

**RESOURCE LIBRARY**  
UNIT

## Beyond Borders

Use this unit to explore European physical and cultural landscapes with your middle school students. This series of teacher-tested lessons will have your students use maps to think about how borders intersect physical and human geographical features, and how those intersections can lead to cooperation and/or conflict.

**GRADES**

6 - 8

**SUBJECTS**

*Earth Science, English Language Arts, Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography, Social Studies, World History*

**CONTENTS**

10 Lesson plans

For the complete unit with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/unit/beyond-borders/>

## UNIT OVERVIEW

The overall theme of this teacher-tested unit is using maps to understand borders and their impacts in Europe. The materials will help your middle school students to use maps to think about how borders intersect physical and human geographical features, and how those intersections can lead to cooperation and/or conflict. The educator resources provided in the unit include maps, multimedia, and case studies that will enable students to develop skills in map analysis and apply that analysis to specific situations. Other parts of the unit will invite you and your students to explore similar cases in Europe and your own community.

This unit was originally developed for the [National Teacher Leadership Academy \(NTLA\) 2008 Summer Geography Institute](#).

## LESSON 1: POLITICAL BORDERS | 1 HR 40 MINS



Students think about regions and borders by determining where they would place borders in an artificial continent, based on a set of physical and cultural features of the area.

## LESSON 2: GATHERING IDEAS ABOUT EUROPE | 2 HRS 30 MINS



Students gather their ideas about the land and peoples of Europe. They map and create lists of things they know about Europe and generate questions they have about the land and peoples of Europe.

## LESSON 3: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF EUROPE | 1 HR 40 MINS



Students are introduced to the physical geography of Europe and delineate major drainage basins in Europe.

## LESSON 4: CONFLICT ON THE DANUBE | 2 HRS 50 MINS



Students examine a case study of how physical features can interact with country borders to cause conflict. In this case, two countries agreed to work together to build a series of dams on the Danube River, but problems kept the project from being completed, and the conflict continues over 40 years later.

## LESSON 5: MORE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AND BORDERS | 2 HRS 40 MINS



Students research four additional examples of physical geography and borders. They explore how mountains, oceans, and islands create physical barriers that affect the country borders in Europe.

## LESSON 6: LANGUAGES AND RELIGIONS OF EUROPE | 2 HRS 30 MINS



Students are introduced to the major language and religious groups of Europe. They explore how those groups align with and/or cross country borders.

## LESSON 7: LANGUAGES AND RELIGIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND | 2 HRS



Students explore how language and religion have affected the borders in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

## LESSON 8: MORE HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND BORDERS | 2 HRS



Students research four additional examples of human geography and borders. They explore how language, culture, and religious differences affect country borders in Europe.

## LESSON 9: EUROPEAN BORDERS THROUGH HISTORY | 1 HR 50 MINS



Students compare maps of European borders at three points in history: after World War I, after World War II, and the 2011 European Union (EU) countries. Students look for political borders that have changed and others that have remained the same, and compare those to what they know about cultural and physical geography in Europe and in their own state or local area.

## LESSON 10: LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD | 1 HR 20 MINS



Students reflect on changes in their own understanding of Europe by repeating some activities from the beginning of the unit, reviewing their previous questions and answers, and reflecting on what they have learned over the course of the unit.

# BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

## Vocabulary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Part of Speech</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>agriculture</b>	<i>noun</i>	the art and science of cultivating land for growing crops (farming) or raising livestock (ranching).
<b>autonomy</b>	<i>noun</i>	independence.
<b>biome</b>	<i>noun</i>	area of the planet which can be classified according to the plant and animal life in it.
<b>birthrate</b>	<i>noun</i>	the ratio of the total number of live births to the total population in a given time and area.
<b>border</b>	<i>noun</i>	natural or artificial line separating two pieces of land.
<b>boreal forest</b>	<i>noun</i>	land covered by evergreen trees in cool, northern latitudes. Also called taiga.
<b>canal</b>	<i>noun</i>	artificial waterway.
<b>capital</b>	<i>noun</i>	city where a region's government is located.
<b>city</b>	<i>noun</i>	large settlement with a high population density.
<b>climate</b>	<i>noun</i>	all weather conditions for a given location over a period of time.
<b>climate change</b>	<i>noun</i>	gradual changes in all the interconnected weather elements on our planet.
<b>coast</b>	<i>noun</i>	edge of land along the sea or other large body of water.
<b>colonization</b>	<i>noun</i>	spreading of a species into a new habitat or ecosystem, and establishing a healthy population there.
<b>compass rose</b>	<i>noun</i>	symbol indicating the cardinal directions (N, S, E, W).
<b>conflict</b>	<i>noun</i>	a disagreement or fight, usually over ideas or procedures.
<b>continent</b>	<i>noun</i>	one of the seven main land masses on Earth.
<b>Council of Europe</b>	<i>noun</i>	international organization based in Strasbourg, Germany, established "to promote democracy and protect human rights and the rule of law in Europe."
<b>country</b>	<i>noun</i>	geographic territory with a distinct name, flag, population, boundaries, and government.
<b>crop</b>	<i>noun</i>	agricultural produce.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Part of Speech</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>cultural landscape</b>	<i>noun</i>	human imprint on the physical environment.
<b>culture</b>	<i>noun</i>	learned behavior of people, including their languages, belief systems, social structures, institutions, and material goods.
<b>dam</b>	<i>noun</i>	structure built across a river or other waterway to control the flow of water.
<b>desert</b>	<i>noun</i>	area of land that receives no more than 25 centimeters (10 inches) of precipitation a year.
<b>dialect</b>	<i>noun</i>	distinct variation of a language, usually marked by accents and grammar.
<b>diversity</b>	<i>noun</i>	difference.
<b>downstream</b>	<i>noun</i>	in the direction of a flow, toward its end.
<b>drainage basin</b>	<i>noun</i>	an entire river system or an area drained by a river and its tributaries. Also called a watershed.
<b>economy</b>	<i>noun</i>	system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
<b>ecosystem</b>	<i>noun</i>	community and interactions of living and nonliving things in an area.
<b>environment</b>	<i>noun</i>	conditions that surround and influence an organism or community.
<b>ethnic</b>	<i>adjective</i>	having to do with characteristics of a group of people linked by shared culture, language, national origin, or other marker.
<b>ethnic group</b>	<i>adjective</i>	people sharing genetic characteristics, culture, language, religion or history.
<b>ethnicity</b>	<i>noun</i>	identity in a group sharing genetic characteristics, culture, language, religion, or history.
<b>Europe</b>	<i>noun</i>	sixth-largest continent and the western part of the Eurasian landmass, usually defined as stretching westward from the Ural mountains.
<b>European Union</b>	<i>noun</i>	association of European nations promoting free trade, ease of transportation, and cultural and political links.
<b>exclusive economic zone (EEZ)</b>	<i>noun</i>	zone extending 200 nautical miles off a country's coast. A country has the right to explore and exploit the living and nonliving things in its EEZ.
<b>exploit</b>	<i>verb</i>	to use or take advantage of for profit.
<b>fjord</b>	<i>noun</i>	long, narrow ocean inlet between steep slopes.
<b>flood</b>	<i>noun</i>	overflow of a body of water onto land.
<b>flood plain</b>	<i>noun</i>	flat area alongside a stream or river that is subject to flooding.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Part of Speech</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>fluent</b>	<i>adjective</i>	able to speak, write, and understand a language.
<b>forest</b>	<i>noun</i>	ecosystem filled with trees and underbrush.
<b>freshwater</b>	<i>noun</i>	water that is not salty.
<b>geography</b>	<i>noun</i>	study of places and the relationships between people and their environments.
<b>glacier</b>	<i>noun</i>	mass of ice that moves slowly over land.
<b>government</b>	<i>noun</i>	system or order of a nation, state, or other political unit.
<b>habitat</b>	<i>noun</i>	environment where an organism lives throughout the year or for shorter periods of time.
<b>highlands</b>	<i>plural noun</i>	plateau or elevated region of land.
<b>human migration</b>	<i>noun</i>	the movement of people from one place to another.
<b>hydroelectric power</b>	<i>noun</i>	usable energy generated by moving water converted to electricity.
<b>immigration</b>	<i>noun</i>	process of moving to a new country or region with the intention of staying and living there.
<b>island</b>	<i>noun</i>	body of land surrounded by water.
<b>landmass</b>	<i>noun</i>	large area of land.
<b>landscape</b>	<i>noun</i>	the geographic features of a region.
<b>language</b>	<i>noun</i>	set of sounds, gestures, or symbols that allows people to communicate.
<b>language family</b>	<i>noun</i>	group of languages descended from a common ancestral language.
<b>latitude</b>	<i>noun</i>	distance north or south of the Equator, measured in degrees.
<b>legend</b>	<i>noun</i>	explanation of symbols and abbreviations used on a map, also known as a key.
<b>location</b>	<i>noun</i>	position of a particular point on the surface of the Earth.
<b>longitude</b>	<i>noun</i>	distance east or west of the prime meridian, measured in degrees.
<b>lowland</b>	<i>noun</i>	slow-flowing river ecosystem usually found in lower altitudes.
<b>map</b>	<i>noun</i>	symbolic representation of selected characteristics of a place, usually drawn on a flat surface.
<b>mountain</b>	<i>noun</i>	landmass that forms as tectonic plates interact with each other.
<b>mountain range</b>	<i>noun</i>	series or chain of mountains that are close together.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Part of Speech</b>	<b>Definition</b>
nation	<i>noun</i>	political unit made of people who share a common territory.
natural resource	<i>noun</i>	a material that humans take from the natural environment to survive, to satisfy their needs, or to trade with others.
nomad	<i>noun</i>	person who moves from place to place, without a fixed home.
observation	<i>noun</i>	something that is learned from watching and measuring an object or pattern.
ocean	<i>noun</i>	large body of salt water that covers most of the Earth.
peninsula	<i>noun</i>	piece of land jutting into a body of water.
physical features	<i>noun</i>	naturally occurring geographic characteristics.
plain	<i>noun</i>	flat, smooth area at a low elevation.
political boundary	<i>noun</i>	imaginary line separating one political unit, such as a country or state, from another.
pollution	<i>noun</i>	introduction of harmful materials into the environment.
population	<i>noun</i>	total number of people or organisms in a particular area.
port	<i>noun</i>	place on a body of water where ships can tie up or dock and load and unload cargo.
precipitation	<i>noun</i>	all forms in which water falls to Earth from the atmosphere.
prime meridian	<i>noun</i>	imaginary line around the Earth running north-south, 0 degrees longitude.
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.
reservoir	<i>noun</i>	natural or man-made lake.
resource	<i>noun</i>	available supply of materials, goods, or services. Resources can be natural or human.
river	<i>noun</i>	large stream of flowing fresh water.
sea	<i>noun</i>	large part of the ocean enclosed or partly enclosed by land.
sea level	<i>noun</i>	base level for measuring elevations. Sea level is determined by measurements taken over a 19-year cycle.
sea level rise	<i>noun</i>	increase in the average reach of the ocean. The current sea level rise is 1.8 millimeters (.07 inch) per year.
silt	<i>noun</i>	small sediment particles.
state	<i>noun</i>	nation or national government.



