

THE EUROPEAN UNION THROUGH DATA ANALYSIS

-Educator Orientation-

Introduction

The European Union is a large and diverse collection of nations with distinct economic, social, political, and geographic patterns. Generally, the standard of living within the EU declines as one moves east and south. Measures of standard of living include per capita income, population growth rate, percent of the population engaged in agriculture, infant mortality rate, and the structure of the population. Engaging students in an analysis of data for each EU nation will help them to see the tremendous diversity within the alliance and the challenge of integrating nations with a low(er) standard of living with some of the wealthiest nations in the world.

Activity Overview

Students are given data for an unidentified EU nation. They construct a population pyramid and a circle or bar graph, review additional data, and write an analysis. Based on the analysis, the student tentatively identifies the country. Each student (or groups of students) present their analyses to the class. It is likely that several students will identify the same country; such conflicts are discussed. In conclusion, the teacher provides the correct answers and debriefs the class on the general patterns and trends they observe.

Connection to the Curriculum

Grade 6: 6.3.B: The student is expected to pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns for selected world regions and countries shown on maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases.

World Geography: 7. A: The student is expected to construct and analyze population pyramids and use other data, graphics, and maps to describe the population characteristics of different societies and to predict future growth trends.

World Geography: 21. A: The student is expected to use historical, geographic, and statistical information from a variety of sources...to answer geographic questions and infer geographic relationships.

World History: 11. B: The student is expected to pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns in world history shown on maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases.

Grade 10 TAKS Objective 5: The student will use critical thinking skills to analyze social studies information.

Class Time

It is estimated that this should take two or three 50 minute class periods.

Materials/Resources

- ◆ Data—one for each student (25 nations)
- ◆ Student instructions—one for each student
- ◆ Population pyramid form
- ◆ Graph paper
- ◆ Calculators
- ◆ Colored pens, pencils, overhead transparencies, stickies (optional)

Classroom Procedures

Beginning the Activity

1. Introduce the activity by reviewing with students what they know about the characteristics of EU-member nations.

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2. Distribute the data and the student instructions. Review (or introduce) the definitions of the data and the kinds of information that can be gleaned from a population pyramid. The student instructions have a place to write the definitions.

The source of the population data is the International Data Base, US Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbsum.html>). Additional data was obtained from EU sources and *Time Almanac 2004, (2003)*. GDP (Gross Domestic Product) measures output generated through production by labor and property which is physically located within the confines of a country. PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) involves the use of standardized international dollar price weights, which are applied to the GDP produced in a given economy.

3. Distribute the population pyramid, graph paper and other supplies needed to produce graphs. Explain the central task to students –that they will organize and analyze the data in order to identify the EU nation country to which it applies. Students follow instructions to construct a population pyramid, a circle or bar graph showing the Labor Force, and answer questions to complete the analysis.

Developing the Activity

4. When students have completed the graphs and analysis, ask each student and/or group to present their findings to the class. They should state they country they think they have and justify their conclusion. As the presentations continue, students may identify the same country. Through your questions, help students to think about the general patterns in the EU. You may wish to display a large map of Europe and have students place a post-it note or a graph on the nation they identify to provide a visual.

Concluding the Activity

5. After all students have presented, review the correct answers and rectify why students misplaced their country. Ask students to describe the general patterns they observe. Where are per capita incomes highest? Lowest? Where is health (indicated by infant death rate and life expectancy) best? Worst? Is there a relationship between per capital income and health? Where are population growth rates highest? Lowest? What might explain this pattern? What are the implications of these trends for the EU in terms of the kinds of economic, social, and geographic services they need to provide?

As an extension, you may wish to ask students to write a brief summary and a speculation on the challenges the EU faces integrating the enlargement countries into the Union.

Answers

A = Belgium	B = France	C = Germany	D = Italy	E = Luxembourg
F = Netherlands	G = UK	H = Ireland	I = Denmark	J = Greece
K = Spain	L = Portugal	M = Austria	N = Finland	O = Sweden
P = Cyprus	Q = Czech Rep.	R = Estonia	S = Hungary	T = Latvia
U = Lithuania	V = Malta	W = Poland	X = Slovakia	Y = Slovenia