Understanding “The Stans”

Students will gather, organize, and analyze data on the 7 countries known as “The Stans” in Central Asia.

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Grade Level
6

Duration
1-3 class periods

National Geography Standards

ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS
1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS
4. The physical and human characteristics of places.

Arizona Geography Standards

Concept 1 The World in Spatial Terms
PO 1 Construct maps, charts, and graphs to display geographic information.
PO 5 Interpret thematic maps, graphs, charts, and databases depicting various aspects of world regions.

Other Arizona Standards

ELA Common Core
6-8 Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
Key Ideas and Details
6-8.RH.2 Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

6-8 Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects
Production and Distribution of Writing
6-8.WHST.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Mathematics Common Core
Standards for Mathematical Practice

Overview

In today’s world where events happen in regions students are not familiar with, students need to have the skills necessary to organize and analyze geographic information. The ability to do this will help create a more geographically literate citizenry.

Purpose

In this lesson students will gather, organize, and analyze information on the seven countries in Central Asia known as “The Stans.”

Materials

- National Geographic Magazines, February, 2002 issue (helpful but optional)
- Country Fact Sheets
- Graphic Organizers
- Analyzing the Data Worksheet
- Central Asia Map
- Transparency of Central Asia Map
- Construction Paper
- Colored Pencils

Objectives

The student will be able to:
1. locate and label “The Stans” on a map of Central Asia.

2. create graphs and charts to organize geographic information about “The Stans.”

3. analyze geographic information about “The Stans.”

**Procedures**

Prior to teaching the lesson, you will need to make individual country folders for each of the 7 Stans. Since students will work in pairs, this will determine how many folders to make. For example, a class of 30 students means 15 folders. Each folder contains information on just one of the Stans. Tape, staple, or glue the information from the National Geographic article to the inside of the folder. If you are unable to find this issue of National Geographic, you may do the same using the Fact Sheets on “The Stans”.

**SESSION ONE**

1. Introduce the lesson by locating the seven Stans (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) on an overhead map of Central Asia while students record them on their Central Asia Map.

2. Pose these questions:
   a. Why do all these countries’ names end with “stan?” (Stan is a suffix that means place of or land of, e.g. Afghanistan is the land of the Afghans, Kazakhstan is the place of the Kazakhs.)
   b. What do you know about this region?
   c. What do these countries have in common?
      - physical landscape (desert, mountains)
      - predominantly Muslim
      - in ancient times the Silk Road and Spice Road went through them
      - issues of human rights and governance
      - five were part of the former USSR

3. On the Central Asia Map, color red the five Stans that were part of the former USSR (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan). Have students add a legend to the map to show what the red indicates.

4. Divide students into pairs. Distribute a country folder to each pair. Students will read about their country and select two or three interesting facts to share with the class. As homework, ask students to find any additional information they can about their country to bring to the next class session.

**SESSION TWO**

5. Distribute the eight graphic organizers (ethnicity pictograph, literacy bar graph, life expectancy bar graph, religion circle graph, country chart, infant mortality pictograph, GDP graph, language chart) to each pair of students.

6. Using the US data, demonstrate for students how to complete the graphic organizers.

7. Have students complete their graphic representations of the data using the country folders and any additional data they brought in. The representations will be put on a piece of construction paper with the name of their country on it.

8. Upon completion, students will post their country work on the classroom walls. The countries will be posted so a wall grouping containing all seven of the Stans. For example, a class of 28 students (working in pairs) would have 2 groups with all 7 countries. If possible have the groups posted on different sides of the classroom. Having multiple groups means students will not all be clustered in one area of the room.

**SESSION THREE**

9. Distribute Analyzing the Data Worksheet. As a pair, students analyze data from the groups posted on the classroom wall.

10. Discuss what was learned using the Analyzing the Data Worksheet.

11. Students will write a one paragraph summary of what they learned from the Analyzing the Data Worksheet that answers the question: What is it like in this region?

**Assessment**

Student graphs may be assessed for geography grade. One point could be given for having a title, one point for neatness, and one point per graph for accuracy making a total of ten points possible. A score of 8 or higher would be considered mastery.

Student paragraphs may be assessed for a writing grade using the traits of Ideas and Content, Organization, and Conventions. A score of 4 or higher in each trait would be considered mastery.

The Analyzing the Data Worksheet may be assessed for a reading grade. There are 19 points possible, so a score of 15 or higher would be considered mastery.
Extensions

Students could bring in news articles about The Stans to share with the class.

Students can complete this lesson using the internet to gather facts and document their sources. An excellent source is the CIA Factbook. (See Sources) which is the same source used to make the data sheets.

Students could do the same graphing/chart activity after researching another region of the world.

Sources

National Geographic Magazine, February, 2002
NG Magazines are often available at your local library for a small purchase price (50 cents).

The CIA Factbook www.cia.gov