



Armchair Traveler - Elementary

Activity: Flag Building

Using The World Factbook’s “Flags of the World” section, teachers will select a handful of flags to display to their students. (We recommend the U.S. flag and a sampling of flags from around the world, preferably one or more from each continent). The teacher will discuss each of the flags and their meanings with students.

To make this lesson more interactive, the teacher may choose to ask students what they think the colors and symbols in each flag mean before explaining their true meaning. They should also—using the maps section of TheWorld Factbook—show students where on the world map the country is located for each flag.

The teacher may like to keep a running list of the colors and their meanings so students can refer to it for the follow-on assignment.

After about 20 minutes, the teacher should hand out 8.5 x 11 pieces of paper, one to each student. For the next 10-15 minutes, using colored pencils, crayons or markers, students will make their own flag. They should feel free to use whatever colors or symbols they would like to represent themselves, their families or their favorite activities. They may use some of the color meanings discussed in the introduction portion of this exercise, but should not feel obligated to do so.

After 10-15 minutes, the teacher will ask each student to stand and present his or her flag. They should explain what the colors and symbols mean and why they were chosen.

At the end of the class, if possible, the teacher should have the students sign their own flags and display them prominently in the room for all to see.

This activity may be adapted for a virtual learning environment, if necessary.

Objective

Students will learn that colors and symbols in a flag stand for something. They may learn what the symbols and colors of many of these flags represent. They will also learn that countries of the world celebrate different values and cultures through their flags. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to think creatively about what is meaningful to them and how they can visually represent that meaning in a flag.

Materials

Access to The World Factbook, markers, crayons, colored pencils, and paper

GRADE LEVEL

SUBJECTS INVOLVED

TIME

Elementary School

Social studies/Geography

1 - 1.5 hr



Armchair Traveler - Middle

Activity: Around the World in 10 Minutes

Students should break into groups of two, if possible—although this activity can be done individually. In this activity, the teacher will direct the student groups to plan a trip around the world. Planned trips should:

- Start and end in the students' home town
- Be six or more stops over six continents
- Visit three or more capital cities (of countries outside of the U.S.)
- Cross two or more oceans
- Include one destination or more in each of the four hemispheres (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western)

Using The World Factbook, student groups are expected to deliver a map detailing the planned travel route as well as an itinerary for the trip. In addition to destinations, travel dates and travel methods (i.e., boat, plane, car, etc.), the itinerary should include the following information:

- An image or description of the flag for each country
- Currency used in each country
- Suggested clothing for each destination, using The World Factbook's climate information as a guide
- Language(s) spoken in each country
- Top economic industries for each country
- The phone number and address of the U.S. embassy or consulate in each country

Teachers are encouraged to provide an example for students.

Students should be given one week or more to research and assemble their trip itinerary, culminating in a class presentation in which students will walk their classmates through their itinerary and findings. Visual aid recommended, but not necessary. Presentations should be no longer than 10 minutes, with time for questions.

Objective

Students will learn how to leverage online resources for research purposes. They will build their understanding of geography by researching international travel, and will enhance their knowledge of cultural and economic differences between countries. They will also improve their oral communications by preparing a presentation for their teacher and peers.

Materials

Access to The World Factbook

GRADE LEVEL

Middle/High school

SUBJECTS INVOLVED

Social studies/Geography

TIME

1 - 3 weeks



Armchair Traveler - High

Activity: Request for Proposals

In this activity, teachers will play the role of client, and students will play the role of business advisor. Using the below prompt, teachers will instruct their students to prepare for them (the client) a thoroughly researched proposal to identify a country in which they might open a second headquarters for their company, “[Teacher Name] International, LLC.” Students will use The World Factbook and the below prompt to identify countries which will be suitable for the teacher’s company.

Students are expected to submit a written proposal, no more than three pages in length that explains why they’ve recommended the selected country. Each proposal should include the key factors that led to their decision. It should also include one alternative option, and detail the reasons why they did not select that country.

This activity can be done individually or in small groups, depending on the teacher’s preference.

Please see the below prompt, which further clarifies the assignment and requirements.

Objective

Students will learn how to leverage online resources to research a problem and identify a solution. They will need to think critically about the problem presented and articulate the reasoning behind their proposed solution. Research for the project will encourage students to learn more about the global economy, natural resources and geography.

Materials

Access to The World Factbook

GRADE LEVEL

SUBJECTS INVOLVED

TIME

High school

Social studies/Geography

1 - 2 weeks



Armchair Traveler

—PROMPT—

Good afternoon,

Your assistance is requested to identify the best location for a second headquarters for my company, “[Teacher Name] International, LLC.” Our current headquarters is in New York City, but demand from a global market and the need for a larger workforce requires that I open a second headquarters.

As a bit of background, “[Teacher Name] International, LLC” is a technology company focused on emerging technologies for governments, businesses and consumers alike. Our operations are split evenly between research and development, manufacturing and sales. I am highly motivated to identify a suitable location in which to open a second headquarters, one that will position us for continued growth and give us direct access to a new region.

Here are a few key indicators I would like you to take into consideration for your proposal:

- Labor force and population: Opening a new headquarters means hiring new people. I am looking for a place that has a large labor force (above five million). Consider the population’s age distribution as well. I’m building for long-term growth, so a young workforce would be ideal.
- Top industries: We are a technology company, so it would be good to operate in a country with a strong technology industry.
- Time zone: We are a global company, but our New York office is closed while half of the world is working. I would like to find something in a time zone on the other side of the world to solve this problem.
- Ocean Access: Proximity to shipping ports would be ideal, though I’m not opposed to landlocked countries that have the right traits.
- Natural Resources: Our company’s success relies on an abundance of natural resources, including aluminum, zinc, copper, neodymium, magnesium, radium, cobalt, titanium and tungsten. While we can import some of these raw materials, it would be beneficial to source them in country.
- Language: In addition to English, I speak French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian. Though not required, it would be easier for me to communicate with in-country stakeholders if I speak their language.
- Urbanization: I want my headquarters to be located in an urban area because studies show that younger generations of workers are more interested in living and working in an urban epicenter.
- Diplomatic relationship with the U.S.: Because we are a U.S.-based company, wherever we open our second headquarters should have a favorable relationship with the U.S.
- Credit rating: I would prefer to locate my company’s second headquarters in a country with a strong credit rating. AAA is ideal, if possible.

This list is by no means exhaustive. There are other categories which I may have overlooked that you may wish to consider in your proposal submission. Thanks in advance for your assistance. I look forward to reviewing your proposal.

GRADE LEVEL	SUBJECTS INVOLVED	TIME
High School	Social studies/Geography	1 - 2 weeks