

## Delaware Recommended Curriculum

This unit has been created as an exemplary model for teachers in (re)design of course curricula. An exemplary model unit has undergone a rigorous peer review and jurying process to ensure alignment to selected Delaware Content Standards.

**Unit Title:** Partnerships and Partitions

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Portions of this unit were adapted with permission for the Delaware Recommended Curriculum from [National Geographic's Beyond Borders: Exploring European Physical and Cultural Landscapes in Grades 6-8](#).

**Content Area:** Social Studies

**Grade Level:** 7

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### Summary of Unit

This unit is about the reasons people divide up space - in their heads and on the ground. It looks at the causes and the effects of a human tendency to establish, identify with, and defend territory. The world regions of Europe and the Middle East provide excellent examples of the tendency of humans to divide space - and the opportunities for conflict and cooperation that result.

Students learn about situations where people have chosen to cooperate across borders, and also times when borders have increased tensions and led to increased conflict. But borders can change as conditions on the ground evolve through time. When there is a big disparity between borders and the patterns of culture or interests of people in the area, conflicts often surface. What happens when two groups claim the same territory, or when political borders are drawn that divides a cultural group?

Three lessons prepare students to demonstrate mastery of this benchmark.

- [Lesson One](#) examines how borders and boundaries can affect the lives of people in general and establishes the link between cultural identity and territory, using Europe as the context.
- [Lesson Two](#) examines the concepts of cooperation and conflict that arise along borders and develops them through a case study exploring a dispute over projects along the Danube River.
- [Lesson Three](#) applies conflict and cooperation to the conflicts of the Middle East. Students learn how water resources may become the subject of dispute or cooperative efforts in another world region. Then, applying conflict and cooperation to cultural matters, they learn how three religious groups may lay competing claims to the same territory. Through role playing and dialogue, students begin to understand the perspectives of the groups, and recognize the complexity of finding solutions to border disputes.

The transfer task challenges students to apply what they have learned to another problem of territorial identity - a people without a political territory.

**Stage 1 – Desired Results**  
What students will know, do, and understand

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**Delaware Content Standards**

- **Geography Standard Four 6-8b:** Students will explain how conflict and cooperation among people contribute to the division of the Earth's surface into distinctive cultural and political territories.

**Big Ideas**

- Territory
- Borders
- Boundaries

**Unit Enduring Understandings**

- Borders define political regions; political borders are hard to change.
- Boundaries of cultural regions are usually blurry and subject to change.

**Unit Essential Questions**

- Why are borders located where they are?
- How can physical features interact with country borders to cause conflict?
- How might sharing a physical border cause countries to either cooperate or be in conflict?

**Knowledge and Skills**

Students will know...

- Definitions and examples of formal, functional and perceptual regions
- Definitions and examples of cultural, physical, and economic regions
- Examples of borders that follow physical features and abstract borders
- Expressions of cooperation (shared access, trade, international ventures)
- Expressions of conflict (Legal disputes, political unrest, military action)
- Examples of political borders that changed over time

Students will be able to...

- Suggest borders or regional boundaries that will minimize conflict
- Identify or predict the likely result of a proposed border or boundary change

## Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Evidence that will be collected to determine whether or not Desired Results are achieved

### Transfer Task

Now that you have learned about territory and how conflicts and cooperation can influence the drawing of borders, it's time to demonstrate your understanding.



### TAKE A STAND ON KURDISH INDEPENDENCE!

The Kurds are a cultural group in the Middle East. They have their own language and customs. Most of them live in the mountains where the borders of Turkey, Iran and Iraq meet. This highland area is the source of rivers that flow into Iraq, Turkey and Iran. Oil deposits are also found in Kurdish areas

But the Kurds do not have their own country. Instead, Kurdish territory is divided among Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. The Kurds are a minority group in each of the four neighboring countries. Many Kurds would like to have a country where they are the majority, and Kurdish culture would be valued and supported.

Some people are proposing a new country called Kurdistan. The boundaries of this proposed country are shown in the map. The new country would include parts of Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Supporters of this plan claim that redrawing the map will solve problems. But will it cause more problems than it solves? You be the judge!

