 Connections and perceptions

Focus area – A diverse and connected world

Content

* Connections shape perceptions
* Global connections

Key inquiry questions

* What are Australia’s global connections?
* How do people’s connections to places affect their perception of them?

Content focus

Students:

* explore countries of the Asia region and the connections Australia has with other countries across the world
* explore and reflect upon similarities, differences and the importance of intercultural understanding.

Outcomes

A student:

* describes the diverse features and characteristics of places and environments **GE3-1**
* explains interactions and connections between people, places and environments **GE3-2**
* acquires, processes and communicates geographical information using geographical tools for inquiry **GE3-4**

Outcomes and other syllabus material referenced in this document are from:

* [Geography K-10 Syllabus](http://syllabus.nesa.nsw.edu.au/hsie/geography-k10/) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2015

Overview

Students undertake a case study into a specific foreign country through two geographical inquiry processes. The first asks students to investigate the connections between Australia and the other country in question (e.g. trade, aid, tourism, sporting, diplomatic). The second inquiry explores the various perceptions and perspectives people have about the chosen country. Students then seek to identify factors that influence people’s perceptions of places (e.g. media, culture, education, travel) and discuss the nature of generalisations and stereotypes.

Note – the capacity of students to engage with the inquiries and content matter will be much greater in Year 6 than early in Year 5. Teachers will need to adjust and scaffold learning activities as appropriate.

Assessment

Many of the activities require students to demonstrate their learning. These activities can be used to assess student progress at various stages throughout the inquiry process.

Selecting your case study

Teachers will need to think carefully when choosing the foreign country/ies to be studied. This is not a cultural study; it is a study of connections and perceptions. The richest case studies will be countries that have three characteristics:

* The country has a wide variety of connections with Australia. Countries that receive [aid from Australia](http://dfat.gov.au/aid/where-we-give-aid/Pages/where-we-give-aid.aspx) will provide an additional angle that will allow exploration of humanitarian connections.
* There are a variety of perceptions of the country. The syllabus instructs students to “investigate how connections influence people’s perception and understanding of places” and suggests “discussion of the effect of generalisations and stereotypes”. It is crucial that the country be one about which people have an opinion, and if possible, about which a range of opinions exist.
* The syllabus also suggests exploration of the “factors that influence people’s perceptions”, including the importance of connections people have. Choosing a country to which people have a connection (e.g. a travel destination or home to relatives) will be helpful.

Suggestions for possible choices include:

* Indonesia
* Papua New Guinea
* Nepal
* Afghanistan
* East Timor (Timor-Leste)

Inquiry 1 – Connections

Students investigate the range of connections between Australia and the chosen country (e.g. Indonesia).

Content

Global connections

Students:

* investigate connections between Australia and other countries of the world, for example: (ACHGK034, ACHGK035)
  + description of connections Australia has with other countries eg trade, migration, tourism, aid.

Acquiring geographical information

Question

Clearly articulate the aim or purpose of the geographical investigation, e.g. What connections does Australia have with Indonesia?

Generate geographical questions to investigate and plan the inquiry, contextualised to the specific case study. For example:

* What diplomatic connections does Australia have with Indonesia? (i.e. an equivalent question for each connection category)
* How has the connection been established?
* Who is involved in maintaining this connection?
* Why is this connection important?
* How does this connection strengthen the relationship between Australia and Indonesia?
* What could threaten this connection?

Acquire data and information

* Familiarise the students with the chosen country.
* Locate the chosen country on a variety of **maps**, paying attention to scale.
* Find **photographs** depicting to the country.
* Review a range of print and online resources (e.g. books, travel brochures, online resources).
* Investigate each type of connection using **print and/or online resources**. (Sample sources are listed below.)
* **Interview** someone who has connections with the country (e.g. family links, business connections).

Processing geographical information

* Review the research **information** collected, and examine and evaluate it for usefulness and/or bias.
* Explicitly teach the visual literacy skills involved in understanding the information conveyed through **visual representations** in the acquired information.
* Use geographical tools to collate or present in a different way the information collected, for example:
  + Develop descriptions of the various political and diplomatic connections.
  + With a **political map** as a base map, use **mapping overlays** to indicate travel and trade routes.
  + Create a **data table** outlining sporting connections.
  + Create two **pie graphs** showing imports and export destinations (including “other”).
  + Create a **column graph** or **compound column graph** that shows visitors to and from the chosen country. Create a **line graph** to track visitors over time.
  + Develop **consequences charts** to explain predicted impacts of changes to connections (positive and negative).
  + Create a **concept map** listing all the types of connections that exist.

