

# Cultural History along the Natchez Trace Parkway



ON-SITE LESSON ONE:

Name It (code 4NI)

➤ **Grade Level:**

4<sup>th</sup> grade

➤ **Subject Areas:**

Social Studies,  
Language Arts

➤ **Setting:**

Classroom

➤ **Duration:**

30-45 Minutes

➤ **Skills:** Analysis,  
creativity, prioritizing

➤ **AL Objectives:**

AL Studies  
1, 6

**Summary:**

The students will determine important features of their surroundings and come up with creative names for these features.



**Materials Needed:** Worksheet, pen, pencil, area to explore (classroom or more)

## Instructional Information

Alabama Objectives: 1) Compare historical and current economic, political, and geographic information about Alabama on thematic maps, including weather and climate, physical-relief, waterway, transportation, political, economic development, land-use, and population maps.

6) Describe cultural, economic, and political aspects of the lifestyles of early nineteenth-century farmers, plantation owners, slaves, and townspeople.

**Learning Objectives:** 1) Understand how pioneers generated place names, 2) use creative skills to generate their own place names, 3) determine important features of localized geographic area

**Teacher Set:** This lesson engages students to determine important locations and creatively develop their own names for places around the school.

**Teacher Overview:** “A trail led from Natchez northward and eastward through forests of oak and hickory and pine, through can thickets and swamps, to Nashville on the Cumberland, 500 miles away. The trail had many names. The southern part followed Indian paths to the farm villages of the Choctaws. English men of the 1770’s therefore spoke of the Path to the Choctaw Nation. The northern part was known by the people of Nashville as the Chickasaw Trace in the 1780’s.

“As the flow of through traffic between Nashville and Natchez increased, men began to speak of ‘the Natchez Road’ or ‘the Nashville Road,’ naming it for the distant point to which they were headed.

“Frontiersmen who first explored the valleys that drained into the Ohio River left faint paths for others to follow. Such paths were called traces. Many of them became famous: Boone’s Trace, Berry’s Trace and others. In time, the people of the Cumberland Valley began to speak of the Natchez Trace. Oddly enough, they called it the Natchez Road” When it was merely a ‘path that serpentine those boundless forests’. Not until after it had in fact become a road did they call it the Natchez Trace.” (Phelps and Ross 1952)

Where did people get ideas for names?

Place names can be descriptive like Napier Mine. Place names can be historic like Yackanookany. Place names can be aesthetic like Birdsong Hallow. Place names can be about a person like Colbert Ferry. Place names can be about an event Pigeon Roost.

Give examples of place names along the Natchez Trace Parkway descriptive such as Shady Grove, Colbert Ferry, Cypress Swamp, Sheboss Place, and Dancing Rabbit Creek. Ask the students how they thought each place got its name.

Ask the students to say place names that they know. Write them on the board as students name them. Discuss how those places may have gotten their names.

**Student Instruction:** Students will determine what they think are important features of the classroom, school or school yard. Students will make up creative names for those important places. Hand out the Name It work sheet. Explain to the students that they will be making up names for fifteen locations in the classroom (or elsewhere). On the worksheet, they will write a short description of the location and then (at their seats or for homework) they will invent a name for the location. If students are going outside the classroom, be sure they understand their boundaries.

**Student Task:** This activity will generate more commitment if students should be able to move about to investigate either as a class, small groups or as individuals.

Students will choose fifteen locations and list them on the worksheet. (Option: Student will draw a map, or be provided with an unlabeled map of the classroom or school) Students will make up unique and descriptive names for each location. For example, the doorway to the cafeteria could be "Food Pass", or the nurse's office could be "Healing Station."

**Teacher Closure:** Review the activity and follow up with discussion of.

**Student Assessment:** Participation in the activity and quality of worksheet responses.

**Suggestions for re-teaching:** On a field trip to the Natchez Trace Parkway have the students observe place names along the roads.

**Extension:** Provide the students a list of names of people and places on the Natchez Trace. Have them choose a person and write a report about that person and how they were associated with the Old Natchez Trace. Alternatively, if the student knows a family member or friend who has a name associated with the Natchez Trace, have them investigate that family's role on the Old Natchez Trace.

- a. Students write a creative paragraph about one or more of the place names they created. For example, the nurse's office could be accompanied by a story about a student who got sick and went to the nurse's office. Students should be encouraged to use descriptive words.
- b. Students write a creative paragraph about one or more the place names on the Natchez Trace. Students should be encouraged to use descriptive words.

NAME IT! Worksheet. Fill out the chart below. In the first box, you will write a short description of a place. In the second box, you will write a creative place name.

	<b>Short description of place</b>	<b>Your new creative name for this place</b>
<b>1.</b>		
<b>2.</b>		
<b>3.</b>		
<b>4.</b>		
<b>5.</b>		
<b>6.</b>		
<b>7.</b>		
<b>8.</b>		
<b>9.</b>		
<b>10.</b>		
<b>11.</b>		
<b>12.</b>		
<b>13.</b>		
<b>14.</b>		
<b>15.</b>		

NAME IT! Example. Fill out the chart below. In the first box, you will write a short description of a place. In the second box, you will write a creative place name.

	Short description of place	Your new creative name for this place
1.	<b>Water fountain by gym</b>	<b>Thirsty Fountain</b>
2.	<b>Principal's Office</b>	<b>Chief's Landing</b>
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		

EXAMPLE