

Best Practices of Technology Integration

Title: *Exploring Virtual Europe*

Subjects: Social Studies

Intended Grade Level(s): 7-8

Description:

This lesson will give middle school students (7th and 8th grades) an opportunity to gain insight into the geography, government, climate, history, economy, and culture of a European country. This lesson relates to the state benchmarks and relates to World History, World Heritage, and Eastern Hemisphere course content often included in the middle school curriculum. The lesson plan will build research skills, ability to search the Internet, language comprehension, geography skills, historic perspective, and cultural awareness.

Narrative:

Students will investigate a country of their choosing on the Internet, gaining knowledge of certain questions relating to that country's geography, climate, currency, history, government, history and language. This project is part of a larger unit on European geography or history, but could be adapted to other geographic regions of the world.

Students will be given an opportunity to select a country of their choice in Western Europe for further investigation and study. Students will be given basic instruction in Internet usage, a list of web sites containing information required on their reports and help accessing those sites (if required).

Students will have the opportunity to find for themselves the physical, historic, economic and cultural features of their chosen country. They will be able to use the Internet to get a real time look at the weather in their chosen country, and to "exchange" US Dollars for their country's currency at the current exchange rate. Students may use both educational and commercial sites on the Internet to gather required information.

Curriculum Benchmarks:

[ML.SOC.II.1.MS.2](#)

Describe and compare characteristics of major world cultures including language, religion, belief systems, gender roles, and traditions.

[ML.SOC.III.MS.3](#)

All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of economic activities, trade, political activities, migration, information flow, and the interrelationships among them. (Location, Movement and Connections)

[MI.SOC.II.4.MS.2](#)

Locate and describe major cultural, economic, political and environmental features of Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and North and South America and the processes that created them.

[MI.SOC.II.4.MS.3](#)

Describe major patterns of world population, physical features, ecosystems, cultures, and explain some of the factors causing the patterns.

[MI.SOC.II.4.MS.4](#)

Compare major world regions with respect to cultures, economy, governmental systems, environment, and communications.

[MI.SOC.V.1.MS.1](#)

Locate and interpret information about the natural environments and cultures of countries using a variety of primary and secondary sources and electronic technologies, including computers and telecommunications where appropriate.

[MI.SOC.V.1.MS.2](#)

Use traditional and electronic means to organize social science information and to make maps, graphs, and tables.

Instructional Technology Across the Curriculum Standard(s):

Benchmark(s):

- Have a greater understanding of the World Wide Web as a pre-existing database and research tool.

8th Grade Communication Arts Benchmarks:

Research Strategies:

- To learn strategies for online searching which aid in the management and movement of data.

- To explain and use online resources that are appropriate for the learner and the topic.

- To organize and analyze information in order to draw conclusions and implications based on the online investigation.

- To utilize other print and non-print sources as necessary.

Online Communications:

- To learn to evaluate a web site

- To become familiar with Internet procedure

Detailed Timeline:

This unit will take approximately one or two weeks to complete. Lab time will be a minimum of four class periods. Additional lab time and or library time is advisable. Time outside of class may be required to complete the work.

Materials/Hardware/Software:

Books and Other Familiar Resources:

Encyclopedias (Current)

World Atlas (Current)

World Almanacs

Useful Web sites:

General Information:

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

<http://cliffie.nosc.mil>

<http://www.vtourist.com>

Facts:

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/country.html>

<http://cliffie.nosc.mil/~NAWFB/wfb-all.html>

Maps:

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref.html>

<http://cliffie.nosc.mil/~NATLAS/index.html>

Flags:

<http://cliffie.nosc.mil/~NAFLAG/index.html>

http://www.3dflags.com/World/index_gm.html

Language translations:

<http://www.travlang.com/languages/index.html>

Currency conversion:

<http://www.xe.net/currency/>

<http://cconv.textor.com/>

Technology Resources:

Computer lab with Internet access

Computer printers

Copy machine

Teacher Preparation:

Access to a computer lab with a minimum of 30 computers (or computers for each student in class) with Internet access for at least four class periods. A second teacher, lab instructor or paraprofessional may be helpful to help advise students and assist them in using Internet search engines.

