

**National Council for Geographic Education
Curriculum & Instruction Committee
Elementary Level Geography Club**

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Overview

Geography is an important discipline at all levels of education. At the elementary level students are naturally curious about the world around them. Teachers or others who work with students are always looking for ways to build on this natural curiosity and excitement for learning new things. Often there is not time during the instructional day to go deeper and spend time on geography projects and in-depth lessons. One way to answer this need is to sponsor and form a Geography Club at school.

The first step in forming a Geography Club is to seek approval from your administrator. Most schools support clubs of this type. Next, assess if there is sufficient interest among students. You will need to determine what grade levels your club will serve; probably upper elementary grades 3 – 5 or higher. Another consideration is supervision and assistance for the club sponsor. Possibilities might include pre-service teachers from a local college, parent volunteers, high school service clubs, or high school students interested in education.

When and how often your Geography Club meets is a local decision. Some schools have a built-in club/activity time during the school day, however most clubs will need to meet after school. Seeking parent permission for after-school activities and arranging for transportation home should follow local policy. It is suggested that the Geography Club meet once or twice a month. Consider also how long each meeting will be, for example 45 minutes to 1 hour. Remember that students have been in school all day – adding too much time may be counterproductive.

Another consideration is funding. See if your school has money budgeted for club activities. If not, consider requesting money from the school PTA or local civic club such as the Rotary or Kiwanis Clubs. Activities are not necessarily expensive, but some materials may need to be purchased.

Determine where your club will meet. A classroom or multi-purpose room will work fine. Some activities will call for group work and movement about the room. Access to computers and the Internet is desirable, so computer access, especially a lab, should be considered.

Once you have addressed these items you are ready to get started. The activities and resources presented on this website are suggestions. You can evaluate them in light of the students who attend your Geography Club. Feel free to adapt any of the activities to suit your needs. Good luck and enjoy your Geography Club!

Materials Needed for a Geography Club

The activities presented will probably require materials that are readily available in most classrooms or media centers. A wall map of the world, atlases, almanacs, and other reference books are suggested. A list of Internet references is included in the “Resources” section. Other materials include colored pencils and/or markers, construction paper and similar supplies.

Monthly Activities for Geography Clubs

Activities for Geography Clubs are posted on the website of the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE), www.ncge.org, for every month of the academic year. The activities are based on the National Geography Standards and are designed to engage students with high-interest, hands-on activities. Each month’s activities include a warm-up activity, a featured activity, and Geo-Questions to cultivate research skills. The materials needed for the activities and any references to websites are included. Student worksheets are ready to print.

Feedback

We want to hear from you. The web page will provide a means for you to respond to the geography club initiative and your activities. Visit www.ncge.org and click on “Resources” to view Geography Club activities.

Resources

The Internet is a source of a great deal of geographic information. Here are some websites that can be used by students.

CIA World Factbook

Comprehensive data on all nations of the world
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

GeoHive

<http://www.geohive.com/>

Welcome to the site dealing with statistics on the human population and Earth in general. The main kind of data you can find here is on the population of regions, countries, provinces and cities. Next to that there are some statistics on economic factors like wealth, infrastructure and more.

The site is divided into several parts. There are four main parts. One dealing with the whole world and its regions, a second with the major regions, a third with all major countries separately and a fourth with rankings (the most, largest, longest, wealthiest, etc.).

Population Reference Bureau

<http://www.prb.org/>

Access to population statistics, news, and the Population Data Sheet

Geography IQ

<http://www.geographyiq.com/>

Planning a trip? Preparing a school homework assignment? Perhaps you're interested in current events or are just curious about exploring the world around you. *Geography IQ* is an online world atlas packed with geographic, economic, political, historical and cultural information. In addition, *Geography IQ* brings together a number of other resources including maps, flags, currency conversion as well as climate and time zone information.

National Geographic One-Stop Research

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/onestop/>

Looking for National Geographic's best resources on our most popular subjects—such as Egypt, tigers, or Pearl Harbor? Search *One-Stop Research* and get results organized by type: maps, pictures, articles, video, and more.

RefDesk

<http://www.refdesk.com/>

Refdesk indexes and reviews quality, credible, and current information-based sites and assists readers in navigating these sites.

United States Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov/>

Access to census data for the United States

United States Census 2000

<http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>

Population data on the United States from the U.S. Census Bureau.

United Nations Population Information Network

<http://www.un.org/popin/>

POPIN strives to make international, regional and national population information, particularly information available from United Nations sources, easily available to the international community.

U. S. Census Bureau IDB Population Pyramids

<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/>

This page allows you to obtain population pyramids (graphs that show the distribution of population by age and sex) for one country. A population data base is available from this page.

Geographic Names Information System

<http://geonames.usgs.gov/>

Search place names in the United States

U. S. Gazetteer

<http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/gazetteer>

A searchable gazetteer of place names in the United States

World Gazetteer

<http://world-gazetteer.com/home.htm>

A gazetteer of world place names