

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article 'Celebrating the 75th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations charter'

Issue September/October 2020



Time:

120 Minutes

Developed by:

Canadian Geographic Education

Overview/focus question:

Why was the United Nations formed? How many countries are part of the United Nations? What does the United Nations do? What is a coat of arms and what does the UN coat of arms represent? What are the Sustainable Development Goals? Why are the SDGs important?

Subject/topic:

Physical Geography, History, Mapping

Grade level:

Grade 6 - 10

Learning Goals

- Students will learn the history of the United Nations and examine a map of the countries that were part of the organization at its inception.
- Students will explore different coats of arms and the role that symbols play in a coat of arms.
- Students will create their own country and decide the different geographical features of their country.
- Students will learn about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Materials Needed

- Print or online copies of "[Celebrating the 75th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations charter](#)" by Michela Rosano in the September/October 2020 edition of *Canadian Geographic* (pages 26-27)
- A projector
- Computers or devices to access Google Earth
- Coat of Arms worksheet
- Poster board, pencil and markers/crayons

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Connection to the Canadian Geography Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Spatial significance
- Patterns and trends
- Interrelationships
- Geographic perspective

Inquiry Process

- Ask geographic questions
- Interpret and analyze
- Communicate
- Reflect and respond

Geospatial Skills

- Foundational elements
- Spatial representations

Lesson Description

Minds on

Students will familiarize themselves with different countries and learn about the 193 countries that are part of the United Nations. Students will read the *Canadian Geographic* article "[Celebrating the 75th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations charter](#)" by Michela Rosano and look at the coat of arms of various countries. Students will complete the Coat of Arms worksheet.

Action

In groups, students will create their own countries, coats of arms, and descriptions of their country. As a class, students will learn about the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. They will choose a goal to focus on (in groups) and create a poster about it.

Conclusion

Students will present their posters to the class and discuss the different goals.

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

Using a projector, display Google Earth and ask students to name different countries. When a country is named, pull it up on Google Earth for your students to see. If students are struggling to name different countries, use the "I'm Feeling Lucky" tool on the left-hand sidebar to explore different countries that your students may not know. Ask students if they know how many countries there are in the world and take answers until students give you the correct answer of 195 countries.

Next, ask students what they do when they get upset with someone in their class. After taking their answers, ask students what they think countries would do if they got mad at another country. Explain that this is one of the reasons the United Nations was formed, to help when countries have disagreements, and that 193 countries are part of the United Nations.

Have your students read "Celebrating the 75th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations charter" by Michela Rosano. Using a projector, display the map that is in the *Canadian Geographic* article "Celebrating the 75th anniversary of the signing

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of the United Nations charter” and ask your students to look at the different flags and coats of arms that they see around the map. A coat of arms is a collection of symbols that create a representation of a person, family, or country.

Instruct students to choose a coat of arms to research. Students are going to complete the Coat of Arms worksheet and answer questions regarding the different symbols, their meanings and the history of the coat of arms.

Action

Next, students are going to get into small groups and create their own countries. Students will choose what to name their country, where the country will be located in the world, what kind of climate their country is going to have and what society is like in their country. Based on all of these factors, students will create a coat of arms to represent their new country, using their knowledge of the symbols they researched previously.

After students have all created their new countries, ask them to list the basic human needs that everyone in their country should have. Ask students what needs they think are most important.

Give students 15 minutes to create a list, then ask students to share different items on their list and discuss them as a class. Make a list together of the basic needs that were common among all the groups. Once you have made a list as a class, explain that most people in the world don't have access to all of these things. Introduce students to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which the United Nations would like to see accomplished by the end of 2030. Display the goals for students to see and read over the 17 goals as a class.

After you have reviewed all 17 goals, ask students to return to their groups and have them pick one of the 17 SDGs for their country to focus on and explain why it is important for their society.

Have students create a poster that displays their country's name, their coat of arms, the geographical region in which the country is located, the climate and the SDG their country is going to focus on.

Conclusion and Consolidation

Have students present their posters as a group to the class. Each group will explain their posters and the class can ask questions about their country.

Have a class discussion about why the SDGs are important for everyone to work towards together, even if some people already have access to these things.

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Extend your geographical thinking

- Have students' posters displayed around the school to teach others about SDGs.
- Create a blog where students can share ways to support the SDGs.
- Have students take part in a debate about which SDG is the most important.
- Have students create and participate in a model United Nations.

Modifications

- Complete the worksheet as a class or in small groups.
- The students could focus on already existing countries rather than creating their own.
- Students can complete this activity virtually.
- Students can complete the whole activity independently rather than having class discussions.
- Presentations can be done as a gallery walk rather than individual group presentations.

Assessment Opportunities

- Assess students' learning based on their participation in discussion throughout the lesson.
- Assess students' learning through the completion of the worksheet.
- Assess students' oral presentations.
- This activity could be handed in for a formal assessment.

Sources and Additional resources

- sdgs.un.org/goals

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COAT OF ARMS

1. Draw a picture of the coat of arms from the country of your choice:

2. What symbols do you notice on the coat of arms?

3. What do these symbols represent?

4. What is the history behind the coat of arms?

5. Is there anything you would change about the coat of arms to fit the geography of this country in 2020?

