

Teaching the EU Toolkits High School Lesson Plan 2.B What is Europe Like? Variety of Physical Geography

Objective: I know that Europe has a variety of geographic features and regions. I can put geographic features on a map. I can consider the benefits of labeling maps in different ways.

CCSS Standard(s):

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Materials needed:

Map of Europe

Agenda:

Students will explore the other ways that we can have geographic understanding—that is, not only by country—by labeling geographic features and coloring geographic regions in Europe. They will then discuss how different regions can be labeled in ways other than by country. Students will add to their previously labeled map of Europe by drawing geographic features on top of their labeled European countries in order to deepen their understanding of elements of a map and the things that are included on a map. If comparing and contrasting, students will make a new map colored by geographic region rather than by country.

Discussion guide:

What is geography? What kinds of things do we look at in the study of geography?

Other than country lines, what else do maps have on them in order to tell us about a place?

What is a geographic feature?

What is a geographic region?

How might we represent geographic features and/or geographic regions on a map?

If a map is not primarily labeled by country lines, does it still serve a purpose? How else might it be labeled? What value might this have?

Students will either be asked to use their map from High School Lesson 2.A or teacher will give them a new map of Europe in order to map out prominent European geographic features, including the following: Danube River, Rhine River, Ural Mountains, Pyrenees Mountains, The Alps, Mediterranean Sea, English Channel, Iberian Peninsula, Scandinavian Peninsula, Balkan Peninsula, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Norwegian Sea, and European Plain.

Reflect: Consider your two maps, the one labeled and colored by country lines and the one labeled with geographic features and regions. How are they similar? How are they different? What does each one tell us that is distinct or different from what the other can tell us? How might this be used to help us understand Europe better?

Extension activity: Choose an alternative form of mapping (geographical, demographic-based, etc.). Using information found through Internet research, code a map by hand or on the computer using an alternative form. For example, a student might code their map based on most popular religion in each country of Europe, using a different color for each religion. Don't forget to create a key for your map!

Conclusion: Europe has a variety of geographic features and regions. I know how to put these things on a map. Different forms of mapping have distinct benefits, and I can evaluate their usefulness.