

Unit 20 Comparing countries

About the unit

The focus of this unit is a comparative study of two countries at national scale; either two more economically developed countries (MEDCs), or one MEDC and one less economically developed country (LEDC).

The unit aims to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of places by encouraging them to explore their perceptions of the selected countries (see also unit 12 'Images of a country'). Throughout this unit pupils develop their skills of independent geographical enquiry.

Although based around a national-scale study, the key question structure of the unit may be adapted for regional or smaller-scale studies.

This unit is expected to take 12–20 hours.

Key aspects

Geographical enquiry and skills

Pupils will:

- ask geographical questions
- suggest investigation sequences
- analyse evidence/to draw conclusions
- use atlases/globes/maps
- use secondary evidence
- communicate, including using ICT

Knowledge and understanding of places

Pupils will:

- locate places and environments
- describe scale contexts
- describe and explain physical and human features
- investigate changes in places
- explore interdependence and global citizenship

Knowledge and understanding of patterns and processes

Explored through:

- two countries in different states of economic development

Knowledge and understanding of environmental change and sustainable development

Not focused on

Expectations

At the end of this unit

most pupils will: compare two selected countries and show how physical and human processes interact to produce their distinctive characteristics and how they may lead to changes; appreciate the many links and relationships that make these countries dependent on others; suggest relevant geographical questions and appropriate sequence of investigation of their selected countries; select and use effectively a range of skills and sources of evidence; present their findings in a coherent way and reach conclusions that are consistent with the evidence

some pupils will not have made so much progress and will: describe and begin to explain geographical patterns in two selected countries; describe how physical and human processes can lead to similarities and differences within and between them; recognise some of the links and relationships that make countries dependent on others; begin to suggest relevant questions and begin to select and use appropriate skills and sources of evidence to help them investigate their selected countries; begin to suggest plausible conclusions and present their findings both graphically and in writing

some pupils will have progressed further and will: compare two countries and describe interactions within and between physical and human processes; begin to explain how these interactions create geographical patterns and help to explain changes in these countries; identify the many links that make countries dependent on others; identify geographical questions and establish their own sequence of investigation of the selected countries; select and use accurately a wide range of skills and evaluate critically sources of evidence; present well-argued summaries of their investigations and begin to reach substantiated conclusions

Prior learning

It is helpful if pupils have:

- considered the characteristics of more/less economically developed countries (MEDCs/LEDCs)
- practised asking and answering geographical questions and carried out mini-enquiries
- interpreted a wide range of statistical, graphical and cartographical information, and constructed choropleth maps

Language for learning

Through the activities in this unit pupils understand, use and spell correctly words relating to:

- comparison, *eg similarity, difference, probable, preferred, links*

Writing – through the activities pupils could:

- organise content into a whole piece with the relationship between points/paragraphs clearly signalled

Reading – through the activities pupils could:

- appraise texts quickly and effectively for their usefulness

Resources

Resources include:

- atlases
- world map outlines
- class wall map
- newspapers
- recordings of television and radio news broadcasts
- internet access to a variety of sites including newspapers
- information texts
- CD-ROMs
- comparison grids
- example geographical digest entries
- websites to help find link schools:
 - Central Bureau (British Council) www.britcoun.org/cbeve/
 - North South School Linking (formerly Education Partners Overseas) www.oneworld.org/epo/
 - Windows on the World www.wotw.org.uk
 - Virtual Teachers' Centre <http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk/resource/cits/geog>

Future learning

The unit develops the skills of independent learning which are fundamental to many aspects of GCSE Geography, especially its coursework components. It provides a foundation of useful geographical knowledge about countries and their regions, which can be drawn on to illustrate case studies at GCSE level.

Links

The activities in this unit link with:

- other geography units – unit 6 'World sport', unit 12 'Images of a country', unit 18 'The global fashion industry'
- ICT – using e-mail and internet search engines
- thinking skills – developing criteria
- citizenship – identifying links between countries

Which countries are we going to compare and why?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to select two countries for comparison | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to pupils the purpose of the unit and ask them to choose two countries (excluding the UK) they would like to compare from a list compiled by the teacher and pupils to reflect departmental resources and pupil interests. Ask pupils to explain their choice briefly to the rest of the class. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give valid reasons for their choice of countries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both countries could be MEDCs, <i>eg so that major economic nations are compared</i>, or one could be an MEDC and the other an LEDC. • This framework could also be used for comparing regions or localities. • ICT: school links or e-mail links could be a valuable method of exchanging information. If e-mail links are used, this will need to be planned in advance. There are a number of sites to help find link schools, see 'Resources' section. |
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Where are the countries I am going to compare?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to use atlases, globes and maps at a range of scales • to determine the geographical contexts of places | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to locate and label their chosen countries, the UK and the continents on a map of the world, and add relevant lines of latitude and longitude. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurately locate their countries on a world map and describe their global context • use latitude and longitude to delimit the extent of countries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chosen countries may be marked on a wall display. |
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What image do I have of these countries?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to think critically about images and to challenge stereotypes • to use secondary sources of evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help pupils to use their general knowledge to answer a set of basic questions about their chosen countries, <i>eg area, population, temperature, rainfall, per capita GNP, adult literacy</i>, and to write down their two or three main images of/ideas about the two countries. • Ask them to check their answers and images/ideas, using atlases and basic reference books, to determine their level of accuracy. <i>What might explain the answers they gave? Which questions/images/ideas do they need to find out more about?</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recall some basic facts about their chosen countries • understand that images of other countries are often based on partial knowledge and more research is often necessary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils who have chosen the same countries may work together. |
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How are my countries portrayed in the media?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to use secondary sources of evidence, including evidence from ICT sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to search a run of newspapers (three–four weeks) and make a note of the stories about their chosen countries. Ask them to display the headlines and to decide whether the images created by these stories are positive, negative or neutral. Arrange for some pupils in turn to monitor television and/or radio news broadcasts and for others to analyse the top 10 websites about their chosen countries, using an internet search engine. The findings of both groups may be listed and classified. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe how and why their countries are portrayed in the media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school librarian may be able to help with the newspaper task. • A representative selection of the headlines may be added to the class wall map. • ICT: searches of newspaper and television sites can be made on the web. |
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Learning objectives

