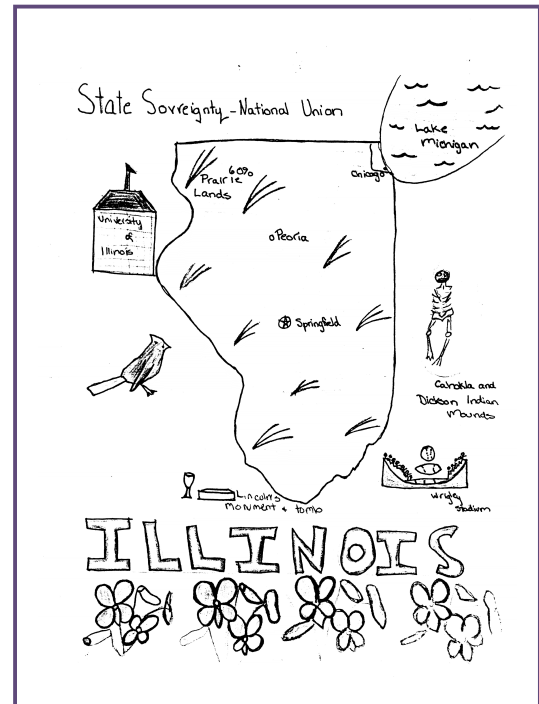# Getting Geographic:
Creating a State Postcard …

A quick survey of the postcard rack at the local drug store, airport, or train station is likely to yield at least one postcard with a state map decorated with icons that tell a story about your state. Examples can also be found online using a search engine and the search words "state map postcard." The map icons generally reflect both physical and human characteristics of the state that represent the fundamental geographic theme of "Place."

Getting Started …

a) Review with students the theme of "place." Help students develop clear definitions and local examples of physical and human characteristics of place. Share with the class one or more state map postcards from your state and encourage students to separate the icons used on the card into physical and human characteristics.

b) Assign each student one U.S. state and explain that their task is to create a state postcard that includes a map of the state and at least: 3 distinctive physical characteristics; 3 distinctive human characteristics; the state name and capital; the state motto or slogan; the state bird and flower; and any other unique characteristics of the state. To achieve a standard appearance, have all students use a single 8.5"x11" sheet of white paper and colored pencils or markers.

c) When the project is complete, display the student postcards on the bulletin board in correct relative location.

Thinking Critically …

a) As a class, discuss the ways in which the states represented are alike and the ways in which they are different. How can students explain these similarities and differences?

b) Introduce the word "*perception*." Lead the class in a discussion of how state map postcards reflect or influence people's perception of a given state. Does the absence of negative icons affect people's perceptions? Have the class evaluate the student postcards in terms of their understanding of the word "perception."