

**Lesson 9.3**

**TAKE A STANCE: A PHYSICAL SPECTRUM**

**Objective:** Students will judge the accuracy of selected stereotypes about Maine and Mainers by placing themselves physically on a classroom-wide spectrum.

**Materials:**

- **Sheet 9.3:** Take a Stance: Myths of Maine (Optional)
- Blackboard
- Cleared space in the classroom
- Handwritten signs reading "True" and "False"

**Timing:** One class period

**Background Reading:** Chapter Nine: Myths of Maine

**Preparation:**

Before class, make two signs in large lettering reading "True" and "False." Hang these up on opposite sides of the classroom. Clear the space in between the signs to allow students to spread out along the spectrum.

**Procedure:**

1. Review Chapter Nine with students. Make sure they understand how the word "myth" is used in the chapter (i.e., not as an ancient folktale, but as a synonym for misconception). Ask them to name the four myths mentioned in the chapter. List them on the board.

1. Maine is the nation's playground
2. Maine is a cultural wilderness
3. Maine is an isolated and backwater state
4. Mainers are old-fashioned, simple people

2. Tell students they will have a chance to decide for themselves how true these myths about Maine were at the time. For each myth, ask students the following questions:

- Where might this myth have come from? Why might people have believed this about Maine?
- What evidence is there to support it?
- What evidence is there to contradict it?
- How true is this myth about Maine at the turn of the century?

3. For the last two questions, ask students to place themselves somewhere along the physical spectrum, according to what they believe about the myth. If they believe it was more true than false, they should stand closer to the sign reading "True." If they believe it

was more false than true, they should stand closer to the sign reading "False." Ask several students to explain their stance. Repeat the process for each myth.

4. This exercise serves as a good review for the chapter. An alternative, though less fun way to do this exercise is on paper. See Take A Stance: Myths of Maine student worksheet (Sheet 9.3).

**Follow up Activities:**

- Portfolio option: Have students write an essay discussing why they took a particular stance on one of the myths. They should support their opinion with factual evidence from the chapter.
- Have students propose myths or stereotypes that people believe about Maine and/or Mainers today. Make a classroom list. Do a physical spectrum for these present-day myths, asking students the same questions as in this lesson.
- Discuss how Maine is portrayed in the media. According to the movies and TV shows featuring Mainers, what are the stereotypes that others seem to hold about Mainers?

**Alignment with the Learning Results:**

Grade Level: **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

Content Area: Social Studies: **HISTORY**

Standard: **Historical Knowledge, Concepts, Themes, and Patterns**

Students understand major eras, major enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.

Descriptor **E1b**: Analyze and critique major historical eras, major enduring themes, turning points, events, consequences, and people in the history of the United States and world and the implications for the present and the future.

