

# *Destination Europe*

## Geopolitical project

**Grading** 150 points  
**Distributed** Monday, September 29  
**Due** Wednesday, October 8

YOUR COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

**Objective** The goal of this project is to immerse you in the physical, cultural, sociological, and historical life of one European nation. Drawing on your experience across the social studies – and capitalizing on the cartographic research skills we've developed so far this year – you will seek to answer the central question of this unit: **How does *where* people live dictate *how* people live?**

**Procedures** **Part 1: Research**

We will hold class in the library for at least three days for the research component of this project. You'll gather demographic information about your country, explaining who lives there, how they worship, how much money they make, their ethnic composition, etc.

You'll also research the history of that nation. What chain of events led to the country as it exists today? How do current events continue to shape this country's identity?

**Part 2: Cartography**

Display your research visually. You'll make eight maps of your country. You may print blank maps and fill them in, but you may not submit maps you simply printed from a website or copied from a book.

1. **Physical.** Mountains, rivers, bodies of water – what defines your nation physically?
2. **Political.** Where are the borders, and what's on the other side? What is the capital, and where are the major cities?
3. **Population density.** Where do people live? How is the population distributed?
4. **Historical.** Show something about your country's past to inform our view of its present.
5. **Resource.** Your choice, manmade or natural, economic, political, industrial, etc.
6. **Demographic #1** (your choice)
7. **Demographic #2** (your choice)
8. **Demographic #3** (your choice)

**Part 3: Analysis**

Reflecting on your research, choose one of the following topics and prepare an analytic argument for your presentation. Choose from the following:

1. **Sociological survey.** What makes members of this culture unique as a group? What makes them different from their nearby neighbors? How does this group identity guide the nation's contribution to the world, especially regarding military policy, politics, language, economics, cuisine, religion, and/or relations with neighboring nations? Check your demographic information. What does it all mean?

Examples of good topics for analysis:

- Lithuania has the highest suicide rate in Europe. Why?
- How has Switzerland's long-sustained neutrality affected the products and services it's best known for globally, including banking, precision watches, and gourmet cheeses and chocolates?
- How has the release of *Borat* changed the way Kazakhstan is known around the world, and what steps has the Kazakh government taken to counteract that bad press? Has it worked in the eyes of Kazakh citizens? Of the world?
- Italian food means a very different thing in the north than it does in the south of Italy. Define those differences. Why did they come about? How does it continue to affect how people live in northern and southern Italy?

2. **Historical survey.** Timeline-style survey of your nation's history. Chart the key events of your nation's history on a series of maps, on a timeline, or both. Explain how those changes have shaped today's state of affairs in your nation, incorporating demographic data as needed.
3. **Topical historical analysis.** Choose a single event or development in your country's history that has helped to define its present state. Describe that event in detail, and explain how it shapes your country today.

For example, if you're studying Greece, your choice could include any of the following:

- Athenian democracy
- Sparta as first military state
- Cultural development in city-states
- Alexander the Great unites Greece
- Greece in the Roman Empire
- Rise/fall of Byzantine Empire
- Rise/fall of Ottoman Empire
- London Protocol
- World War I
- Greco-Italian War
- World War II
- Greek Civil War
- ~~My Big Fat Greek Wedding~~

#### **Part 4: Presentation**

Take parts one through three, and show us what you've learned.

Your baseline assignment is a 5-10 minute presentation, where you explain what you learned and why it's important in today's world. You may use notes.

Acceptable alternatives include Powerpoint presentations, five-to-ten-minute-videos, and research papers (three pages plus).

Other types of presentations will be accepted with prior clearance. Let me know in advance what you're thinking about, and I'll probably approve it. I will also do all I can to get you the technology you need to complete this project to the best of your ability.

#### **Part 5: Submission**

Completed research packet: 30 points  
Cartography: 40 points  
Presentation: 80 points

**TOTAL: 150 points**

## PEOPLE

Population

Age distribution

Population density

Religious groups

Official language(s)

Other languages

Ethnic groups

Population growth rate

Is education compulsory?

Average length of schooling

Fertility rate  
(average number of children to a mother)

Literacy rate

Voting restrictions

## GEOGRAPHY

Total area (square mi or km)

Land area

Capital

## GEOGRAPHY

<b>Location on the map</b>	<b>Topography</b>		
	<b>Neighboring countries</b>		
<b>Highest point (cite elevation)</b>		<b>Lowest point (cite elevation)</b>	
<b>Current environmental issues</b>			
<b>Compare it, in size, to part of America</b>	<b>Coastline</b>	<b>Land boundaries</b>	<b>Geographic coordinates</b>
	<b>Terrain</b>		
<b>Boundary disputes (current or historical)</b>		<b>Refugees/displacement (current or historical)</b>	

<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	
<b>Official website</b>	
<b>Type of government</b>	<b>Head of state</b>
<b>Local divisions</b> <i>provinces, states, municipalities, etc.</i>	<b>Head of state's date, place of birth</b>
	<b>Head of government</b>
	<b>Head of government's date, place of birth</b>
<b>Defense budget</b>	<b>Number of troops</b>
<b>Five largest cities</b> 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.	<b>Describe the distribution of power. Does the PM shape policy? The President? Is the head of state only a ceremonial leader? Is there a significant role for military leadership?</b>
	<b>Describe court system here</b>

## ECONOMY & FINANCE

Define *gross domestic product* here:

GDP

Monetary unit

GDP per capita

GDP growth

Industries

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Chief crops

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Natural resources

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Livestock

Arable land

Crude oil reserves

Electricity output

Breakdown of labor force

Unemployment rate

Urban:

Rural:

Imports (\$)

Exports (\$)

Budget

Tourism income

Main export partners

<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>			
Length of railroad	Number of airports	Chief port(s)	
Number of automobiles	Number of commercial air flights	Number of commercial passengers	
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>			
TV sets per capita	Radios per capita	Telephones per capita	
Internet users	Newspaper circulation	Cell phones in use	
<b>HEALTH</b>			
Life expectancy (male)	Life expectancy (female)	AIDS rate	
Birth rate	Death rate	Number of people living with AIDS/HIV	Number of annual AIDS-related deaths
Major infectious diseases/illnesses 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		Infant mortality rate	
		Percentage living below poverty line	

**OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST**
