

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 1 HR

Research Examples of Human Geography and Borders

Students explore how language, culture, and religious differences affect country borders in Europe. They conduct research on the Roma, the Basques, Moldova, and Cyprus.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

English Language Arts, Geography, Human Geography, Social Studies, World History

CONTENTS

3 PDFs, 6 Links

OVERVIEW

Students explore how language, culture, and religious differences affect country borders in Europe. They conduct research on the Roma, the Basques, Moldova, and Cyprus.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/research-examples-of-human-geography-and-borders/>

DIRECTIONS

1. Have a whole-class discussion about cultural conflicts.

Remind students that Lesson 7 focused on the United Kingdom and Ireland and their history of conflict because of religion and language. Lead a whole-class discussion about cultural features—such as ethnicity and traditions—that can cause conflict among different groups. Ask: *What cultural features do you think are most likely to cause conflict? Why?* If students

struggle to identify relevant cultural features, write a list of cultural features that might cause conflict, such as religious views, marriage and family traditions, language differences, types of work, and education.

2. Introduce the case studies.

Tell students that they will work in small groups to research specific examples of human geography and borders in Europe. Distribute copies of the worksheet Human Geography Research Project to each student. Read aloud the four examples. Use the glossary in the Background & Vocabulary tab of this activity to provide vocabulary support, as needed. Allow students to ask questions about the examples or the task before breaking into small groups.

3. Have small groups conduct research.

Divide students into small groups of four. Assign each group one of the four examples from the worksheet to research, using the provided websites. Give groups maps according to the examples they are assigned:

- Example 1: The Roma—MapMaker 1-page Map: Europe
- Example 2: The Basques—MapMaker 1-Page Map: Europe
- Example 3: Moldova—MapMaker 1-page Map: Moldova
- Example 4: Cyprus—MapMaker 1-page Map: Cyprus

For those students who are assigned Examples 1 or 2, provide copies of the MapMaker 1-page map of Europe and ask students to create their own locator maps showing where these populations are located. Tell all students they will become experts on their assigned case study, and will need to be prepared to share their expertise with classmates in Lesson 8, Activity 2 of this unit. Give students a time frame to answer the questions from their case study. Have them turn in their completed worksheets, or publish them in the classroom so students can see or read their classmates' work.

Modification

If you have limited computers and/or computer availability: Instead of having students research their own project, select one example for the class to explore in depth. Or, select two examples to research as a class and create a chart comparing and contrasting them.

Informal Assessment

Assess students' assigned sections in the worksheet.

Extending the Learning

Encourage students to find and research a new example that is not listed on the worksheet. You can extend the activity beyond Europe in order to address current events or other topics you are teaching.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

- English Language Arts
 - Geography**
 - [Human Geography](#)
 - Social Studies**
 - World History

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- research an example of a cultural feature that has impacted a country border

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Cooperative learning
- Discussions
- Research

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- 21st Century Student Outcomes
 - Information, Media, and Technology Skills
 - Information, Communications, and Technology Literacy
 - Learning and Innovation Skills
 - Communication and Collaboration
- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Analyzing
 - Remembering
 - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
 - Acquiring Geographic Information
 - Analyzing Geographic Information

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- Theme 1:

Culture

- Theme 5:

Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 1:

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

- 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

- Standard 4:

The physical and human characteristics of places

ISTE STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS (ISTE STANDARDS*S)

- **Standard 2:**

Communication and Collaboration

- **Standard 3:**

Research and Information Fluency

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Pencils
- Pens

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per small group, Projector

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction
- Small-group instruction

OTHER NOTES

This can be a short research project, or it can be more involved and cover several days.

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

The Roma are a traditionally nomadic ethnic group who originated in northern India. The total global population of Roma is estimated between two to five million. They have held a presence in Europe for an estimated 1,000 years. Today, most Roma continue to live principally in Europe, particularly in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania.

The Basque ethnic group of southern Europe straddles both Spain and France in an area known as Basque Country. This region borders the Bay of Biscay and is located near the western end of the Pyrenees Mountains. Although their origins are unknown, Basques are characterized by their shared language and culture. The Basques are distinct from most European groups because the Basque language is not Indo-European.

Moldova is a country located in the northeastern corner of the Balkan region of Europe. It is bounded by Ukraine to the north, east, and south and by Romania to the west. The former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) combined many unique cultures under one governing system. Once the country was set up, Russians moved to every area of the U.S.S.R., which created tensions between Russians and other ethnic groups when independence was achieved. Moldova became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991, and a member of the United Nations in 1992.

The island of Cyprus is located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, south of Turkey, west of Syria, and southeast of mainland Greece. Cyprus has a long history with both Turkey and Greece. In 1960, Cyprus gained its independence from Britain, and there has been a struggle between the Turkish and Greek peoples that has lasted to the present day. Although Cyprus was recently admitted to the European Union (EU), the political division of the island prevents northern Cyprus from receiving the same level of EU benefits as the rest of the island.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
autonomy	<i>noun</i>	independence.
border	<i>noun</i>	natural or artificial line separating two pieces of land.
conflict	<i>noun</i>	a disagreement or fight, usually over ideas or procedures.
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.
ethnicity	<i>noun</i>	identity in a group sharing genetic characteristics, culture, language, religion, or history.
European Union	<i>noun</i>	association of European nations promoting free trade, ease of transportation, and cultural and political links.
human migration	<i>noun</i>	the movement of people from one place to another.
language	<i>noun</i>	set of sounds, gestures, or symbols that allows people to communicate.
nomad	<i>noun</i>	person who moves from place to place, without a fixed home.
population	<i>noun</i>	total number of people or organisms in a particular area.
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.

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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