



Primary Source Activity: Exploring a Country Through Its Flags and Maps

Type of Teacher Tool: Whole Class, Small Group, or Individual/Differentiation

Targeted Grade Level(s): This activity could be modified as needed for students in grades 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12

Targeted Curriculum Areas: Social Studies

Learning Objectives:

The learner will:

1. interpret two types of primary sources—flags and maps.
2. use maps to hypothesize about a particular place and to learn information about a particular place.
3. interpret a map's scale and featured information.
4. think critically and creatively and check his/her thinking against facts later learned.

Featured National Standards:

The following standards from the National Council for the Social Studies are referenced:

1. Learning Expectation 3.1.2: Concepts such as location, direction, distance, and scale
2. Learning Expectation 3.1.9: Tools such as maps, globes, and geospatial technologies in investigating the relationships among people, places, and environments.
3. Learning Expectation 3.2.3: Gather and interpret information from various representations of Earth, such as maps, globes, geospatial technologies and other geographic tools to inform the study of people, places, and environments, both past and present.

The following standards from the Common Core State Standards are referenced:

1. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1](#)
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
2. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](#)
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Additional State and National Standards related to the content of our videos listed below for this lesson are also provided on the Educate.Today page where you find the video.

Resources/Materials Needed:

1. This activity can be used with any one or combination of the following Educate.Today videos: Sample Video-116, Geography-10, Geography-12, Geography-13, Geography-14, Geography-15, Geography-16, Geography-18, Geography-19.

2. A slightly revised version of the activity (included later in this document) can be used with Geography-17.
3. The student worksheet reference in the activity is provided at the end of this document and also in a separate document on the same Educate.Today web page where you found this Teacher Tool.
4. Outside research sources such as the Internet or other books of your own that have information related to the countries and topics included in this activity.

Teacher Instructions:

1. Overview Information for the Activity:
 - a. This activity is designed to have students practice their skills in reading a map and to think critically and creatively about a country and its people as they interpret and hypothesize about what they are learning from two types of primary sources—flags and maps. It is also designed to give students the opportunity to compare that thinking to facts learned about the country from additional research they conduct.
 - b. You may choose to do this activity with the entire class at once, break the class into small groups each using the same or a different video, or by having students complete the activity independently using one or more of the videos you assign them to view.
 - c. The video deliberately has no audio included so it is just the images that students respond to.
 - d. Each image is left on the screen for multiple seconds so you or the student can pause it at any time as they complete the activity.
 - e. Students are to complete the sections of the worksheet in the order provided so their work flows in the same order as the three images they will see in each video. That order is:
 1. flag of the country
 2. a map showing the location of the country without any additional features
 3. a map showing political and geographic features of the country.
 - f. Instruct students to NOT view the video in its entirety at first. Rather, they should just look at the flag image to answer Section 1 of the worksheet, the location map to answer Section 2, and the political/geographic map to answer Section 3.
2. Procedures for the Activity:
 - a. Decide if you wish to do the activity with the entire class, with the class in small groups, or as an individual assignment.
 - b. Determine which video(s) students will view.
 - c. Have students view the videos chosen pausing as needed on each of the three images and making sure that students do not view the entire video at first. Viewing the entire video at first will affect how students are able to compare what they are hypothesizing about the country in Sections 1 and 2, and the first three questions of Section 3 of the worksheet to what they are learning about the country as they complete the rest of Section 3 and Section 4 of the worksheet.

- d. After students have completed Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the worksheet, they should do additional research on their own to answer the questions in Section 4 and then also complete their reflection in Section 5.
- e. Once students have completed the entire worksheet, have them either turn it in for evaluation or engage in a class discussion prior to turning in their worksheets. Class discussion could focus on examples students offer from Sections 3 and 4 of the worksheet to check for student understanding on:
 1. how to read maps
 2. the potential limitations of maps
 3. features needed to create a clear and accurate map

Note: One of the reasons that student answers may have been inaccurate when they only looked at the maps is because of what is not included in the maps themselves. The maps do not contain a legend and show the country in only its own particular region. As a result, students may have lacked information they needed or did not know how to reference information (such as hemisphere location and time zone placement). Discuss this with the class and have them offer their thoughts on the importance of a map including a legend and of using their own prior knowledge of the geography of the world to overcome the lack of worldwide reference information in the maps. How might this experience affect how they would create a map of a particular place?

Extension Activity Options:

1. Building off what students have learned about the country, have them create their own map of that country including:
 - a. the capital and other cities
 - b. three to five important geographic features
 - c. bordering countries or bodies of water
 - d. a scale
 - e. a legend
2. Building off what students have learned about maps and features they should include, have them create their own map of a particular location both you and they are familiar with. Examples could be your classroom, the school building, the neighborhood the school is located in, your town, a park or other specific area of your town. Evaluate the map on:
 - a. clarity and accuracy of the features the student has chosen to highlight
 - b. clarity and accuracy of borders
 - c. clarity and accuracy of a scale
 - d. clarity and effectiveness of a legend

Assessment/Evaluation Options:

1. Evaluate the accuracy of student answers on the worksheet where appropriate.
2. Evaluate the student's ability to read/interpret a map based on answers provided on the worksheet
3. Read the student reflection to gauge student understanding of the uses and needed features of maps
4. Use class discussion to evaluate student understanding of the uses and needed features of maps
5. Evaluate student research skills based on answers provided on the worksheet.

