

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

Introduction to Europe's Languages & Religions

Students discuss their ideas about what makes a group, which groups might cause conflict when combined in the same country or area, and what religions and languages are present in Europe.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

English Language Arts, Geography, Human Geography

CONTENTS

2 PDFs

OVERVIEW

Students discuss their ideas about what makes a group, which groups might cause conflict when combined in the same country or area, and what religions and languages are present in Europe.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/introduction-to-languages-and-religions-of-europe/>

DIRECTIONS

1. Brainstorm what makes a group.

Ask: *What is a group?* Have a whole-class discussion about what makes a group. Ask: *What can groups be based on?* Write students' ideas on the board. Encourage students to include criteria such as religious affiliation, language, race, and nationality, and to think of different

ways people might describe themselves.

2. Have pairs or small groups identify groups, at different scales, that they know.

Divide students into pairs or small groups and distribute a copy of the Five-Column Chart to each group. Draw a five-column chart on the board and model labeling the chart with the following headings: School, City, State, Country, and Continent. Have each pair or small group label their charts and list as many groups in each category as possible. Provide support, as needed.

3. Have a whole-class discussion about the groups students identified.

Have each pair or group share their list with the class. Compile a class list on the board in the five-column chart you drew. Allow students to share their ideas without correction. Then ask: *Which of the groups might need to have their own region to live in? Which groups do you think can or should be mixed together?* Tell students that in the next few lessons of this unit, they will explore the human geography of Europe, including different language and religious groups and where those groups are found in different parts of Europe.

4. Have students list what they already know about languages and religions in Europe.

Ask students to look back at the notes about Europe the class took in Lesson 2: Gathering Ideas About Europe. Have students review their initial ideas about language and religion in Europe. Distribute a copy of the worksheet Cultural Overview of Europe to each student. Have students record their ideas about language and religion in item 1 on the worksheet. Tell students they will revisit the list from Lesson 2 again later in this unit, when they will make changes to the list based on what they learn.

5. Have students read a passage and answer questions.

Have pairs of students read the passage on the worksheet. Then have students independently complete items 2-3 with their ideas about languages and religions in Europe. Invite volunteers to share their ideas and create a class list. Ask: *What questions do you still have about European languages and religions? What might be some good sources of information about languages and religions in Europe?*

Tip

Make sure students understand that this activity is intended to allow them to share their ideas, not to learn correct answers. Students will return to these ideas later to make additions and corrections.

Informal Assessment

Have each student write a reflective journal entry that addresses the following questions:

- What did you used to think about Europe's languages and religions before this activity?
- What have you learned that changed that thinking?
- What issues related to Europe's languages and religions interest you? What would you like to learn more about?
- What are you still unsure of?

Extending the Learning

- Have students make a personal connection by brainstorming a cultural overview of your region. Ask them to include cultural differences, such as languages and religions, of people in your region. Ask students how the movement of people impacted what languages and religions are found in your region.
- Encourage students to use current events to research and report on ways people of differing languages and religions cooperate, learn to coexist peacefully, and/or assimilate.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

- English Language Arts
- **Geography**
 - Human Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- explain what makes a group and which groups might cause conflict when combined in the same country or area
- articulate their initial ideas and expectations about what religions and languages are present in Europe

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Cooperative learning
- Discussions
- Reading

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Learning and Innovation Skills
 - Communication and Collaboration
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Remembering
 - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - Asking Geographic Questions

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

IRA/NCTE STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- **Standard 9:**

Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- **Theme 1:**

Culture

- **Theme 5:**

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- **Standard 10:**

The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics

- **Standard 13:**

How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Lesson 2, Activity 2 list of ideas about Europe
- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

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

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction
- Small-group instruction

OTHER NOTES

Students will need to pull their notes from Lesson 2, Activity 2 out of their portfolios to complete the worksheet in this activity.

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Some groups cause conflict when combined in the same country or area. You can look at languages and religions in Europe to see how cultural differences have divided Europeans. Europeans speak a variety of languages. They worship in many different churches, mosques, and temples. They have diverse language backgrounds. For centuries, Europeans' cultural differences contributed to a war-torn landscape. Armies battled over which church would minister to the people or which group would control a territory. In the 20th Century, millions died in World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945). Both wars began in Europe. They were fueled in part by these cultural divisions. Today, language and religion still divide Europeans. However, they are also united in organizations such as the European Union, Council of Europe, and United Nations. These organizations resolve problems through negotiation and cooperation.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

| Term | Part of Speech | Definition |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| city | <i>noun</i> | large settlement with a high population density. |
| continent | <i>noun</i> | one of the seven main land masses on Earth. |
| Council of Europe | <i>noun</i> | international organization based in Strasbourg, Germany, established "to promote democracy and protect human rights and the rule of law in Europe." |
| country | <i>noun</i> | geographic territory with a distinct name, flag, population, boundaries, and government. |
| culture | <i>noun</i> | learned behavior of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods. |
| European Union | <i>noun</i> | association of European nations promoting free trade, ease of transportation, and cultural and political links. |
| language | <i>noun</i> | set of sounds, gestures, or symbols that allows people to communicate. |
| region | <i>noun</i> | any area on Earth with one or more common characteristics. Regions are the basic units of geography. |
| religion | <i>noun</i> | a system of spiritual or supernatural belief. |
| state | <i>noun</i> | nation or national government. |
| territory | <i>noun</i> | land an animal, human, or government protects from intruders. |
| United Nations | <i>noun</i> | international organization that works for peace, security and cooperation. |

For Further Exploration

Articles & Profiles

- [National Geographic Education: Europe—Human Geography](#)

Maps

- [NG MapMaker 1-Page Map: Europe](#)
- [National Geographic Education: Europe MapMaker Kit](#)
- [NG MapMaker Interactive: Europe](#)

Websites

- [National Geographic Education: National Teacher Leadership Academy \(NTLA\)](#)



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