

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 20 MINS

Describing Europe the Continent

Students apply the language of location to places on a map of Europe.

GRADES

K, 1, 2

SUBJECTS

English Language Arts, Geography

CONTENTS

1 Link

OVERVIEW

Students apply the language of location to places on a map of Europe.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/describing-europe-the-continent/>

Program



DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the materials.

Before starting this activity, assemble the Europe Mega Map. Then prepare cut-outs of countries by printing out specific pieces of the Europe Mega Map and pasting them together. Use colored paper for the cut-outs so that the country shapes stand out on the Mega Map. Suggested countries and their corresponding Mega Map pieces:

- Italy: 75-76, 89-91, 104-105
- France: 59-61, 73-75
- Spain: 71-74, 85-88
- Lithuania: 50

2. Help students describe where they live and see its relation to Europe.

Ask students to talk about where they live. Point to the globe. Ask a student to point to where they think home is. Using a globe or wall map of the world, help students repeat after you the places where they live starting with the town or city, then the country, and then the continent. Together, name and point to the seven continents. Point out the oceans. Help students to see the relationship between the globe or world map and where they live on Earth. Help them to also see the relationship between the continent where they live and Europe the continent.

3. Introduce the map of Europe using language to describe its location.

Refer to the Europe Mega Map. Tell students they will be taking a very large look at one continent: Europe. Ask: *Where is Europe? What lies between Europe and our own continent?* (Possible answers: Atlantic Ocean, Arctic Ocean) On the Mega Map, point to parts of two other continents that are near Europe: Asia and Africa. Point out that Asia is next to or near Europe. Point to Africa, which is next to or near Europe. Ask: *Which continent is between Asia and Africa?* (Europe) Have students repeat after you to practice geographic language:

- *Next to*—Africa is next to Europe. Asia is next to Europe.
- *Near*—Africa is near Europe. Asia is near Europe.
- *Between*—Europe is between Asia and Africa.
- *Far From*—The Atlantic Ocean is far from Asia.

4. Have students describe the relationship between continents, countries, and cities of Europe.

Using the country cut-outs, explain that countries are inside of the continent of Europe. Show students the prepared country cut-outs, and help students place them on the map, as if they are pieces of a puzzle. Trace the border of one of the countries with a finger. Then have students go to the map one at a time and trace a country with their own finger. To reinforce that countries are inside of continents, have students repeat after you: “ ____ is inside of

Europe.” If students ask questions about the island countries that are “inside of” Europe, such as Ireland and the United Kingdom, trace on the map where the continents stretch around the island countries.

Modification

Complete this activity with a map of another continent. Find Mega Maps of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Australia & Oceania via the [Nat Geo MapMaker Kits program page](#). You will need to create new examples to use for your country cut-outs and location phrases.

Modification

For advanced students, introduce the compass rose, and use it to mark the top and sides of the Mega Map with the cardinal directions north, south, east, and west. Have students practice using the cardinal directions to describe locations of continents and countries; for example, “Norway is north of Germany.”

Informal Assessment

Have students in small groups practice saying their “Earth address”: their city/town, state, country, continent, and planet Earth. Have them point to places on the map as they recite their address. Then ask them to point to Europe the continent, and then name one country in Europe.

Extending the Learning

Have students practice comparing country size using “larger than” and “smaller than,” remembering that country size is measured both in population and land size. To be clear, make sure students understand that in this activity they are focusing on whether a country has more land or less land than another country.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

- English Language Arts
Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- locate their city or town, state, country, and continent on a globe or wall map of the world
- locate the seven continents and the oceans on a globe or wall map of the world
- describe locations of cities, countries, and continents on the Europe Mega Map using geographic language
- describe the relationship between continents, countries, and cities of Europe

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Themes
 - Global Awareness
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - Acquiring Geographic Information
 - Analyzing Geographic Information

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

IRA/NCTE STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- **Standard 4:**

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- **Standard 1:**

How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Colored paper
- Globe
- Glue
- Scissors
- Transparent tape
- Wall map of the world

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Optional
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

OTHER NOTES

If you choose to do this activity with a map of another continent, you will need to create new examples to use for your country cut-outs and location phrases. Mega Maps of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Australia & Oceania are available from the [Nat Geo MapMaker Kits program page](#).

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Learning how to apply language and spatial skills to map reading is important in the younger grades. Students can also gain experience with mapping fundamentals such as map keys or legends, symbols, borders, continents, countries, and cities, which can be applied to a variety of maps they will encounter.

Prior Knowledge

Recommended Prior Activities

- [Exploring Maps and Models of Earth](#)
- [Using the Language of Location](#)

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
city	noun	large settlement with a high population density.
continent	noun	one of the seven main land masses on Earth.
country	noun	geographic territory with a distinct name, flag, population, boundaries, and government.
map	noun	symbolic representation of selected characteristics of a place, usually drawn on a flat surface.
town	noun	human settlement larger than a village and smaller than a city.

