



Grade Level: 6-8

Time Needed: Three to five class periods

Lesson Plan:

How Does *Where We Live* Influence *How We Live*?

SUMMARY

A variety of factors influence our lives and our standard of living. A wealthy country with an established government, proper infrastructure, and a stable economy can provide its citizens with a good job market, safe roads, public transportation, access to food and medical care, and a free education. Conversely, unstable governments, natural disasters, limited economic opportunities, and extreme social factors are among a few of the many influencers that can have a profoundly negative effect on the lives of a country's citizens.

In this lesson, students will explore the connection among these influencers in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan, as well as in the United States. Students will identify those factors that have the most influence over the lives of a country's citizens; and they'll explore the connection between these geographic, economic, social, and political factors and peace.

Students will work in small groups to create a presentation around their findings, sharing the information and their conclusions with the class.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will research and synthesize information.
- Students will use critical thinking skills to draw conclusions.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of distinguishing geographic, economic, social, and political characteristics and conditions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and the United States.
- Students will compare and contrast distinguishing geographic, economic, social, and political characteristics and conditions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and the United States.
- Students will analyze and interpret the relationship between geographic, economic, social, and political characteristics and conditions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and the United States and the lives of the citizens living in those countries.
- Students will demonstrate understanding and apply learning by working individually or in small groups to create a presentation to display the data.

SUBJECTS

- Language Arts
- Economics
- Social Studies (History, Politics, Geography/Human Geography)



HOW DOES *WHERE WE LIVE* INFLUENCE *HOW WE LIVE*? continued

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are geographic characteristics and conditions (such as rivers, mountains, or extremely cold temperatures)?
 - What are economic characteristics and conditions (such as opportunities for people to work)?
 - What are social characteristics and conditions (such as religion and values)?
 - What are political characteristics and conditions (such as governments)?
 - What are the connections between a country's geographic, economic, social, and political characteristics and conditions and the lives of its citizens?
 - How do a country's geographic, economic, social, and political characteristics and conditions influence or affect the lives of its citizens?
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RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Poster board, markers, magazines, scissors, glue, sticky notes, index cards, etc.
 - Research tools such as newspapers, news magazines, and the Internet
 - Central Asia Institute blog, which can be found at <http://centralasiainstitute.org/field-notes/>
 - Videos (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
 - Photos (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
 - Fact sheets (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
 - Printable Map (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
 - Glossary of Terms (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
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LESSON

1. Introduce your students to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan using the resources listed above, plus other resources at your disposal. If you have students or teachers at your school from one of these countries, invite them to speak to your class about their experiences.
2. Discuss the Essential Questions with your students. Ensure that students understand the difference between geographic, economic, social, and political conditions.
3. Depending on the number of students in your class and the amount of time that you have to teach this lesson, you may opt to have a whole-class discussion or to divide your students into small groups. Options include:
 - Dividing your class into **four groups**: one group to research Afghanistan, one to research Pakistan, one to research Tajikistan, and one to research the United States. Each group will research the geographic, economic, social, and political conditions for its assigned country and explore how those conditions affect the lives of citizens.



HOW DOES *WHERE WE LIVE* INFLUENCE *HOW WE LIVE*? continued

- Dividing your students into **three groups**: one group to research Afghanistan, one to research Pakistan, and one to research Tajikistan. Each group will research the geographic, economic, social, and political conditions for its assigned country *and* the United States, and explore how those conditions affect the lives of citizens.
 - Selecting only one country (Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Tajikistan) and dividing your class into **four groups**. Each group will research one type of condition for the country chosen—geographic, economic, social, or political—and explore how the condition affects the lives of citizens.
4. For groups studying the **geographic characteristics**, ask students to create a map of their assigned country, labeling distinguishing geographic characteristics such as major cities, mountain ranges, bodies of water, and natural resources, e.g., gold, oil, and lumber.
 5. For groups studying the **economic characteristics**, have students make a chart to show economic conditions such as the average family income, the gross domestic product, the unemployment rate, and the percentage of citizens living below the poverty level.
 6. For groups studying the **social and cultural values and norms**, have students make a collage using pictures from magazines or other resources to display information such as religion, average age of marriage, literacy rate, basic human rights, and civil liberties.
 7. For groups studying the **political history**, have students create a timeline that includes the type of government/leadership and rights of individuals under that leadership. Have students identify periods of war and peace, and the country's current political status.
 8. Once students have completed their research, have them draw conclusions about how the country's geographic, economic, social, and political conditions affect the lives of its citizens. For example, in some cultures people believe that girls should not attend school. How might that belief affect the lives of girls and women in that country? In turn, how might that belief affect a woman's children, the quality of life in that woman's village, and the economic opportunities for women and the country as a whole? Does the country have a wealth of natural resources? Can those resources be used to sustain the economy? A country without a stable economy will have high unemployment and high levels of poverty. That government will be unable to tax its citizens, and so there will be no money to build schools and hire teachers.
 9. Finally, have students work in groups using their illustrated map, chart, collage, or timeline to present their findings to the class. Post your art projects around the classroom or in a prominent part of the school for others to enjoy and learn from.

Note: It is important to help students understand that wealth does not necessarily result in a high standard of living or happiness. A small village where everyone has an opportunity to get an education, work, and live in peace may be optimal in comparison to a large city where citizens have more money but fewer civil liberties. Encourage students to research facts, but also to be wary of their own biases based on *our* culture.

**HOW DOES *WHERE WE LIVE* INFLUENCE *HOW WE LIVE*? continued****IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE ALL LEARNERS**

- English Language Learners
 - Give students a Word Bank with vocabulary that will help them with the discussion and project.
 - Ensure that students understand the Glossary of Terms (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
 - Encourage students to share with the class the geographic, economic, social, and political conditions that exist in the country where they lived prior to moving to the United States.
- Special Education
 - Allow students to work together in small groups.
 - Have students research just one of the conditions, such as geography.
- Gifted and Talented
 - Have students research, compare, and contrast the geographic, economic, social, and political conditions for several *developed* countries, such as the United States and France, or the United States and Japan.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- If you have access to students, teachers, or parents who have lived outside the United States, invite one or more of them to speak to the class about their experiences—focusing on the geographic, economic, social, and political characteristics of their country.
- Afghanistan has had long periods of civil war. What are the long-term effects of generations of war or conflict?
- Tajikistan was part of the Soviet Union until 1991, when it became an independent nation. A civil war was fought almost immediately, lasting from 1992 to 1997. What effect could that war have had on the country's ability to establish (and grow) an education system?
- Pakistan suffered a devastating earthquake in 2005. Are developing countries equipped to handle natural disasters? What were the long-term effects of the earthquake on Pakistani citizens?

DIGITAL ACTIVITIES

- Have students use free online classroom collaboration tools such as Wiggio or Edmodo to work on this lesson inside and outside class time. Take time to familiarize students with the features of the program. For example, provide some training and practice using the shared calendar, assigning/recording specific roles to team members, videoconferencing, and messaging one another.
- Have students collect all their findings and organize the final product using a wiki format. Use a free online wiki program such as Wikispaces or Edmodo.

Tell us about your project! We'd love to see samples of your maps, charts, collages, and timelines. Send photos and/or descriptions to info@penniesforpeace.org.