

SIMON SAYS ... EXPLORE

RECOMMENDED GRADES: K-8



TIME NEEDED: 15 MINUTES OR MORE

(activity is flexible as to grade level, size of group, and amount of time)

Description

Students play this popular and fun game while exploring Africa.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- explore both the physical and human geography of Africa
- utilize movement and knowledge of cardinal directions to locate and identify major physical and political features in Africa

Materials

- Lanyards (40 total, 10 of each color: red, blue, yellow and green) (optional)
- Hourglass timer (optional)

Preparation

5 minutes

- Review the “Simon Says” statements for your group size and familiarize yourself with the statements, including locating the solutions to any Simon Says commands that are unfamiliar.

Tips/Modifications

Tip

- This activity can also be used as a pre-assessment or post-assessment tool.

Modification

- This activity can be tailored to grade level, group size, and amount of time. “Simon Says” commands for large groups and small groups are provided.

Rules



Have students remove shoes before walking on the map.

DIRECTIONS

- Depending on experience and prior knowledge students may need a general introduction or tour of the Africa map. This teacher-led activity can serve as an introduction or review of some of the major physical and political features that the game will require students to visit during the game. Walk over the map and show (or have selected students locate and stand on) the following:

Political boundaries
Capital cities
Nile River
Congo Basin
Gabon
South Africa

Coast
Sahara
Okavango Delta
Lake Victoria
Kenya
Madagascar

Cardinal directions
Kalahari Desert
Atlas Mountains
Atlantic and Indian Oceans
Namibia
Egypt

Note the colors on the map that represent countries, elevation (or relief), and water. Have students face north on the map and then turn and face each of the other three cardinal directions (south, east, west) before starting the first game.

- Divide the class into four teams—red, blue, yellow, and green—and instruct each team to gather behind their “Base Camp” (the colored circles in the corners of the map). Make the teams as even as possible. Give each student a lanyard corresponding to the color of his or her team.
- Review the rules of “Simon Says” with students. No running is allowed. Students who run, touch, or impede other students will be “out.” Remind students if they move toward a location that did not begin with the direction “Simon Says,” or they choose an incorrect place, they will be “out.” When a student is out, he or she will walk off the map and sit on the border of the map near his or her team’s corner until the start of a new game. Use the hourglass timer (optional) to signal the end of each game. The team with the most team members still on the map will be declared the winner of that game. Assure students that each game will have a time limit of 5 to 10 minutes to keep “out time” to a minimum. (This time is governed by the timer.)
- Using “Simon Says” statements, direct students to visit various locations in Africa. If they move toward a location that did not begin with the direction “Simon Says,” or they choose an incorrect place, they will be out. When a student is out, he or she must walk off the map and sit on the border of the map near their team’s corner until the start of a new game.

Mix up the game and control traffic with qualifiers like these:

- Simon Says **everybody ...**
- Simon Says **red team ...**
- Simon Says **all girls ...**
- Simon Says **all boys ...**

Remember to mix in statements without saying “Simon Says” to catch students who are not paying close attention.

Feel free to create and use your own “Simon Says” statements.

- When the timer is up, the game is over. Have students gather at their “Base Camp” for the start of a new game. Repeat as many times as you’d like!

“SIMON SAYS” STATEMENTS FOR LARGE GROUPS

“Simon Says” statements for the start of the game or with larger numbers of students:

➤ Simon Says ...

- Dive into and swim in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Crawl and search for water in the Sahara.
- Stand on the Atlantic coast of the continent.
- Climb any mountain range. [Examples: Atlas Mountains, Drakensberg, Ethiopian Highlands, Muchinga Mountains, Saharan, Tibesti Mountains]
- Stand on a political boundary.
- Face east.
- Sit in a country that borders Chad. [Cameroon, Central African Republic, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan]
- Swing your trunk like an African elephant.
- “Walk like an Egyptian” as you walk to Egypt.
- Hop up and down on a capital city. [Examples: Cairo (Egypt), Dakar (Senegal), Tripoli (Libya)]
- Walk as tall as a giraffe to Kenya.
- Leap like a lemur to Madagascar.
- Swim to Cape Town, South Africa.
- Stand in a landlocked country. [Examples: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Lesotho, Mali, Niger, South Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and others]
- Fly your plane from the northernmost to southernmost points of Africa.
- Walk west to east across Africa.
- Stand in a country that starts with the letter A. [Algeria, Angola]
- Click your claws like a crab among the mangroves on the coast.
- Stand on one leg like a flamingo on the coast of South Africa.
- Form a circle around Madagascar.

“SIMON SAYS” STATEMENTS FOR SMALL GROUPS

“Simon Says” statements for the end of the game or with smaller numbers of students:

► Simon Says ...

- Yawn like a hippo in waters near Lake Victoria.
- Go to Gabon and pound your chest like a Western lowland gorilla.
- Face north in South Africa.
- Stand in a country that starts with the letter N. [Namibia, Niger, Nigeria]
- Tiptoe to Tanzania.
- Swim in the Nile River and snap like a Nile crocodile.
- Roar like a lion in the Kalahari Desert. [Look in: Botswana, Namibia]
- Put a toe on any tributary of the Nile River.
- Do your best chimpanzee impression in Cameroon.
- Lie down entirely within the political boundary of any country.
- Hiss like a Madagascar hissing cockroach in Madagascar.
- Stand on a river in Sudan.
- Stand with each foot in a different country.
- Lie down across at least four countries.
- Go to Ethiopia and face west.
- Stand atop a mountain at least 600 meters (2,000 feet) above sea level. [Examples: Ahaggar Mountains (Northern Niger), Air Massif (central Niger), Brandberg (Namibia), Kilimanjaro (Tanzania), Mount Kenya (Kenya), Muchinga Mountains (Zambia), Tibesti Mountains (Northern Chad), and others]
- Swim north along the eastern shore of the continent.
- Stretch your legs like a cheetah in Namibia.
- Stand in the largest country in Africa by area. [Algeria]
- Stand on a capital city on the coast. [Examples: Accra, Algiers, Banjul, Bissau, Cairo, Conakry, Dakar, Djibouti, Freetown, Libreville, Lomé, Luanda, Malabo, Maputo, Mogadishu, Monrovia, Moroni, Nourskchott, Porto-Novo, Rabat, São Tomé, Tripoli, Tunis, and others]

Copyright © 2017 National Geographic Society. All rights reserved.