

PROJECT GEOS

UNIT OVERVIEW

This is a typical Social Studies unit - with a twist. Instead of doing activities related to the usual countries like Mexico or Argentina, students invent their own countries for a brand new planet called "Geos." Ideal for split grade classrooms, the stimulating activities in this unit place an emphasis on creativity and cooperative learning. The unit is divided into four main parts:

PART I - CREATING A COUNTRY

- A country name as well as a capital city is chosen.
- A "theme" for the country is chosen.
- A national flag is drawn.
- Students evaluate classmate's assignments.

PART II - MAP MAKING AND INFORMATION FACTSHEETS

- A map of the country is drawn.
- Information sheets describing employment and occupations of the residents is completed.
- A map showing population distribution is made.

PART III - MAJOR PROJECT

- In a contract format, students choose from innovative assignments ranging from creating a coat of arms for the country to designing traditional cultural clothes to inventing a national sport.

PART IV - ENVIRONMENTAL NIGHTMARE (optional)

- The new countries of the planet Geos are subjected to an environmental disaster.
- In the simulation, Global Warming causes a rise in sea level and massive flooding of low lying areas.

PART I - CREATING A COUNTRY

Student Activities

- Students choose a **theme** for their country, a **country name**, and a **capital city name**.
- Students design, draw, and colour a **national flag**.
- Students evaluate classmate's assignments.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

●●● Theme, Country Name, and Capital City ●●●

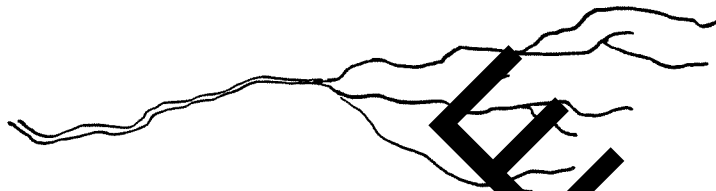
- Give students an overview of the unit, explaining some of the activities they can expect as well as the marking format that will be used.
- Divide students into pairs or groups of three (or let students choose own groups)
- A discussion of cooperative work skills is appropriate since these groups will be together for the entire two or three weeks of the project.
- Hand out one copy of the student handbook "How to Make A Country" to each group and have the students follow along.
- Explain the situation. "A new world called Geos has been created. Each group is now a country. Your job is to brainstorm a **theme** for your country, **names** for your country and its capital city.
- Students seem to have a much easier time of things if they first choose a "theme." For example, a theme could be "horses" with places like Palomino Bay, Appaloosa River, The Stirrup Mountains, and a capital city of Stallion. The country could be roughly made into the shape of a horse's head or a saddle.
- Other possible themes include: animals, birds, musical instruments, athletes, cars, dinosaurs, food, breakfast cereal, cartoon characters, Star Trek, sports equipment, hockey players, sports, WWF wrestlers, dogs, cats, insects, reptiles, mammals. One country called "Salad" used vegetables for names while another country called "Punctuation" was made in the shape of a big question mark.
- Having brainstormed a theme, groups invent a name for their country and a capital city. Students can also start thinking up names for the other cities, rivers, lakes etc. to be used in Part II of the unit.

Two cities must be located on the **coastline** for a shipping **port**. Ports are usually located in bays for protection against ocean storms and are often situated at the mouths of rivers.

Boundaries of cities should be drawn in this way. Do not colour the cities in.



Rivers start as small streams in the mountains (like tree branches) and flow to the ocean.



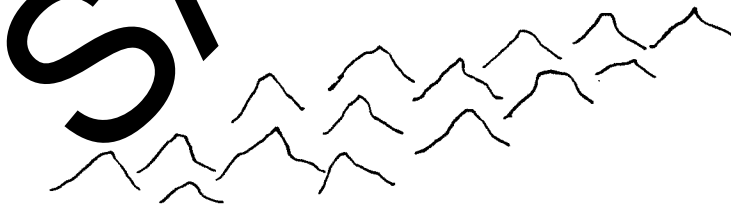
A bar scale should be drawn in the lower, right corner of the page, with one centimetre on the map equalling 10 kilometers of actual distance.

Rivers should not be drawn too wide. (Remember 1 cm. equals 10 kilometers!)

Do Not colour your map - the names will be hard to read.

Shade around the edges of the coast in a light blue fringe to show where the water is. (Do not colour the entire ocean - it takes too long!)

Mountain ranges should be drawn in this way.



Labels should be in neat **printing** (not writing)

All labels are expected to be **horizontal** - not sideways or slanted. (It is O.K. to write the names of rivers following along the river)

Draw the map first in **pencil**, then use markers to darken it later.

Hand in your finished map for marking.

FOOT

