

Create A Country: A Super-Fun Geography Project

Mr. Kersey

This packet belongs to: _____

Introduction: This project will test your research skills, your critical thinking skills, and give you an opportunity to do what we all would like to do: rule your own country. It is pretty darn important for you to keep this packet handy, since it contains all the information you need to complete this project. Oh, and you ought to read this packet. Just carrying it around probably won't do you much good. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Directions: This project has several parts. You will complete each part by its due date (or before) and move on to the next portion of the project. Simple, eh?

Part I: The Research

Choose a country from Europe, or choose Russia. Research your country using the following questions as a guide. Take careful notes as you research these questions. I suggest using large 4"x6" index cards, but notebooks are okay too. You will be presenting your answers to these questions later on in your presentation.

1. What is the name of your country?
2. Where is your country located?
3. Describe the physical geography of your country. Does it have mountains? Is it an island? Is it landlocked? Does it have multiple regions?
4. Describe the climate and vegetation of your country. What kind of weather does your country normally get? Is it cold and snowy? Is it dry? Is it a desert? Does it have rain forests? Remember to take your country's physical geography into account when discussing its climate.
5. Discuss the natural resources found in your country. Do the people in your country have an abundant energy source, or are they required to import it? Do they have any resources to export? Do they mine for gold or diamonds?
6. Describe the population of your country. Where do people live? Why do they live there? Does your country have huge population, or a very small one? Is your country's population growing? Why or why not? Do people in your country migrate a lot or do they stay put?

7. Describe your country's cultural traits. What kinds of work do they do? What are their beliefs? Do they have any interesting ways of doing things? What kinds of food do they eat? What is the language of your country? Do they have multiple languages? Are there any challenges to your country's culture or cultures?
8. Describe the religion of your country's people. Are they Christians? Are they Buddhist? Are they polytheistic?
9. Describe the social structure of your country's people. Are there social classes in your country? What are they? Is family important to the people of your country? If so, are nuclear or extended families more prevalent?
10. What kind of economic system do the people of your country use? Do they use capitalism, socialism, communism? Do they have their own unique system? What is the money called in your country? Do the people even use money?
11. What kind of political system does your country have? Is it a monarchy, a direct democracy, or a dictatorship? Is your country governed by one big central government or is it run by many smaller governments at the local level?

You should be sure to keep a careful record of your sources. Write down the titles, authors, copyright dates, and publisher's information for any and all sources you use for this project. You need to complete a properly formatted bibliography (MLA format) and turn it in on the day of your presentation. You must use at least two printed sources for your research other than encyclopedias or your textbook.

Part I is due on: _____

Part II: The Country

Create a country of your own. Use your imagination. The sky is the limit. Have fun. Want your country to be underground? Go for it. Want your people to speak only in monosyllabic grunts? Fine. There are just two rules. First, it must be logical. Don't have tropical vegetation in a desert for example. Second, you must answer the same questions for your fictional country as you did for your research country. Use these questions as your checklist for making sure you have addressed all the necessary points for your country.

Part II is due on: _____

Part III: The Maps

It just wouldn't be a Geography project unless we had a couple of maps. You need to draw two maps. One map needs to be of your research country and one map needs to be of your fictional country. Each map needs to have the following elements:

Each of your maps *must* have a key, a scale, a compass rose, and any lakes, rivers, mountains, or other major physical features. They must show at least one city or town – your nation's capitol. They should show any borders it has with other countries. They should be *colorful*, creative, and neat. They should be large enough to present them to a group of people. Poster board size is a safe guide. Again - the more detail, the better.

Part III is due on: _____

Part IV: The Presentation

After you are finished with all that hard work, you are going to present your work to the class. Your presentation will be a comparison between your research country and your fictional country. You will compare and contrast the similarities and differences between these two countries. You will use your maps and any other visual aids you have created to help you.

Your presentation will be no more than 10 minutes long. Be sure to leave some time for questions. You will practice good oral presentation techniques including speaking clearly and with good volume. You will not just read your presentation from a paper or note cards, although you may use them as an aid.

Part IV, the Presentation, is on: _____

Conclusion: When you are all finished with this little project, you will have practiced and honed your research skills, your presentation skills, your critical thinking skills, and you will have thought about things like culture and political systems in new ways. Not bad for a few weeks work. Remember to have fun, and enjoy the experience of discovery and invention.

A Note on Groups: If you wish you may choose to complete this project with up to three of your fellow students. You will still be assessed individually if you choose to work in a group. If you do choose to work in a group however, be aware that my expectations increase with each additional group member. Because there are more people contributing to the finished product, that product ought to be that much better. Groups with four members should pretty much astound me with their ingenuity and the depth of their research.

Rubric: You will receive detailed rubric for this project soon. There are several standards being assessed for this project. It is possible to exceed the standards by demonstrating unique mastery of the skills and knowledge required for this assignment. If you meet all the requirements listed here, then you will certainly meet the standards. More on this will follow, but basically just do your best work.

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Map Checklist – Use this checklist to make sure you have all the necessary parts of your maps. To meet the standard here you must meet these minimum requirements.

_____ Both of my maps have a key or legend.

_____ Both of my maps have a scale.

_____ Both of my maps have a compass rose.

_____ Both of my maps have the appropriate and important physical features.

_____ Both of my maps have the nations' capitols.

_____ My maps show any borders with other countries (if applicable).

_____ My maps are creative, colorful, and neat.

_____ My maps are large enough for use in a presentation (poster board size).

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Presentation Checklist – Use this check list to help you make sure you are prepared for your presentation.

My presentation date is: _____

_____ I have completely answered each of the eleven question groups for my research country.

_____ I have completely answered each of the eleven question groups for my fictional country.

_____ I have prepared notes or index cards to help me during my presentation.

_____ I have prepared any additional visual aids necessary for my presentation.

_____ I have practiced my presentation and it is between eight and ten minutes long.

_____ I devote approximately equal time in my presentation to my research country and my fictional country.

_____ I can give my talk without reading it straight from my notes or index cards.

_____ I have a properly formatted bibliography ready to turn in on the day of my presentation.

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Record of Group Work – If you are working on this project with fellow students, use this sheet to record the work completed by each member of your group. Continue your record on the back of this sheet if you run out of room. This record sheet must be turned in on the day of your presentation, and it must be signed and dated by each member of your group.

Group Member's Name(s)

Task & Dates Worked On

Date Completed

Signatures: By signing this form, you agree with the record of the work noted above.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____