Communicating geographical information

Communicate

Students create an **infographic** that embeds a variety of **visual representations** of some the connections between the countries.

Respond

* Discuss how Australia could strengthen the connections and relationship between the two countries.
* Write **letters/emails** to the High Commission expressing solidarity and support for Australia’s international connections with their country.

Resources

Generic portrayals

* [Lonely Planet](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/places)

Governmental/Diplomatic Connections

* The [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)](http://dfat.gov.au/geo/pages/countries-and-regions.aspx) website
* The High Commission website for your chosen country

Trade

* [DFAT Trade and Economic Fact Sheets](http://dfat.gov.au/trade/resources/Pages/trade-and-economic-fact-sheets-for-countries-and-regions.aspx)
* Online exchange rate calculators

Migration

* [Australian Bureau Statistics](http://www.abs.gov.au/) information on migrants and migration.

Tourism

* Statistics on [Australians travelling overseas](http://www.tra.gov.au/statistics/australians-travelling-overseas.html) and [international tourism statistics](http://www.tra.gov.au/research/International-tourism-statistics.html) by Tourism Research Australia
* The [DFAT Smart Traveller](http://smartraveller.gov.au) website
* Airline, cruise ship and general travel websites and publications.

International Organisations & Agreements

* The [Australian Treaties Database](http://dfat.gov.au/international-relations/treaties/pages/treaties.aspx)
* The [Commonwealth](http://thecommonwealth.org/member-countries) website
* The [United Nations](http://www.un.org/) and its [sub-organisations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_specialized_agencies_of_the_United_Nations)

Humanitarian/Aid

* The [DFAT Australian Aid](http://dfat.gov.au/aid/where-we-give-aid/Pages/where-we-give-aid.aspx) website
* [Amnesty International](http://www.amnesty.org.au/) and [Greenpeace](http://www.greenpeace.org/australia/en/) allow searches based on country names.

Learning connections

* English K-6 Syllabus – Visual literacy skills are required and developed through this inquiry.
* Mathematics K-6 Syllabus – The geographical tools used in this inquiry reflect content found in the Data substrand of the Statistics and Probability strand.

Inquiry 2 – Perceptions

After gathering factual data on the connections between the two countries in Inquiry 1, students conduct an inquiry into the ways the chosen country is perceived and portrayed. Students explore the factors underlying these perceptions and portrayals and consider the effect of the viewpoints.

Content

Connections shape perceptions

Students:

* investigate how connections influence people’s perception and understanding of places, for example: (ACHGK036)
  + identification of factors that influence people’s perceptions of places eg media, culture, education, travel.
  + discussion of the effect of generalisations and stereotypes about places.

Acquiring geographical information

Question

Clearly articulate the aim or purpose of the geographical investigation, e.g. How is Indonesia portrayed and perceived in Australia?

Generate geographical questions to investigate and plan the inquiry, contextualised to the specific case study, for example:

* How is Indonesia portrayed in the media / on government websites / in travel brochures?
* How is Indonesia perceived in this portrayal?
  + What connection has the author with Indonesia?
  + What is its intended audience and purpose?
  + What language forms and features are being used?
  + Does it use objective or subjective language?
  + Is there evidence of bias?
  + What effects might this portrayal have?
  + Does it foster generalisations and/or stereotypes?
* What factors have contributed to the range of perceptions people hold about Indonesia? What significance and validity do you give each factor?
* How do people’s connections to Indonesia affect their perceptions?

Acquire data and information

* Expose students to a **series of portrayals** of the chosen country. Apply critical literacy skills to evaluate each portrayal. Note – teachers may wish students to conduct online searches for material. The use of a Google Custom Search Engine to constrain search results will prevent inappropriate material being found. Portrayals may include:
  + Travel brochures
  + Depictions in literature
  + Government websites (both Australian and belonging to the country in question)
  + News articles
  + Photographs
  + Documentaries
* **Interview** someone who has connections with the country (e.g. family links, business connections).
* Develop and conduct a **survey** of community members to ascertain their perceptions of and knowledge about the country in question.

