Lesson: History of the Mason and Dixon Line
By Susan Fowle

Objectives: Students will understand that boundaries of states may be determined by the geographical features of the area or in terms of absolute location (using latitude/longitude).

Standards:
Strand 4: Geography; Concept 2: Places and Regions
PO 1. Describe how the following regions exemplify the concept of region as an area with unifying human or natural factors:
  ▪ Three American colonial regions
  ▪ West, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest
  ▪ North and South during the Civil War

PO 2. Describe the geographic characteristics of a state in the United States with the assistance of maps, the internet, atlases, and other reference materials.

Strand 4 Geography, Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms
PO 3. Identify the location of significant geographic features from content studied on a physical or political map.


Teaching:
1. Discuss the animated map and how some states have clear geographic features that determine their boundaries while others are determined by their absolute location.
2. Introduce the Mason and Dixon Line to students and show the keynote presentation describing the history of the boundary and how by the time of the Civil War it became the division between the slave and free states.

Independent practice/extension activity: Have students use atlases to examine the state they are currently researching and determine its geographical boundaries. Some may need access to internet to determine how their state’s boundaries were decided.