You have been invited to share your views on the proposed new country in a video clip for your student TV station. For your clip to be aired, you must clearly take a side for or against independence. Develop a set of up to 5 talking points. Write out your main ideas and key facts you want to remember to mention. For maximum effect, use the key words territory, border, conflict and cooperation in your presentation

Prepare one slide or poster to be shown during a "cut-away" during your presentation. Select the photos, map or other graphic carefully to support your talking points.

Your talking points and visual will be submitted to the show producers in advance of the interview.

## Rubric

Score Point	1	2	3	4
Understanding of Territorial Expression of Culture is...	Basic or unevenly applied to the aspects of the issue. OR Student takes no position on this issue of cultural territorial expression	Evident, but vocabulary related to culture or territory may be applied inappropriately or be missing from the presentation	Evident in either talking points or visual. Geographic terms are generally used well.	Clearly evident in talking points and supported by visual. Geographic words are correctly used.
Understanding of Conflict and Cooperation in relation with Boundaries and Borders is...	Basic, but evident; no references to the map or facts provided. OR The student takes no position on the effect of changing the international borders.	Evident, but vocabulary related to borders, conflicts and cooperation may be missing or inaccurately applied.	Clearly evident and vocabulary is used appropriately in talking points or. Visual	Clearly evident and vocabulary is used appropriately.. The visual clearly reinforces ideas of border conflict or cooperation.
Understanding effects of border changes. References to the effects of border changes are...	Basic and do not refer to effects of changes in cultural life in regions.	Are evident. Some reference is made to the effects of discrepancies between cultural regions and political borders.	Are evident. References to potential effects of border changes are supported by references to data or visuals.	Are evident. References to potential effects of border changes are supported by references to data and visuals.

## Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Design learning activities to align with Stage 1 and Stage 2 expectations

### Lesson One: Drawing Borders<sup>1</sup>

#### Essential Question

- Why are borders located where they are?

#### Background

An area of the earth's surface with which people identify culturally or politically is termed a *territory*. Invariably, a territory is a formal region, defined by specific borders (though not always recognized by neighbors). The space within a territory is often regarded as a part of one's political or cultural definition. As such, it is exclusive and not able to be shared with others because to do so would dilute the identity it represents. In a perfect world, the world's political territories would each reflect the sovereignty of the people who occupy them. Unfortunately, cooperation such as that which produces the stable Canadian-U.S. border is not always the norm. Many active and latent conflicts exist in which different people lay claim to the same territory: in Northern Ireland between Protestants and Catholics, in northern Spain between Castilians and Basques, in Israel between Jews and Palestinians. Students should understand that the present-day division of the earth's surface into political and cultural regions is the result of the *current* consequences of conflict and cooperation between states and ethnic groups. Boundaries between groups have not always been stable, and claims over territory based on the discovery of new resources (e.g., oil) or the movement of people (e.g., illegal Salvadoran settlers in sparsely populated Honduras) can destabilize regional boundaries.<sup>2</sup>

#### Important Concepts

- Border: An imaginary line separating one political division, such as a country, state, province or county, from another
- Country: A recognized territory whose government is the highest legal authority over the land and the people living within its boundaries
- Region: An area with one or more common characteristics or features, which give it a measure of homogeneity and make it different from surrounding areas

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<sup>1</sup> This lesson is adapted with permission for the Delaware Recommended Curriculum from [National Geographic's Beyond Borders: Exploring European Physical and Cultural Landscapes in Grades 6-8](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Understanding the Geography Standards grade 6-8, page 10](#)

## Instructional Strategies

### Strategy 1: Gathering Information

#### Think-Pair-Share<sup>3</sup>

Use a Think-Pair-Share strategy for students. Ask each student to think of a time he or she crossed a political boundary or border.

How did you know where the border was?

Would the border be visible from outer space?

Have each student pair with a partner to talk about their answers together, then with the class.

Conduct a short discussion with the class raising questions about the words “border” and “region.”