Processing geographical information

* Assist students to progressively complete a **perceptions analysis table** in which each portrayal of the chosen country is analysed according to a series of categories, for example:
  + connection of the author to the country
  + objective facts
  + subjective opinions
  + language features
  + evidence of bias
  + summary.
* Use a **T-chart** to represent perceptions (positive and negative) gathered through surveys.
* Assist students to compare and evaluate the variety of perceptions discovered. Do any perceptions generalise or stereotype the chosen country? What effects might this have?

Communicating geographical information

Communicate

Students create a **multimedia presentation** or **visual collage** entitled ‘Many Eyes – One Country’ (or similar) that portrays the range of perceptions that people have of the chosen country. Students annotate each perception with contextual data regarding the author’s connection with the country. Teachers can also choose the extent to which the annotations critique the perception (i.e. the degree to which it is a stereotype or portrays bias).

Create a ‘Did you know?’ page for your class or school **website** about the perceptions of the chosen country and/or its connections with Australia.

Respond

Discuss the variety of factors affecting our perceptions of places, and how perceptions can be affected by personal connections. Discuss the effects of generalisations and stereotypes. Invite students to consider how these phenomena affect their social world and what might be done.

Learning connections

English K-6 Syllabus – Critical literacy skills are required and developed through this inquiry.

Concepts, inquiry skills and tools

Geographical concepts

The following geographical concepts have been integrated into the teaching and learning sequence:

* Place – the significance of places and what they are like eg characteristics of places.
* Space – the significance of location and spatial distribution, and ways people organise and manage the spaces that we live in e.g. how people organise and manage spaces in their local environment.
* Environment – the significance of the environment in human life, and the important interrelationships between humans and the environment e.g. how the environment influences people and places; how people influence the environment; the effect of natural disasters on the environment.
* Interconnection – no object of geographical study can be viewed in isolation eg how environments influence where people live; ways people influence the characteristics of their environments.
* Scale –the way that geographical phenomena and problems can be examined at different spatial levels eg environmental and human characteristics of places on local and regional scales; the effect of events on people and places locally and regionally.
* Sustainability – the capacity of the environment to continue to support our lives and the lives of other living creatures into the future eg extent of environmental change; environmental management practices; sustainability initiatives.
* Change – explaining geographical phenomena by investigating how they have developed over time eg changes to environmental and human characteristics of places.

Geographical inquiry skills

The following geographical inquiry skills have been integrated into the unit:

Acquiring geographical information

* develop geographical questions to investigate and plan an inquiry (ACHGS033, ACHGS040)
* collect and record relevant geographical data and information, using ethical protocols, from primary data and secondary information sources, for example, by observing, by interviewing, conducting surveys, or using maps, visual representations, statistical sources and reports, the media or the internet (ACHGS034, ACHGS041)

Processing geographical information

* evaluate sources for their usefulness (ACHGS035, ACHGS042)
* represent data in different forms, for example plans, graphs, tables, sketches and diagrams (ACHGS035, ACHGS042)
* represent different types of geographical information by constructing maps that conform to cartographic conventions using spatial technologies as appropriate (ACHGS036, ACHGS043)
* interpret geographical data and information, using digital and spatial technologies as appropriate, and identify spatial distributions, patterns and trends, and infer relationships to draw conclusions (ACHGS037, ACHGS044)

Communicating geographical information

* present findings and ideas in a range of communication forms as appropriate (ACHGS038, ACHGS045)
* reflect on their learning to propose individual and collective action in response to a contemporary geographical challenge and describe the expected effects of their proposal on different groups of people (ACHGS039, ACHGS046)

Geographical tools

The following geographical tools have been integrated into the unit.

Maps

* large-scale maps, small-scale maps, topographic maps, flowline maps
* maps to identify location, latitude, direction, distance, map references, spatial distributions and patterns

Fieldwork

* observing, measuring, collecting and recording data, conducting surveys and interviews
* fieldwork instruments such as measuring devices, maps, photographs, compasses, GPS

Graphs and statistics

* pictographs, data tables, column graphs, line graphs, climate graphs
* multiple graphs on a geographical theme
* statistics to find patterns

Spatial technologies

* virtual maps, satellite images, global positioning systems (GPS)

Visual representations

* photographs, aerial photographs, illustrations, flow diagrams, annotated diagrams, multimedia, web tools.