

## Is Europe a proper continent? Is the Mediterranean a proper sea?

Taking a 'geography conundrums approach' this lesson invites learners to think critically about what we mean by terms such as 'continent' and 'sea'.

This lesson makes use of the unlabelled map of Europe from the previous session. This will now be marked up with the pupil's initial findings.

### Key questions

- How does Europe perform as a continent which is not a 'contiguous land mass surrounded by water'?
- Is there one 'Europe', or are there many 'Europes'?
- What is the difference between a small sea and a big lake?
- Making sense of seas within seas: the Tyrrhenian, Ligurian, Adriatic, Cretan and Aegean Seas.
- Is the Black Sea a part of the Mediterranean?
- What continent is the Mediterranean in?

### Subject content areas

- *Locational and place knowledge:* Building on the previous lesson, this will further develop learners' locational and place knowledge, but at a more precise scale.
- *Human and Physical Geography:* This lesson will help students "describe and understand key aspects of physical geography", including seas, coasts, and continental plates.
- *Geographical Skills and Fieldwork:* This lesson will further develop skills for mapworking, enquiry, research and critical thinking - including using and interpreting "a range of sources of geographical information." It will explore, test and develop learners' use of geographical terminology.

### Downloads

- Mediterranean Statements PDF | MSWORD

### Additional links

Below are links to maps for use during lesson activities:

Map of the European Union including its outermost regions. Go to Wikipedia website:

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map-Europe-Outermost-regions.PNG>

Unmarked relief map of world. Go to Wikipedia website:

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Relief\\_World\\_Map\\_by\\_maps-for-free.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Relief_World_Map_by_maps-for-free.jpg)

Tectonic plates map. Go to Wikipedia website:

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plates\\_tect2\\_en.svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plates_tect2_en.svg)

Mediterranean Sea. Go to World Atlas:

<http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/infopage/medsea.htm>

Various resources on 'The Mediterranean' Go to Encyclopaedia of the Earth website: [www.eoearth.org/view/article/154548/](http://www.eoearth.org/view/article/154548/)

### **Starter**

Group the class into six table groups. With the whole class, take a brief look at the partly-completed outline map of Europe.

Bearing in mind what they have learnt in the previous lesson, ask each table group to suggest a definition for the word 'continent'.

These suggestions should be noted on a flipchart or whiteboard.

### **Main**

As with the previous lesson, children are going to test their ideas against evidence from maps. Where do we 'draw the line' around the continent?

Whilst still in six table groups, two tables are given a print out of a political map of the European Union, two a relief map of the world, and two a tectonic plate map of the world (see links above).

Ask pupils to draw an outline around the continent, illustrating where its outer boundaries lie.

When pupils have finished drawing the outline, each 'political' table passes its map onto a 'relief' table, which passes its own map on to a 'tectonic' table. The latter passes its map on to the 'political' table.

Pupils spend exactly one minute reviewing the maps that they have been given. They should then pass that map on again to the same table as before. The 'political' table should now be looking at a relief map, and so forth.

Children spend exactly one minute reviewing this second map, and they then pass it on as before. They should now have their own map back again.

Now, conduct a whole class discussion: did different groups draw the outlines in different places? Why was this? Did different maps suggest different answers?

Each table group is given a set of the downloadable statements about the Mediterranean (you might want to cut these up into a set of cards).

Each table puts the statements into groups that will help them answer the following questions about the Mediterranean.

- Where does the Mediterranean Sea end?
- What does the Mediterranean form a part of?
- What does the Mediterranean connect to?

Students are asked to come to some provisional conclusions, and to offer reasons for their choices.

As an extension activity, pupils could look at reference books and online sources such as those listed above, to further refine their answers.

### **Plenary**

In turn, each table offers its answers to these questions, and key features (e.g. the Straits of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal) are marked onto the map of Europe.

Following the lesson, children add to the notes they are building up as part of the assessment task.

### **Assessment opportunities**

- *Formative assessment.* 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.* The activities offer opportunities for the teacher to review students' appropriate use of geographical language, their understanding of concepts such as scale, their ability to offer and substantiate reasoned arguments. 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.