What do those words mean to students?

Why do people define regions or countries in any given area?

### Check for Understanding

Ask students to think about borders in their community or state.

- How were the borders defined?
- Do they follow a physical feature in the landscape?
- Do they follow cultural differences between people on either side of the border?

### Strategy 2: Extending and Refining

#### Drawing Political Borders

Explain to students that in their activity today, they will work in a small group to set borders and define regions in an area of land.

Teacher Note: A transparency of the [set of maps \(Drawing Political Borders\)](#) could be cut in quarters, and the maps placed on top of one another to show students the interplay of physical and cultural features.

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Have students work in groups of two. Provide each group with a [set of maps \(Drawing Political Borders\)](#) that show physical and cultural features of a fictitious area.

Challenge each group to draw country borders in the area, based on how they think the land should be divided. For best effect, the teacher **should not** provide further guidance, such as the number of regions, purpose of the boundaries, or what lies beyond the mapped area. This activity is intended as a discussion starter to bring out student ideas about how regions are defined, and how land and resources should be divided among countries.

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<sup>3</sup> Each individual student takes approximately one minute to think about an answer or solution and record their thoughts. The student then pairs up with another student and they discuss their answers or solutions together. Each pair responds for consideration by the entire class. <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/cl1/CL/doingcl/thinkps.htm>

Have students use the information in three of the maps — Religions, Mountains and Rivers, and Languages — to determine where they would place borders in the Outline map. The group should come to a decision together and should take notes about why they drew the borders where they did. Give students about 10 minutes to draw their borders.

Once students complete the drawing of borders, ask questions to better understand what students are thinking:

- Do you think physical features such as rivers are more important than cultural ones, such as language, in setting borders? Why or why not?
- What would happen if you split this physical feature between two countries? Would people in the countries be able to share the land and/or resources or would they constantly fight over its use?
- What would happen if a country has a mix of different cultural features (language, religion, etc.)?
- Will this impact how the people can live and work together in that country?

### Check for Understanding

- Physical features like rivers and mountain ranges are often used to form boundaries. Name at least one advantage and one disadvantage of using physical features as international boundaries.
- Have each group use [this worksheet](#) to compile their reasons for why they drew the borders where they did. They will share these reasons with the class in Strategy 3.

### Strategy 3: Application

#### Think-Pair-Square<sup>4</sup>

Have students use a Think-Pair-Square strategy to analyze the problem of drawing the borders.

- What information was not provided that would have made their job easier? (For example, are there coastlines? How big is the total area? How many people live here? What is the climate? Where are the closest markets?)
- How might this information have impacted the regions and borders they set?

Ask students to discuss the number of the regions they established and the reasons borders were placed. (For example, students might have attempted to divide the space evenly; others may report that they tried to reduce conflict by keeping cultural groups together.)

Ask students whether they agree or disagree with the reasons other students gave for placing borders. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers; the point of the discussion is to bring out many perspectives.

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<sup>4</sup> This [activity](#) is built on the foundation of Think/Pair/Share without the class reporting. Then, after Think/Pair/Share takes place the partners team up with another set of partners creating groups of four students. Each group compares & contrasts the two sets of answers or solutions. From the two the group decides on a compromise. The whole class reports out on their decisions.

Ask students to speculate what other things might shape country borders (besides the physical and cultural features they looked at in this lesson). Students might list things such as wars between countries, natural resources, dividing land evenly between different groups, etc.

Have each original group of two students re-examine their [original list of reasons from Strategy 2](#) for why they drew the borders where they did. Have this pair share with a 2<sup>nd</sup> pair of students to further refine the list.

Reveal to the students that the landmass they used in this exercise was adapted from the continent of Europe. (The shape is rotated and distinguishing peninsulas were removed, but language, ethnic groups and physical features are correct.) Tell students that their ideas about where borders should be placed in Europe may apply in other world regions. Keep the list of [Reasons for Regions](#) for the class to refer to in later lessons, to see if their ideas have changed.

### **Check for Understanding**

- Why are borders located where they are? Explain your answer with a geographic example.

