

What's on the map? Bird's eye view on Europe

This lesson takes an overview of Europe and the Mediterranean, including: key coastlines, nations, rivers, and mountains.

To prepare for the lesson, either download the unlabelled map of Europe for use on an interactive whiteboard, or use a large map on the classroom wall. This map will be added to during this and the following lesson.

Key questions

- How do we understand Europe as a continent?
- Using geographical language and concepts to describe its location within the wider world?
- By understanding that it encompasses many different countries?
- Through identifying some of its key cities, physical and human features?

Objectives

- Understanding that there are different kinds of maps, which are used for a variety of functions.
- Understanding some of the common features of all maps (scale, key, purpose, orientation, title etc.)

Subject content areas

- *Locational knowledge:* this lesson will help pupils “locate the world’s countries, using maps to focus on Europe, by concentrating on environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities.” It may also help them “identify the position and significance of latitude and longitude.”
- *Place knowledge:* this lesson begins to help pupils “understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region in a European country.”
- *Human and Physical Geography:* this lesson begins to help pupils understand physical geography including: climate zones, mountains and volcanoes.
- *Geographical Skills and Fieldwork:* this will help students to interpret a range of sources of geographical information including: maps, diagrams, globes and aerial photographs. This is alongside the use of maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied. It begins to develop learners’ use of “the eight points of a compass, map symbols and key.”

Downloads

- Map of Europe PDF | MSWORD

Additional links

Below are links to maps for use during lesson activities:

Europe weather interactive forecast map. Go to Weather Online website:
<http://www.weatheronline.co.uk/Europe.htm>

Interactive European languages map. Go to The Guardian website:
<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/interactive/2014/jan/15/interactive-european-language-map>

Free downloadable political, topographical, rivers and outline maps of Europe. Go to World Atlas website: www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/eu.htm

Population map (2007). Go to Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Europe#mediaviewer/File:EU_NUTS_2_population_density_2007.svg

Europe Climate map. Go to Go Europe website:
<http://goeurope.about.com/od/climate/l/bl-europe-climate-maps.htm>

Land use and resources map. Go to How Stuff Works website:
<http://maps.howstuffworks.com/europe-land-use-resources-map.htm>

European religions map. Go to Wikipedia:
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Europe_religion_map_en.png

Aerial view of Europe at night. Go to Wikipedia:
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Europe_night.png

Starter

Begin the lesson by showing children the unlabelled map of Europe. What ideas do they have about this continent? Over the next few lessons, the class is going to be looking at Europe and the Mediterranean. At the end of this time, pupils will be reporting back on what they have found out.

Ask pupils to work in pairs, each pair coming up with one thing that they think they know about Europe. These are then marked up on the map (if you are using a wall-map, you may want to use post-it notes for this). At this stage, it is best to accept even inaccurate ideas without correcting them.

Show the pupils where the Mediterranean is on the map. They may have visited it on holiday, or even have lived nearby. Ask each pair to come up with one thing that they already know about the Mediterranean (they can use some of the information already suggested about Europe to help them in this). Again, these ideas should then be marked up on the map.

Main

Explain that we are now going to test what we think we know, by looking closely at maps.

Ask children to work in table groups, and supply each table group with a globe, or a good quality school atlas. Using the map, can each table find one way of describing where Europe is in the world? To do this, they might use the lines on the map, or use words such as 'North' and 'South' in relation to the land, or the sea nearby.

Provide table groups with print-outs of specialised maps (see list of links above). Each table will have a different map to look at: a political map; a map showing principal cities and population centers; a rivers map; a climate map; a topographical or relief map etc. More able groups might look at specialised maps showing land use, languages, religion etc.

Plenary

Each table group should report back on five main things that it has found out:

- One way of describing where Europe is in the world
- Three things that they have found out by looking at the map
- The sort of name it would give to its map, and what this sort of map would be used for.

The first four of these should be marked up on the outline map.

With the teacher, the whole class should check these findings against the initial ideas from the starter activity. Some of these initial ideas might be amended or replaced as a result.

The lesson ends with the pupils being introduced to the assessment task. They will need to write down some initial thoughts following this first lesson, and will then add to it as the module progresses, leading to a final presentation at the end of the module.

Assessment opportunities

- *Formative assessment.* The elicitation activity provides opportunities for baselining. The plenary allows both teachers and learners to check their learning against the initial baseline, and to plan together for progression. How are things moving on? Are there points which will need clarifying or misunderstandings arising?
- *Summative assessment.* This and the subsequent lessons will lead up to a presentation, using appropriate software such as Prezi or Windows Media Maker. This will constitute the main final assessment task.