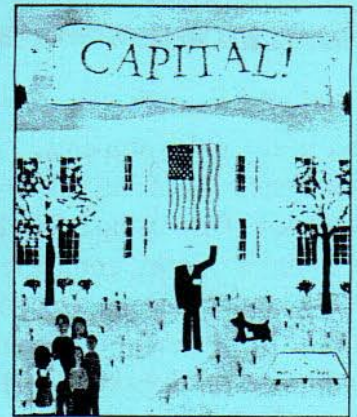
# CAPITAL!

Washington D.C. from A to Z

## Classroom Activity Sheet

*Capital! Washington D.C. from A to Z*—alphabet book and travelogue—provides endless teaching possibilities for the primary classroom. Laura Melmed structures her book in a very user-friendly manner by filling the pages with interesting facts about our nation's capital, in an alphabetical picture-book tour.

This classroom activity sheet is designed to provide a broad spectrum of extension activities to enhance the enjoyment of Ms. Melmed's book while investigating our national and local treasures. The activities in this guide are organized by subject matter, but many can also be expanded to include various subjects at once. For example, writing activities can be combined with art projects, and math and science activities can also include creative writing components.



### CAPITAL!

Washington D.C. from A to Z

By Laura Krauss Melmed

Illustrated in full color  
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### "My Town from A to Z"

Contact local village/town clerks and historical societies to gather information on your hometown. Include information on memorials, landmarks, history, architecture, etc.

Create a classroom book similar to *Capital! Washington D.C. from A to Z*. Have students sort pictures, make drawings, and/or write poems that would accompany the various places or people of interest in the town. Alphabetize the entries, and publish the book by adding it to the classroom library.

### "Washington's World Wide Web"

Investigate websites that pertain to the various places in the book (e.g., U.S. Treasury, Kennedy Center, the memorials). Assign each child a different place of interest, and teach students to look items up on the Internet. Have them compile the findings and present them to the rest of the class.

### "You Are Here"

Using the map of Washington, D.C., in the book, determine a "mystery location" and then give students directional clues to lead them to this special destination. (i.e., "Travel west from Union Station, south to the place where the president lives, and then straight north. Where did you end up?")

### "Home Sweet Home"

Using the cross-section model of the White House, have students create the same map of their own homes. Count up the windows, doors, rooms, bathrooms, etc. This can also be done on a large scale using the school building.

### "The Sign of the Times"

In honor of Gallaudet University, teach children the alphabet in sign language. Then have students spell their name in sign language. Find books that depict actual words in sign language, and have students practice speaking to each other in sign language.



### “Trial and Error”

This is for older students. Review the United States legal system by using the book as a springboard for discussion. Then using a familiar fairy tale, reconstruct the Supreme Court, complete with justices, attorneys, gallery, etc. Have the students argue for/against the actions of different characters in the story (e.g., Goldilocks for breaking and entering, Jack and the Beanstalk for goosenapping).



### “Show Us the Money”

Examine different currency and discuss amounts. Discuss how money is minted and how people have historically paid for items. Have students look at foreign currency and talk about exchange rates. Have students design a new currency. Who would they place on the bills or coins?

### “And If I’m Elected...”

Contact local political figures and representatives to arrange a visit to the classroom. Have them discuss their roles, their jobs, how they became political figures. Have students write their own speeches afterward and share them with the class.

### “Biography Corner”

Create a biography corner in the reading area. Collect books on the various people mentioned in *Capital! Washington D.C. from A to Z*. Students can research these people individually or in small groups.

### “Art for Art’s Sake”

Choose some famous works by American artists from the 19th and 20th centuries. Display the artwork in the classroom as if it were in a museum. Have students try to draw or paint pictures in the same manner (e.g., Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns). Students can add these artists to the biography corner as well.

### “The Shape of Things to Come”

Discuss and display the different shapes found in math (e.g., the pentagon, hexagon, circle, obelisk, square). Have children match monuments and buildings in the book with the different shapes. Supply pictures of architecture from modern and ancient times. Discuss which ideas were “borrowed” and which are new. Children can vote on the most appealing building or structure in Washington, modern times and/or ancient times.




### “Etched in Our Minds and on Our Hearts”

Discuss the various memorials. What do they signify? Why do we have them? Now in view of September 11th, discuss with the students what they feel would be fitting memorials to those events.



### “One Moment in Time”

Using archival footage, view with students some important events in our history (Apollo moon landing, Dr. King’s speeches, desegregation of schools, Babe Ruth’s home runs, etc.). Discuss these events from a historical point of view. Talk about life at this moment and hopes for the future. Then have students read the biography of one of these important persons from history and share a summary with the class. As an extension activity, discuss the elements of writing an autobiography and then have students write their own autobiographies.

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