NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 50 MINS

Present Research on Physical Geography

Students use the jigsaw cooperative learning strategy to discuss and present research on four case studies of conflicts due to physical geography in Europe. Then they make generalizations about physical features and country borders in a whole-class discussion.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

Geography, Physical Geography

OVERVIEW

Students use the jigsaw cooperative learning strategy to discuss and present research on four case studies of conflicts due to physical geography in Europe. Then they make generalizations about physical features and country borders in a whole-class discussion.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:
http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/present-research-on-physical-geography/

DIRECTIONS

1. Have students use the jigsaw cooperative learning strategy to discuss their case studies.

Have students regroup in their small groups from Lesson 5, Activity 2 and make sure they have their completed worksheets from that activity. Remind students they are in their "expert" groups. They have studied one case study in depth. Regroup students so that each new group of four has at least one member from each expert group. Have each expert in a group report on their case study. Other students learn from the experts and complete their worksheets.

2. Have groups present their findings.

Have each group present their case study to the class by reading aloud the scenario and explaining the answers they arrived at while conducting their research.

3. Make generalizations about the impacts of physical features on country borders.

Hold a class discussion about physical features and their impact on country borders using the questions below as prompts. Encourage students to cite their research projects or other specific examples to support their answers.

- *How are mountain ranges important in defining borders? How would the answer be similar or different for rivers?*
- *When a country borders an ocean, how might that impact the borders of that country? Consider uses of oceans, and also changes in the oceans over time in your answer.*
- *How are our relationships with physical features changing with increased technology? Are mountains, rivers, and oceans important barriers to movement, trade, and culture anymore? How is this different from 100 or 1,000 years ago?*

Modification

The case studies can be presented orally or in writing.

Informal Assessment

Check for student understanding by observing their presentations and jigsaw and whole-class discussion contributions. Evaluate how well students are able to integrate small-group research findings into the whole-class discussion.

Extending the Learning

Have students research additional physical features in their own region or state and present their findings. Provide students with the following questions to research: What physical features are important in your area? How do physical features impact state, city, and other borders? Have there ever been conflicts around those borders?

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- Physical Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- develop generalizations about physical features and their impacts on country borders

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Cooperative learning
- Discussions
- Jigsaw

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
  - Learning and Innovation Skills
    - Communication and Collaboration
- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Analyzing
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information

- Analyzing Geographic Information
- Answering Geographic Questions

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

• **Theme 3:**
People, Places, and Environments
• **Theme 8:**
Science, Technology, and Society

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

• **Standard 1:**
How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information
• **Standard 13:**
How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface
• **Standard 14:**
How human actions modify the physical environment
• **Standard 16:**
The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources
• **Standard 17:**
How to apply geography to interpret the past

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Lesson 5, Activity 2 completed worksheets
- Pencils
- Pens

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction
- Small-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Countries with ocean or sea borders have some control over a limited area extending into the ocean from their coastal borders. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was signed on December 10, 1982. According to it, every coastal country can establish an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) extending 370 kilometers (200 nautical miles) from shore. Within the EEZ, a coastal country has exclusive rights to the oil, gas, and other natural resources in the seabed up to 200 nautical miles from shore. Oil was discovered in the North Sea in the 1960s. Oil is one of the most valuable resources taken from the ocean today. The claim had to be divided among the many countries that border the North Sea—the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Norway.

A peninsula is a piece of land jutting out into a lake or into the ocean. Because they are surrounded on three sides by water, peninsulas usually have long coastlines. "Peninsula" comes from two Latin words, which together mean "almost an island." The Scandinavian Peninsula in northern Europe is one physical feature where there are three countries: Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

A strait is a narrow passage of water that connects two larger bodies of water. One of the best known is the Strait of Gibraltar, which links the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Historically, straits have had great strategic importance. Whoever controls a strait is likely to control the sea routes of an entire region. The countries controlling the Strait of Gibraltar control the flow of traffic into an out of the Mediterranean Sea.

The edge of land that borders the ocean along a continent or an island is called the coast, or seacoast. Most people think of coasts as fixed, enduring boundaries that mark the land's end. Yet all coasts are constantly changing in an endless battle with the ocean. In some areas of Europe, countries struggle with their water borders. They have had to erect barriers against the ocean to prevent coastal flooding caused by high winds and tides or by seismic sea waves called tsunami. For 800 years, the Netherlands has been successfully fighting against the North Sea to keep its coastline. Sixty-five percent of the Netherlands would be underwater today if it were not for the dikes constructed by humans.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
border	*noun*	natural or artificial line separating two pieces of land.
country	*noun*	geographic territory with a distinct name, flag, population, boundaries, and government.
culture	*noun*	learned behavior of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods.
mountain range	*noun*	series or chain of mountains that are close together.
ocean	*noun*	large body of salt water that covers most of the Earth.
physical features	*noun*	naturally occurring geographic characteristics.
river	*noun*	large stream of flowing fresh water.
trade	*noun*	buying, selling, or exchanging of goods and services.

For Further Exploration

Articles & Profiles

- National Geographic Education: Europe—Physical Geography
- National Geographic Education: Europe—Resources

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)