

What's so special about the Mediterranean?

This lesson takes the form of a research project into how landscape and climate have affected this region, past and present and the linkages between human and physical processes.

This lesson begins by using the unlabelled map of Europe from the previous two lessons. Multiple copies of the 'message in a bottle' worksheet are needed for the main activity. If you have limited internet access in the class, then you may need to download and print out some of the supporting information.

Key questions

- Why is the region so significant? What is exceptional about it?
- What are some of its human and natural wonders?
- What connections do we, or our families, have to the region (e.g. though family members, work or holidays)? What can these personal experiences contribute to our learning?

Subject content areas

- *Locational knowledge:* This lesson will help pupils "locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on Europe whilst concentrating on environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities."
- *Place knowledge:* It contributes to an understanding of "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 will help students understand the interdependence of natural and human processes in the context of Europe. Pupils' will be able to describe and understand key aspects of physical geography including, climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains and the water cycle. Equally, pupils will engage with human geography including types of settlement and land use in the region, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water.
- *Geographical Skills and Fieldwork:* This lesson will contribute to skills for mapworking and enquiry including using and interpreting "a range of sources of geographical information."

Downloads

- "My message in the bottle" writing frame PDF | MSWORD

Additional links

The Mediterranean environment. Go to the WWF website:

http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/mediterranean/

'Save the Mediterranean'. Go to Greenpeace website:

www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/oceans/our-oceans-and-seas/mediterranean/

Mediterranean biome. Go to Wikipedia website:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_forests,_woodlands,_and_scrub

Social atlas of Europe. Go to EU rope website:

<http://eu-rope.ideason europe.eu/2014/08/12/a-country-called-europe/>

Online newspapers around the world. Go to Online Newspapers website:

www.onlinenewspapers.com

Starter

"If a bottle came through the Straits of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean Sea, where might it go?"

Begin the lesson by briefly tracing the main circulation currents on the map that you should already have up on the classroom wall / whiteboard.

(The main currents in the Mediterranean flow in from the Atlantic via the Straits of Gibraltar, travel east to the Levant, and then back along the coast of North Africa, where the water is pushed northwards towards Europe).

Main

Explain that pupils are going to find out about some of the Mediterranean countries in Europe that the bottle would go to. Each table will write a 'message in a bottle' from the country it is looking at.

Walking anti-clockwise around the class, allocate a different country to each table group. Your route follows the flow of the main currents. As you reach each table give them a copy of the "message in a bottle" writing frame. They will use this writing frame to create a message in a bottle for their country.

The water flows first towards Greece and the Balkans, then to Italy (including Sicily and then Sardinia), to France (including Corsica) and thus to Spain (including the Balearic Islands).

(If you have a limited number of tables, then pupils might only look at Croatia as a Balkan country. The other coastal Balkan states, following the flow of the currents, are Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Slovenia. The latter only has a tiny coastline. If you need one or two additional countries, then Cyprus and Malta are possibilities, as is *European* Turkey – although Turkey is bypassed by the main circulation currents).

To complete its message, each table will look at six main themes: economy, culture, environment, people, the influence of the Mediterranean and the future. These themes are explained on the writing frame, but you may want to clarify understanding.

When looking for information, they should view at least one of each of the following:

- a tourism website or brochure;
- a newspaper or news website from that country;
- an encyclopaedia or general reference book;
- a set of images (e.g. through an online search).

We offer some links above that will help them do this. If you do not have sufficient internet access, then you may need to print out some web pages in advance. These can be supplemented by general reference books from the school library, brochures (usually available for free from travel agents) etc.

Plenary

Using a suitable container as the 'bottle', collect the messages from each table in turn, starting with Greece. All the messages are laid out on a table at the front of the class.

Using 'silent debate' pupils briefly review all the 'messages'. Go to Tide Global Learning website: www.tidegloballearning.net/resources/silent-debate

Whole class discussion:

- Were there similar points that came up for different countries?
- Why are these countries similar or different?
- Which countries rely most heavily on the Mediterranean Sea for their economy? Why?
- Who is the climate most important for? Why?

End the lesson by asking: What did people say about the region's future? This theme will be picked up in the next few lessons.

Following the lesson, children add to the notes they are building up as part of the assessment task. They might include their messages in the bottle as part of this.

Assessment opportunities

- *Formative assessment.* The 'silent debate' allows the teacher to review the comments and questions that pupils are generating.
- *Summative assessment.* The messages in the bottle provide opportunities for extended writing. Together, the six lessons will lead up to a presentation, using appropriate software such as Prezi or

Windows Media Maker. This constitutes the main final assessment task.