

If the World Were a Village

Teaching Activities



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So Where Are We?

Looking at a globe, have your students find the latitude and longitude of their school. Then have them find the exact opposite location on the globe. Is it in the ocean? Are there any islands close by? Or is it on land? What is the closest city or town?

Water, Water Everywhere, But Not a Drop to Drink

Where does your school's water supply come from? Have your students identify the route the drinking water travels from the point where it first falls as rain to the point that it emerges from the tap. How far does it travel? How is it processed? How much of the route is affected by human engineering? Now have them examine the way water is acquired in a remote village in Africa. How much do we take clean, accessible drinking water for granted?

Weather Networking

Where does your community's weather come from? Have your class keep track of daily weather in town, in a place 800 km (500 mi.) west and in a place 1600 km (1000 mi.) west. Have them look at temperature, rainfall, wind, sky conditions, etc. Visit cirrus.sprl.umich.edu/wxnet/ for a listing of over 380 weather-related links!

Dear (Earth) Diary

Divide your class in half. Have one group keep a daily Earth log of your community and have the other group keep the same log of a place on the other side of the country. Include wind direction and speed, temperature, precipitation, sunrise, sunset, length of day, etc. Use the Internet for easy access to different time zones.

Incredible Journeys

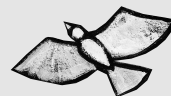
Using a roll of craft paper, have the class draw a large map of the world and get each student to pinpoint places they've been to — and places they'd like to go to. Have them use coins, stamps, bookmarks, spoons, etc., that they've collected to mark these places on the map.

Consumer Alert

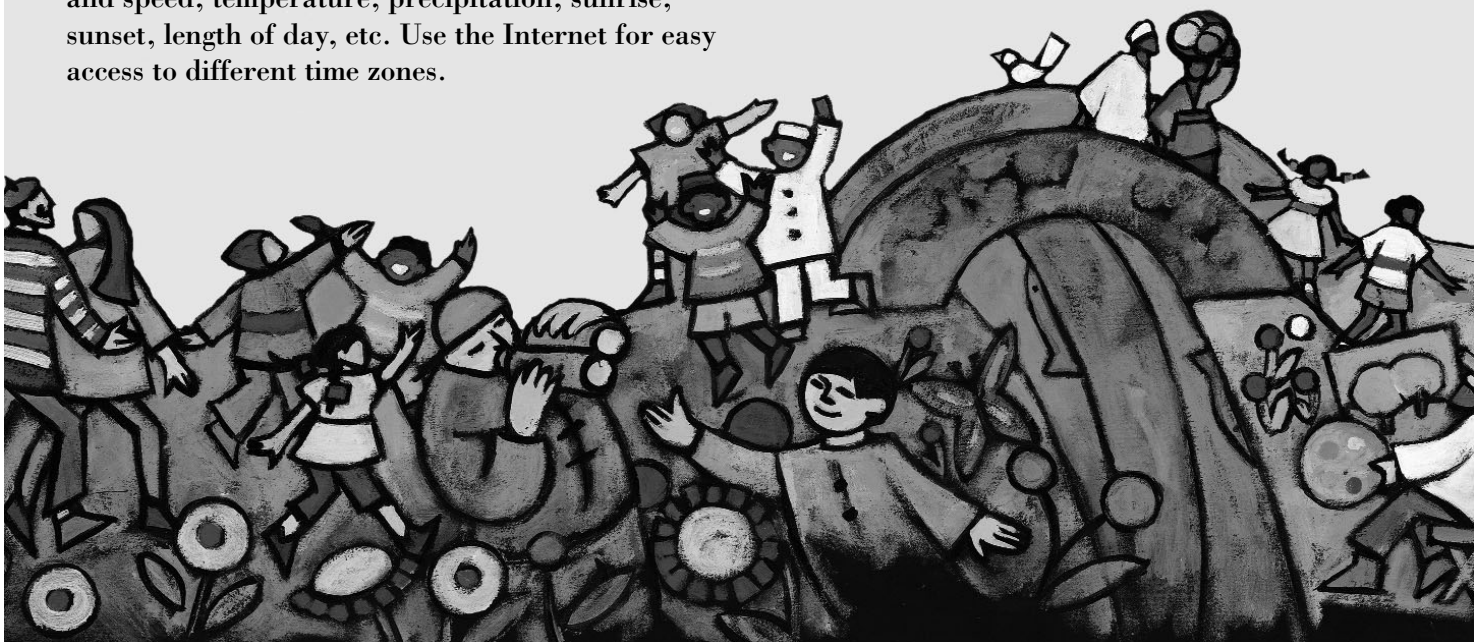
Have your class bring in a variety of everyday items such as clothing, canned goods, games and other consumer goods. Use the labels to identify the goods' origins on a map. Discuss where their T-shirts come from. Their shoes. Their groceries.

Return to Sender

Have your students ask family or friends who are traveling abroad to send back postcards to the class. Map all the postcards the class receives, examine the stamps and ask travelers to bring back coins or bills as well so that the class can study them to learn more about the country of origin. Check out www.mytravelguide.com for information on the people, geography, economy, communications, transportation and health of countries around the world.



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WRITING

Natural Decisions

Have your class discuss how the local environment affects the way people live — choice of building materials, housing, etc. Consider how natural features affect life, too: mountain ranges (life in Himalayas vs. lowlands of Nepal); deserts (life in the Sahara vs. Sub-Saharan Africa); islands (life on an island vs. life on nearby mainland). In small groups, have your students design a village that takes into account all the aspects explored.

And Then I ...

Have your students tell a story (either based on personal experiences or made up from information they've gathered) about what it is like to travel to or live in another part of your country or of the world.

The World in My Community

See if your class can find aspects of the local community and culture that originated in other countries and cultures (shops, places of worship, etc.).

A Day in the Life

Have each student keep a detailed diary for one day. Their entries should include what they ate, how they got to school, what they studied in class, after-school activities they were involved in, TV programs they watched, etc. Then, as a group, investigate what a day in the life of a young person in a foreign country would be like. Investigate the similarities and the differences.

Origins (French *origine* or Latin *origin-* *origo* from *oriri* — to rise)

Using a dictionary or a Web site such as www.wordsmith.org, create a list of words that have become part of the English language, but whose origins are found in other languages. Talk with multi-cultural students in your class about whether any of these words are still used in their native language.





DISCUSSION TOPICS

Consider the Possibilities

1. If there is really enough food in the world, why do some people go hungry?
2. What is a country? Why are there so many new ones?
3. Why do so many people want to live somewhere else?

GAMES

What's Next?

In a class, have one student name two bordering countries, provinces or states, and the next person has to say what the next bordering place is.

For example:

Canada, United States = Mexico

California, Oregon = Idaho or Washington

British Columbia, Alberta = Saskatchewan

Capital / Country

Using atlases or globes, have a student name a country and ask the class to then name the country's capital, or vice versa.

Details, Details ...

To learn basic facts about countries, have one student pick a country and then have other students name details about that country. For example: Italy = capital is Rome, language is Italian, home of the Vatican, etc.

Write the facts listed on the board and have your students create little travel guides with the information collected.

For links to many relevant Web sites, please go to David Smith's site at www.mapping.com and click on Helpful Links.

* Please note that the Web site addresses listed in this publication were visited and were accurate at the time of printing; however, we cannot guarantee that the sites will offer the exact information needed, or that the domain sites will not change. Please remind your students to always surf the Internet with an adult and to never give c
personal information.