Pupils should learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**What do I need to find out about these countries?**

- to ask geographical questions and suggest appropriate sequences for investigation
- to select and use secondary sources of evidence
- to analyse evidence and draw and justify conclusions
- to describe and explain the physical and human features that give rise to the distinctive character of countries
- to identify differences in development within/between countries
- Give pupils an opportunity to suggest questions for their investigation, to put them into a sensible order and to suggest where they will find the answers. (All pupils need to research physical and human features, details of countries' levels of development and ways in which they are changing.) The purpose of the investigation should be reiterated: to compare the two countries using a range of resources, including reference books, textbooks and websites. At least two weeks, including homework, should be given for the research. Some pupils will need considerable support in the choice of material and suitable prompts to extract information. Other pupils may be given the opportunity to work with a greater degree of independence.
- produce a detailed geographical profile of the physical, human and developmental characteristics of their chosen countries, using a range of resources
- ICT: to gain information, pupils could use internet search engines, or e-mail and fax to communicate with people in another country.
- Language for learning: this activity provides an opportunity for pupils to appraise texts quickly and effectively for their usefulness.

How and why are these countries similar and different?

- to compare two countries and identify main similarities and differences
- Ask pupils to complete a grid to highlight similarities and differences between the countries. Ask them to select what they think are the three main similarities and the three main differences (excluding changes, see activity below) and to suggest explanations for them, in writing. Some pupils may need more support with explanations.
- identify, describe and explain the main similarities and differences between their chosen countries

Are there differences within each country?

- to identify regional differences that exist within a country
- to compare two regions – one from each of the different countries
- Discuss with pupils the concept of 'region' – formal, functional and administrative. Help them to use atlas maps and text to produce overlay maps showing the main regions of each country. Ask them to add notes about key features.
- Discuss with pupils how they might set about comparing two regions within a country. Get them to agree a strategy and to do this in pairs/groups, tabulating/recording their responses.
- Set a writing task for individual pupils – they are to imagine that a region of one country is 'twinned' with a contrasting region of the other country, and as a citizen of one country, they have visited the other. Ask them to write a five-minute talk to give to the local 'twinning' organisation, focusing on comparisons between the two regions. Agree an outline structure with the whole class, including useful connecting phrases (see unit 12, 'Images of a country') and remind them about an appropriate level of formality for the writing. Weaker writers may need more structured support.
- correctly name and locate major regions within each country on maps and add notes about key human and physical features of each region
- give a detailed description of two regions
- compare and contrast two regions, one drawn from each country being compared
- describe and compare features of contrasting regions
- There is the opportunity in this section to return to the theme of population and change, ie to explore the causes and effects of changes in the population of regions and countries, including migration.
- Mixed-ability grouping may help support lower attaining pupils.
- Language for learning: this activity provides an opportunity for pupils to organise content into a whole piece, with the relationship between points/paragraphs clearly signalled.

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
Pupils should learn:		Pupils:	
Are these countries changing for the same or different reasons?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify how and why places change to consider probable and preferred futures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce pupils to the idea that countries are dynamic and ask them to find evidence of change and to suggest why there is change. <i>Are the countries changing for similar or different reasons? What might explain their findings?</i> Ask them to record their findings in an appropriate way. Some pupils may need to be given a structure to record their findings. Ask pupils to use the notes to write two imaginary entries for <i>one</i> of their countries for a geographical digest in 2050: one entry for what they think the country will probably be like and one for what they would prefer the country to be like. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe and explain the main changes affecting their chosen countries predict future trends for their chosen country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some pupils will need greater direction, <i>eg in using spider diagrams, tables.</i> Pupils' entries could be compiled as a class geographical digest.
Are these countries connected a) with each other, b) with the UK? Why?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to select and use secondary sources of evidence, including the internet to select and use appropriate techniques to present evidence to explore how countries are interdependent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask pupils, in groups, to suggest what sort of links there might be between countries, <i>eg political links, trade links, travel links, sporting links, cultural links and environmental links.</i> Ask them to identify the links between the two countries and with the UK, using a range of resources. The links may be presented diagrammatically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify ways in which their countries are linked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links with previous units, <i>eg unit 6 'World sport', unit 18 'The global fashion industry', unit 19 'Tourism – good or bad?'</i>. A further exploration of cultural links could contribute to pupils' cultural development.
What image do I have of these countries now?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to reflect on their own views, on their way of working and how they might improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with pupils how they might review what they have learnt, <i>eg by returning to their first piece of work in the unit. How has their image of the two countries changed? Why? Which activities did they find the easiest to undertake? What will they need to work on to improve next time?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify how their own ideas have developed identify as a result of reflection what element of their work needs to be improved and how that might be achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How pupils' knowledge and understanding of their chosen countries has changed as a result of their research could be the basis for a class assembly. Thinking skills: this activity provides an opportunity for pupils to develop criteria for finding the value of their own work and ideas, and to have confidence in their judgements.