<b>Term</b>	<b>Part of Speech</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>state</b>	<i>noun</i>	political unit in a nation, such as the United States, Mexico, or Australia.
<b>steppe</b>	<i>noun</i>	dry, flat grassland with no trees and a cool climate.
<b>sustainability</b>	<i>noun</i>	use of resources in such a manner that they will never be exhausted.
<b>territory</b>	<i>noun</i>	land an animal, human, or government protects from intruders.
<b>trade</b>	<i>noun</i>	buying, selling, or exchanging of goods and services.
<b>transportation</b>	<i>noun</i>	movement of people or goods from one place to another.
<b>tributary</b>	<i>noun</i>	stream that feeds, or flows, into a larger stream.
<b>tundra</b>	<i>noun</i>	cold, treeless region in Arctic and Antarctic climates.
<b>United Nations</b>	<i>noun</i>	international organization that works for peace, security and cooperation.
<b>upstream</b>	<i>adjective</i>	toward an elevated part of a flow of fluid, or place where the fluid passed earlier.
<b>vegetation</b>	<i>noun</i>	all the plant life of a specific place.
<b>watershed</b>	<i>noun</i>	entire river system or an area drained by a river and its tributaries.
<b>wetland</b>	<i>noun</i>	area of land covered by shallow water or saturated by water.
<b>World War I</b>	<i>noun</i>	(1914-1918) armed conflict between the Allies (led by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France) and the Central Powers (led by Germany and Austria-Hungary). Also called the Great War.
<b>World War II</b>	<i>noun</i>	(1939-1945) armed conflict between the Allies (represented by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union) and the Axis (represented by Germany, Italy, and Japan.)