### *Rubric*

2 – This response gives a valid explanation with an accurate and relevant example.

1 – This response gives a valid explanation with an inaccurate, irrelevant, or no example.

### *Sample Responses*

2 – Borders are located by physical features because they don't change very often. For example, the Great Lakes border between Canada and the U.S. is easy to identify.

1 – Borders are shaped by where different cultures end up settling. Two different cultures might set a border between them.



## Lesson Two: Conflict and Cooperation in Czechoslovakia

### Essential Question

- How can physical features interact with country borders to cause conflict?

### Background

This case study illustrates how physical features can interact with country borders to cause conflict. In this case, two countries agreed to work together to build a series of dams on the Danube River, but problems kept the project from being completed, and the conflict continues 40 years later.

### Important Concepts

- Conflict: Incompatibility of one idea, desire, event, or activity with another
- Dams: Structures built across a river to control the flow of water
- Environment: The sum of the conditions that surround and influence an organism
- Flood: The rising and overflowing of a body of water onto land that is not normally covered with water

Unfamiliar Place Names:

Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia)

Hungary

Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros (Pronunciation: gob-CHET-ko-vo NAHJ-mo-ra)

### Instructional Strategies

#### Strategy 1: Gathering Information

[Click here for the handout for this scenario](#): Farmer Brown is located in the uplands of a river. Mrs. Jones owns property in the mid-stream area, and Fisherman Wilson operates near the mouth of the stream.

The question posed to students is:

- What happens to these three neighbors if Mrs. Jones decides to build a dam for a lumber mill on her property?

#### Strategy 2: Gathering information Selective Highlighting

Have students read [Rivers and the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project](#).<sup>5</sup>

#### Teacher Tip

During directed reading, students can use highlighter pens of different colors or bookmark tags to identify pros and cons or evidence of conflict and cooperation.

<sup>5</sup> This reading has a [lexile measure](#) of 1050, appropriate for the Common Core State Standards 6-8 grade cluster.

As the students read, ask them to:

- Identify one benefit, or positive outcome, that might result from the project, and one drawback, or negative outcome
- Find evidence of cooperation along the Danube and evidence of conflict
- Tell how people in the region have tried to settle this dispute.

Map reading: Students should use two reference maps: [The Danube River and Gabčíkovo Dam](#) and [Gabčíkovo Dam](#) to identify the locations and borders mentioned in the reading.

- Locate the area of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project on the map of the Danube River.
- Which countries are upstream of the project? Which countries are downstream?
- Where is the Danube River in relation to the country borders in the area? Based on the borders, who should control the river? Why?

### **Strategy 3: Extending and Refining**

#### **Think-Pair-Square<sup>6</sup>**

Divide the class into groups of approximately four students. Assign each group to discuss and construct an answer for these questions:

- Why would countries downstream from the dam care about the project? Countries upstream? Should they be allowed to help make decisions about the dams?
- In building the Cunovo dam and diversion canal, more than 80 percent of the water from the Danube River was moved out of its original course. How would this affect the people living along the original course of the river? How might it cause conflict?

#### **Check for Understanding**

- Why might this project help improve life in your countries?
- Why it is an example of international cooperation that other countries should follow?
- Explain the physical geography and the economic and political situation of the area as part of your press release.

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<sup>6</sup> This [activity](#) is built on the foundation of Think-Pair-Share without the class reporting. After Think-Pair-Share takes place, the partners team up with another set of partners creating groups of four students. Each group compares the two sets of answers or solutions. From the two the group decides on a compromise. The whole class reports out on their decisions.

## **Strategy 4: Application**

### **Laser Talk**

Have students work in groups of 2-3. Each group is assigned to present the case of either the Hungarians or the Czechs on the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project. (Since it is important that both viewpoints be represented, the teacher may have to assign groups for each side.)

Each group will prepare a [Laser Talk](#). Many geographers and planners make presentations to audiences about a particular topic. A laser talk is a format that a presentation could take which attempts to influence audience members to take a stand.