Modification for Geography-17 Video:

The video entitled “Geography-17 Flag and Location of Russia” includes only the images of the Russian flag and the first map showing the location of the country. It DOES NOT include the third map showing political and geographic features. As a result, the activity could be modified in the following way:

1. Have students complete Sections 1 and 2 of the worksheet then have them begin their research on the country to find a map that shows political and geographic features and learn more about the country’s flag so they could then answer the questions in Sections 3 and 4.
2. Have students provide you a copy of the map they used to answer the rest of the worksheet. This could be provided through the URL where it is located or through a printed copy or through a copy of the atlas or book in which they found it.
3. Proceed through the rest of the activity as planned modifying class discussion as needed to include their own research regarding the political and geographic map of the country.

Primary Source Activity: Exploring a Country Through Its Flags and Maps Student Worksheet

Student Name:

Section 1: Thinking About the Country's Flag

1. What do you notice about the flag? Describe it in 20 words or less. You do not have to use complete sentences. Do you know the country this flag represents? If so, include that information in your answer.
2. Why do you think the country might have chosen the colors it did for its flag? What could those colors represent?
3. Is there a symbol on the flag? What do you think it is? What could it represent? Why do you think the country chose to put it on their flag?

Section 2: Thinking About the Country's Location in the World

1. In the first map you see a country highlighted on a continent. What is the country highlighted? What is the continent where you would find that country?
2. Based on your decisions in question #1, what does the location of the country tell you about the following:
 - a. The hemispheres it is in (Northern or Southern, Eastern or Western)
 - b. The temperatures it might experience in the summer
 - c. The temperatures it might experience in the winter

- d. If it's Noon on Tuesday where you are, are the people of this country also experiencing Tuesday as you complete this worksheet or are they enjoying Monday or Wednesday?
3. As you look at the map, what do you notice about the country in regard to:
 - a. It's size compared to other countries near it
 - b. It's boundaries

Section 3: Thinking About the Country Geography and Population

1. After looking at the map, what do you think is the biggest city in the country? What, based on the map, makes you think it is the biggest city?
2. After looking at the map, what do you think is the capital of the country? What, based on the map, makes you think it is the capital?
3. Which of the following geographic features do you see on the map? If you do not see the feature on the map then write "not on the map" as your answer.
 - a. A river (name it)
 - b. A mountain range (name it)
 - c. A geographic region (name it)
4. By looking at this map, what new information do you learn about its location and how does that affect your answers in #2 in Section 2
 - a. 1st piece of new information
 - b. 2nd piece of new information
 - c. 3rd piece of new information

- d. In regard to the following questions in Section 2 of this worksheet:
1. Is your answer to question 1 still the same? If different, what is it now?
 2. Is your answer to question 2a still the same? If different, what is it now?
 3. Is your answer to question 2b still the same? If different, what is it now?
 4. Is your answer to question 2c still the same? If different, what is it now?
 5. Is your answer to question 2d still the same? If different, what is it now?
5. Does the map you are using for this section of the worksheet have a scale? If so, what is that scale?

Section 4: Comparing Your Thinking About the Country to Facts About the Country

Now that you have completed the first three sections of the worksheet, do some quick research on the country's flag and on the country itself and compare your answers to questions 2 and 3 in Section 1 and your answers to questions 1, 2, and 4d in Section 3 to what you learn from your research. Based on your research, what are your answers to the following questions now:

1. What do the flag's colors represent?
2. If there is a symbol on the flag, what does it represent?
3. What is the biggest city in the country?
4. What is the capital of the country?
5. What hemispheres is the country in?

6. What temperatures would the country's people experience in the summer?
7. What temperatures would the country's people experience in the winter?
8. If it's Noon on Tuesday where you are, are the people of this country also experiencing Tuesday as you complete this worksheet or are they enjoying Monday or Wednesday?
9. Questions 3 through 8 in this section are based on the two maps you originally viewed in the video. Did any of your answers to those questions change after you conducted your additional research? If so, write below what answers changed.
10. Pick one of your answers to question 9 (if any of your answers had changed) and explain why you think the map led you to offer an incorrect answer. Was it something about the map itself? Was the map unclear in some way or inaccurate in some way? Did the map leave out information you needed? Or did you interpret the information on the map incorrectly? If so, what do you think caused you to do that?

Section 5: Reflection

What has this activity taught you about the uses for, and limitations of, maps in obtaining information about a particular place? If you were to create a map of a particular place, what would you want to do to make sure your map is as accurate as possible and easy to interpret as possible?