Access to the school library may also be useful to acquire knowledge for the reports. Teachers in the lab should all be familiar with computer usage and Internet browser functioning.

This project should be preceded by a general introduction to the geography, history and cultures of Europe. Enough information should be available to allow students to make an informed selection of a country for study.

Group or individual presentations of researched material following completion of the reports would expose classmates to other European countries. A unit on the European Economic Community could also provide a unifying aspect to the project.

Prerequisite Student Skills:

Students are expected to have a prior knowledge of basic computer skills and a basic understanding of using an Internet browser to locate information on the web. Students should also know how to locate information in the library. Map reading skills are also required.

Activities/Procedures:

Passport: Europe

Taking a Virtual Tour of a European Country

For the next few days, the class is going on a virtual tour of Europe. Without leaving the computer lab, we will visit the continent of Europe, learning about its geography, politics, economy, currency, weather, and language. To do this we will have to use the Internet and our imaginations.

First we will each look at a map of Europe and select a Western European country that you would like to know more about. Here is a partial list:

Austria	Norway
Belgium	Netherlands
Denmark	Poland
Finland	Spain
France	Sweden
Germany	Switzerland
Italy	United Kingdom
Ireland	

Use the Internet URL addresses given at the beginning of each section to locate the information requested.

1. Locate a map of the country on the Internet. Sketch the general shape in the space provided. Include the following items:

A compass rose

Scale of miles (kilometers)

Capital city

Other major cities

Major rivers, oceans, mountains and deserts

2. Use an on-line factbook to find the information requested in the statistics portion of the worksheet.

3. Locate a picture of the flag of your country on the Internet. Sketch the flag in the space provided. Color the flag to match the photo.

4. Use the Internet to find the current conversion rate for US dollars into the currency of your country. Use a calculator to change the US dollar values listed into the currency of your country.

5. Use an on-line translation dictionary to translate the English words listed into the language of your country.

6. Check the weather forecast in the region of Europe you have selected, and write the forecast and long term forecast in the space provided.

General Info:

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

<http://cliffie.nosc.mil/>

<http://www.vtourist.com>

Name: _____

European Passport to: _____

Country Map Sketch

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref.html>

<http://cliffie.nosc.mil/~NATLAS/index.html>

Statistics:

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/country.html>

<http://www.cliffie.nosc.mil/~NAWFB/wfb-all.html>

Capital City:

Population:

Land Area:

Government Type:

Current Leader:

Natural Resources:

Imports/Exports:

Major Religion(s):

Features (Rivers, oceans, mountains, deserts)

Flag Sketch

<http://cliffie.nosc.mil/~NAFLAG/index.html>

<http://www.3dflags.com/world/index.gm.html>

Currency Conversions

<http://www.xe.net/currency>

<http://cconv.textor.com>

\$1 US = _____

Use calculator to convert the following amounts:

\$15.00 =

\$50.00 =

\$74.00 =

\$140.00

\$1250.00

Language Translation

<http://www.travlang.com/languages/index.html>

ENGLISH

ENGLISH

Hello:

Man:

Goodbye:

Woman

Thank you:

Child:

Please:

Dog:

Good Morning:

Cat:

Weather Forecast

<http://www.usatoday.com/weather/basemaps/weut1.html>

http://members.xoom.com/wie/wetter_a.html

Today's Weather:

Temperature: High:_____ Low:_____

Forecast:

Tomorrow's Weather:

Temperature: High:_____ Low:_____

Forecast:

Long Term Weather Outlook:

Temperature: High:_____ Low:_____

Forecast:

Assessment:

Reports would be graded for completeness and accuracy. Did the students meet the minimum requirements in each content area? Extra credit can be given for students who go beyond the minimum requirements, for example providing a national cookbook of ethnic foods or providing a English - Native Language dictionary for the language spoken in the selected country.

Management:

Students may work individually, in pairs or in small groups, depending on the teacher's preference. In pairs or groups, tasks could be divided there by cutting down necessary class time required to complete the project. Students may do work in the classroom, but computer lab and/or library time is a requirement. Extra lab or library time may be required before or after school, depending on the teacher's availability. Students with special needs might do a scaled down version of the project, using map outlines or having the assistance of more advance students.

Submitted By:

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