#### **Tips for delivering a laser talk:**

- **Get your listener's attention** with a dramatic fact or short statement. Keep this opening statement to one sentence if possible. For instance, you could say: "I know you share my concern about improving the environment."
- **Present causes** of the problem you introduced in the first section. How serious is the problem?
- **Suggest a solution** to the problem you just presented.
- **Be specific about what you want to do.**

[Click here for a Laser Talk rubric](#) designed to measure student performance for **Geography Standard Four 6-8b** and the **ELA CCSS Speaking and Listening Standard 4**.

## Lesson Three: Conflict and Cooperation in the Middle East

### Essential Question

- How might sharing a physical border cause countries to either cooperate or be in conflict?

### Instructional Strategies

#### Strategy 1: Gathering Information

Begin by asking students to transfer river systems concepts to rivers of the Middle East. Display the [Map of Rivers in Asia](#) or similar image and ask:

- Where are the headlands of the Nile? The Tigris and Euphrates?
- How might people in upstream areas influence people living downstream?

Help students relate settlement patterns to watersheds and river basins. Use the [Water Maps Set](#), which includes short readings and questions to reinforce that watersheds are functional regions based on water use, while countries are formal political regions.

#### Strategy 2: Extending and Refining

Use the student reading [Water in the Middle East: Conflict or Cooperation?](#)<sup>7</sup> to emphasize the scarcity of water in the Middle East and the probability that access to water in an arid region might lead to conflict or present opportunities for cooperation.<sup>8</sup>

Introduce cultural conflict and cultural affiliation with territory in Middle East. Provide background information on the three great religions that originated in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and the cultural ties and claims they make on the City of Jerusalem by using [Jerusalem: A Holy City by Gale Ekiss, Arizona Geographic Alliance](#).

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<sup>7</sup> This reading has a [lexile measure](#) of 1010, appropriate for the Common Core State Standards 6-8 grade cluster.

<sup>8</sup> An additional resource is a downloadable clip from PBS News Hour, [A Struggle for Water Resources in Middle East Conflict](#) with teacher's guide, posted on October 6, 2010. The video clip explores this issue in more depth, with more insight into efforts to cooperate and share resources.

### Strategy 3: Application

#### Thinking Like a Geographer

Have students read [Do Good Fences Really Make Good Neighbors?](#) Provide copies of [Map 1](#) and [Map 2](#) for pairs of students to use as they read. Student pairs should complete the *Thinking Like a Geographer* questions on the reading. It's important that students complete the questions for [Map 1](#) first before moving on to [Map 2](#).

For Map 1:

- How might partitioning the city lead to peace among the city residents of different faiths? In what ways might this traditional solution lead to increased conflicts?
- How might this map change if present trends continue?

For Map 2:

- Which quarter is likely to have the most visits from people of other faiths?  
*The Muslim Quarter; it contains three Christian shrines.*
- Use the map to plan a route for a tour group from each of the religious faiths. Which group will have the most contact with people from other faiths? *Christian pilgrims would have the most contact.* Which group is likely to have the least contact?  
*Muslims - only one site is outside the Muslim Quarter.*
- Based on the map, what places in the Old City might have the most potential for conflict? *The Temple Mount (lower right hand corner) has the greatest potential, with two Muslim sites and a Jewish site in very close proximity. Other potential trouble spots are wherever two faiths have a site side-by-side.*
- What steps might leaders take to reduce misunderstandings and conflicts in the Old City? Suggested answers - *Street signs and announcements could be made in several languages. Rules about required clothing, restricted items, traffic flow, and visiting hours, could be clearly posted on signs and given to tour guides and visitors. Security guards and visitor guides should be trained in cultural differences.*

### Additional Resources

- [Dispute over Danube Dam Threatens Hungarian Wetlands \(NY Times, July 1993\)](#)<sup>9</sup>
- [Explore water usage in the larger Middle East with an emphasis on problem solving based on data analysis.](#)

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<sup>9</sup> This article's lexile level is 1290, above the expectations for the 6-8 grade band, but its difficult place names account for the increase.