

Yours, Mine, and Ours: Determining Boundaries

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Overview: Students learn about conflict by participating in a role-playing activity in the context of the fictional region of “Ugeria.”

Suggested Grade Level: 12th

Class Length: 90 minutes

Connection with Curriculum Standards:

Standard 10: The Characteristics, Distribution, and Complexity of Earth’s Cultural Mosaics

Standard 16: The Changes That Occur in the Meaning, Use, Distribution, and Importance of Resources

Inquiry Questions:

- Why and how do cooperation and conflict help shape the distribution of social, political, and economic spaces on Earth at different scales?
- What is the impact of multiple spatial divisions on people’s daily lives?
- How do differing points of view and self-interest play a role in conflict over territory and resources?

Materials Needed: Maps of the fictional colony “Ugeria”
Pencils and markers
Paper or posterboard

Procedure:

Opening:

Conduct a discussion about the following terms: region, territory, boundary, sovereignty, alliance, colony, ethnic group, exclave, enclave. At the conclusion of the discussion, students should have a working knowledge of the terms. Some definitions:

Region: an area with one or more common characteristics or features that give it a measure of homogeneity and make it different from surrounding areas

Territory: a part of a country that does not have the full status of a principal division

Boundary: any line or thing marking a limit

Sovereignty: an independent state or governmental unit

Alliance: a close association of nations or countries for a common objective

Colony: a community of people of the same nationality or pursuits, concentrated in a particular district or place

Ethnic group: people who share customs, characteristics, language, and common history

Exclave: a bounded (non-island) piece of territory that is part of a particular state but lies separated from it by the territory of another state

Enclave: a piece of territory that is surrounded by another political unit of which it is not a part

Development:

1. Discuss boundary conflicts around the world. Identify some common features of political land division. Explore natural divisions such as mountains, rivers, deserts.

2. Make maps of a fictitious colony called Ugeria. The colony should contain mountains, rivers, and several major cities. Label several small parts of the map Group B majority, and the rest Group A majority.
3. Divide the class into four groups. Distribute a set of pencils, blank paper or poster board, markers, Ugeria maps, and Ugeria background information (below) to each group.
4. Have at least two students in each group perform the roles of members of the A or B ethnic groups in Ugeria. The other students within each group may assume roles of UN personnel who are helping mediate boundary issues between members of the two groups.
5. Have each group study the maps and data and seek a solution to the conflicts that may arise. Differences in the two ethnic groups and their spatial distribution in Ugeria may cause trouble. If a boundary creating two new countries is created, the group should draw it on the map. In any case the students should record reasons for their decision.

Closing:

1. Have each group give a report on its recommendations and the rationales for its decision. The maps and written rationales should be displayed for comparison among the groups.
2. As a class, attempt to come to consensus regarding the fate of Ugeria. Construct a final map showing a whole or partitioned Ugeria and list the reasons for the class's decision. Be sure to highlight the physical geography and the political, cultural, and economic issues that emerged in the decision-making process.

Homework:

Read and analyze Kenneth C. Danforth's article "Yugoslavia," *National Geographic*, August 1990, and complete these questions:

1. Describe the boundary characteristics from the 14th century to the present of the area known in 1990 as Yugoslavia. Have they stayed the same? Changed? If so, in what ways?
2. What cultural (economic, social, political, religious) factors have affected the boundaries of Yugoslavia?
3. In what ways has the physical setting played a part in the boundaries of Yugoslavia?
4. What factor(s) do you feel were most significant in shaping Yugoslavia's boundaries?
5. In what ways have outside powers played a part in shaping Yugoslavia's boundaries?
6. In what ways have Yugoslavia's boundary changes affected other countries, including the United States?
7. Based on news reports since 1990, what issues have shaped the boundaries of the countries that were created from the former Yugoslavia?
8. "We're all supposed to be Yugoslavs, but scratch one of us and you'll find a Serb or a Croat or something else." How does this statement from a citizen of the former Yugoslavia relate to the conflicts over its partitioning?
9. Make a case supporting or refuting this statement: "The United States is just as physically and culturally diverse as the former Yugoslavia, but such diversity has historically had less effect on the boundaries of the US than on Yugoslavia's boundaries."