

# WORLD TAGS

## GRADES

second and third

## MATERIALS

paper

pencil

thumbtacks or tape

scissors

a large map of the world

In my kitchen, you can find dish-washing detergent made in Ohio, cookies from Denmark, vinegar from France, olive oil from Italy, matches from Minnesota, cat food from California, juice from Florida, coffee from Colombia, syrup from Canada, tin foil from Virginia, a dish towel from India, and horseradish from Japan. My kitchen is an adventure in geography. Yours is too. If you look closely, you'll find that virtually everything that you buy, virtually everything that enters your house—food, clothes, furniture, electrical appliances—comes with some mark declaring its point of origin.

Here is a way to use dish towels and cat food to teach your child about geography. Get a big map of the world and place it on a wall. Then, as you buy things, take a look at the labels. Where does that soap come from? How about the tomato paste? What about that winter scarf? As soon as you find out the city, state, or country, write SOAP, TOMATO PASTE, or SCARF on a bit of paper, and tape or tack this paper tag onto the map. How long will it take you to have tags on every continent? How long will it take to have tags on every state in the U.S.A.? What states fill up with tags? What countries? What countries are tagless? Do some countries seem to specialize in food or clothes? Do some countries seem to export absolutely everything?



As you cover your map with tags, you may find that your child develops a special interest in one country or another. Take advantage. Make a quick trip to the library. Borrow books on Italy or China—books with plenty of pictures are best. Even if your child doesn't become a China expert, he'll still learn a lot. He'll become familiar with the map. In time, he'll probably recognize physically distinctive states like Texas and countries like Italy. He'll realize that his life in his hometown is connected to the lives of people in many towns and countries around the world.

