

Why Study Geography?

World Geography

K20 Center, Susan McHale
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Grade Level	7th – 11th Grade	**Time Frame**	2 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	90 minutes
Course	Human Geography, World Geography, World Human Geography		

Essential Question

Why is the study of geography important?

Summary

Students do not often reflect on the importance of geography and its applications. This short, introductory lesson is great for beginning the year in any geography class. Students, through a variety of methods, discover the importance of studying geography.

Snapshot

Engage

Students predict how many people can correctly name countries on a blank map, discuss the definition of geography, and reflect on the importance of knowing geography.

Explore

Students write a statement describing why it might be important to study geography. This statement is shared and rewritten with a partner.

Explain

Students look at quotes from other people about the importance of geography and choose one they believe is most important. They rewrite their geography statements with their partner and add information from these quotes.

Extend

Students write a letter or email to Britney Spears expressing why geography is important to study.

Evaluate

The completion of the graphic organizer and the letter-writing activity will be used as assessments of this lesson.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: World Human Geography (9th through 12th grade))

WG.1: The student will use maps and other geographic representations, tools and technologies to acquire, research, process, and solve problems from a spatial perspective.

Attachments

- I-Think-We-Think-We-Re-Think-Graphic-Organizer - Spanish.docx
- I-Think-We-Think-We-Re-Think-Graphic-Organizer - Spanish.pdf
- I-Think-We-Think-We-Re-Think-Graphic-Organizer.docx
- I-Think-We-Think-We-Re-Think-Graphic-Organizer.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Why Study Geography.pptx
- Magnetic-Statements-Student-Handout - Spanish.docx
- Magnetic-Statements-Student-Handout - Spanish.pdf
- Magnetic-Statements-Student-Handout.docx
- Magnetic-Statements-Student-Handout.pdf
- Magnetic-Statements-for-Geography-Mini-Posters - Spanish.docx
- Magnetic-Statements-for-Geography-Mini-Posters - Spanish.pdf
- Magnetic-Statements-for-Geography-Mini-Posters.docx
- Magnetic-Statements-for-Geography-Mini-Posters.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- I Think, We Think, We Re-Think Graphic Organizer handout (attached)
- Magnetic Statements Mini Posters handout (attached)
- Magnetic Statements handout (attached)

20 minutes

Engage

Begin with **slide 3** of the slideshow, displaying the Essential Questions for this lesson: "Why is the study of geography important?" Ask for volunteers to share their ideas about this question.

Transition to **slide 4**, titled "Can You Name a Country", and explain that Jimmy Kimmel, a late-night talk show host, asked ordinary people on the street to name any country on a map. Ask students, through a show of hands, how many countries they could name on a blank map? One, three, five, ten, more? Ask for a show of hands as you state the numbers on this slide.

Show the Jimmy Kimmel "Can you Name a Country?" video (a link to the 3:44 long video can be found on **slide 5**).

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=kRh1zXFKC_o

After the video, ask students how many people were able to name a country or countries. *In the video, only one person is able to do so.* Ask the class if it is important that these people in the video are able to identify a country on a map? Why or why not? Encourage a number of answers.

Teacher's Note: Geography Awareness Stats

If you want to share statistics about Americans' lack of geography awareness, a survey in the British newspaper, Telegraph, said that only 23% of college-educated American students could name four countries on a map. According to the Telegraph, a National Geographic poll of over 500 young Americans, aged 18 to 24, showed that six percent failed to locate their own country on a map of the world. (Source found in the resource list.)

Move to **slide 6**, which provides a definition of geography. Read the definition aloud. Ask students, "In addition to the study of countries and their location, what other things might we study in this class?" Based on the definition, solicit other elements of geography that will be studied. Answers will vary but should include ideas such as environment, plant life, landforms or the surface of the Earth, people and cultures of different countries, weather, etc.

15 minutes

Explore

Introduce a version of the I Think/We Think strategy. Pass out the attached **I Think, We Think, We Re-Think Graphic Organizer** handout. Begin the strategy on **slide 7**, titled "I Think". Ask students to answer the question shown, "Why is the study of geography important?" Allow three to five minutes for students to write one or two sentences about why they believe we should study geography.

Now, show **slide 8**. Assign or allow students to select an Elbow Partner. Have the partners compare their "I Think" statements and decide on a shared reason or reasons why the study of geography is important. Each student should write the reason they chose with their partner in the "We Think" column. Solicit a few partners' answers from the "We Think" column.

Explain

Teacher's Note: Magnetic Statement Activity

The next section introduces a Magnetic Statements strategy. Prior to beginning this activity, post the **Magnetic Statements geography posters** (attached) around the classroom walls. It is very important during the Magnetic Statement activity that students understand each quote. Make sure that as groups discuss their chosen quote, they also explain its meaning. If the group does not have a good understanding of the quote, expand or correct their understanding with a teacher explanation.

Tell students that the class will examine statements of famous people's beliefs about the importance of geography. Remind students that the study of geography is more than just knowing the location of a country, but is also the study of the Earth, our human interaction with the Earth, and the cultures and ideas of other people.

Display **slide 9**. Have students walk around the room and read all of the Magnetic Statements about geography. Each student should choose the statement that most appeals to them or "attracts" them (like a magnet). Ask them to stand by their chosen statement. Once students are grouped by chosen statements, display slide ten. Within their groups, have students explain what the quote means and their reasoning for choosing that statement. Then, ask a spokesperson from each group to share what the group discussed.

Have students return to their Elbow Partners from the I Think/We Think strategy. Pass out the **Magnetic Statements** handout. Display **slide 11**. Ask partners to read the Magnetic Statements again, circling words or phrases that they believe best support why the study of geography is important.

In the "We Re-Think" column of the student handout, have partners rewrite their statement to include at least two more ideas from the Magnetic Statements. The new statement should be longer and expanded compared to their previous "We Think" statement and should be written in their own words, not copied the quotes.

20 minutes

Extend

Show the quote by Brittany Spears on **slide 12**. Ask students how this quote demonstrates Britney's lack of understanding of geography. Solicit answers from the class. Tell students that individually they are to write Britney a letter or email, correcting Britney's understanding of geography, and explaining why the study of geography is important. In their letter or email, have them explain to Britney why students should study geography and in what ways it may contribute or add to their knowledge of the world. They can use the magnetic statements handout and their I Think, We Think, We Re-Think graphic organizer as a referenced when they compose their letter or email.

Evaluate

The I Think, We Think, We Re-Think graphic organizer and the letter or email to Britney Spears can serve as assessments for this lesson.

Resources

- Alsop, H. (2014, February 15). Americans surveyed: Misunderstood, misrepresented or ignorant? Retrieved from https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/10640690/Americans-surveyed-misunderstood-misrepresented-or-ignorant.html
- Jimmy Kimmel Live. (2018, July 12). Can you name a country? [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRh1zXFKC_o
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I Think / We Think. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f5065bfd
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Magnetic Statements. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f50761bf
- K20 center. (n.d.). Elbow Partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116