

Geography and GDP

By Mary Scifres Grabianowski

Grade Level: 12th – but adaptable for younger grades

Estimated Time: Two days

National Geography Standards Addressed:

Standard 2 – Places & Regions: Students will acquire a framework for thinking geographically, including the location and unique characteristics of places. They will identify the physical and human characteristics of places. They will understand that people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity, and those cultures and experience influence people's perception of places and regions.

Standard 4 – Human Systems: Student will identify and analyze the human activities that shape Earth's surface, including population numbers, distribution and growth rates, rural and urban land use, ways of making a living, cultural patterns and economic and political systems. Using grid-based technology, such as remote sensing and GIS wherever possible, they will map the distribution of various human phenomena and look for spatial patterns that the map reveals.

Standard 6 – The Uses of Geography: Students will understand the influence of physical and human geographic factors on the evolution of significant historic events and movements. They will apply the geographic viewpoint to local, regional and world policies and problems.

Indiana Economic Standards Addressed:

E.5.1; E.5.3; E5.8; E.8.1; E.8.4; E.8.6

Indiana Social Studies Standards Addressed:

WG.1.5; WG.2.5; WG.2.7; WG.4.1; Wg.4.12; WG.4.17

Objectives: Students will...

1. Develop an understanding of the relationship between GDP, life expectancy and standard of living.
2. Work with various kinds of information comparing nations based on population, economic might and life expectancy.
3. Note the differences between the locations of the first and third worlds.

Materials Required:

- A world political map
- Sticky Notes in three different colors (or three different colored small, round stickers)
- Student access to computers

Procedures:

Day One:

1. Make small cards with the names of a variety of nations on them. Divide the cards into categories – wealthy countries, poor countries and medium countries.
2. Put students into groups of 2 or 3 and allow them to pick two countries – each from a different category.

3. Take class to computer lab and have them log on to the CIA website (www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geo/us.html). Students should look up the following information for their countries:
 - Geographic size
 - General climate statistics
 - Population size
 - Infant mortality rate
 - Life expectancy rate
 - Literacy rate
 - Major natural resources
 - Total GDP (and read the summary of the nation's economy)
 - GDP/Capita
 - GDP growth rate
 - How many land-based telephones and how many cell phones
 - One other random fact they find interesting
4. Students may also use other sources to find additional information about their nations to present.

Day Two:

5. Using this information, students will prepare a comparison of their two countries to present to the rest of the class. Students will be encouraged to include visual aids in this presentation. In addition to their presentation, students will be expected to identify their nation on the world political map in the classroom. Students will put a sticky note on their map locating their country. Use one color for wealthy nations; another for medium nations; yet another for poor nations. This will visually identify for the class the distribution of the world's resources.
6. After the presentations, lead the class in discussion of what are the criteria we use for determining whether a nation is wealthy or poor. What does population growth have to do with wealth? Isn't it important that a nation have lots of natural resources? How come Japan is so wealthy and they do not have much in the way of natural resources?
7. Return to the computer lab and have the students go to the World Bank web site (<http://youthink.worldbank.org/gallery>) where they are to work their way through two interactive sites: 1) Millennium Development Goal and 2) Aids Quiz.

Adaptations/Extensions: For those with more time, the students could do more extensive research on their countries and prepare a power point or poster presentation. It is also fun to share food, music and other cultural things from various nations.

Assessment: This lesson is part of a larger unit studying developing nations and trade. Students would be tested over the entire body of knowledge. Students would also be assessed on the basis of their participation in class discussion.

Rubric for the Presentation assignment:

Economics Group Presentations Grading Rubric

Countries covered by group: _____

Members of the group: _____

Covered Material (10 points possible) _____

Thoroughly	10
Hit most point	8
Missed major points	6-7

Outside Sources (3 points possible) _____

At least 2	3
Only 1	2
None	1

Creativity (2 points possible) _____

Good use of Materials	2
Kept everyone awake	1
YAWN	0

Evidence of Effort (5 points possible) _____

Terrific Job!	5
Neat & organized, but ...	4
Not everyone participated	3
Lame	1-2

TOTAL (20 points possible) _____