### Activity
Exploration of the nature and significance of international political boundaries through an investigation of contemporary political boundaries.

### Social studies standards
- **C3:D2.Geo.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both like and different from other places.
- **C3:D2.Geo.17.** Learn how to apply geography to interpret the past.
- **C3:D2.Geo.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.

### Learning Outcomes
- Define and give examples of physiographic, geometric, and anthropographic boundaries.
- Explain the relationship between boundary characteristics and national cohesiveness.

### Map URL: http://esriurl.com/worldGeolnquiry5

#### Ask

**What are physiographic boundaries and where are they located?**
- Click the link above to launch the map.
- With the Details button underlined, click the button, Show Contents.
- Click the countries north & south of the Pyrenees Mountains.
- The Pyrenees Mountains are on the border between which two countries? **[Spain and France]**
- Select the bookmark, Europe. Name two other countries where mountain ranges form political boundaries. **[Alps: Italy and Switzerland; Alps: Italy and France; and others]**
- Turn on the two layers, Rivers and Lakes.
- Noting where red country boundary lines disappear beneath the blue river lines, name two pairs of countries that share a boundary that is a river. **[Rhine: France and Germany; Danube: Romania and Bulgaria; and others]**

#### Acquire

**What do geometric boundaries look like and where are they located?**
- Geometric boundaries consist of straight lines that do not correspond to physical features on the earth’s surface.
- Select the bookmark, Africa.
- Looking at the map, name several countries with a shared geometric boundary. **[Egypt and Sudan; Sudan and Chad; Libya and Chad; Niger and Algeria; and others]**

#### Explore

**Where are anthropographic country boundaries?**
- Turn off the three layers, Rivers, Lakes, and Country Boundaries 2016.
- Turn on the layer, Languages.
- Click the Languages layer name, and then below it. Click the Show Legend button.
- Name two pairs of countries separated by an anthropographic (societal characteristic) boundary based on language. **[China and Nepal; China and India]**
- Turn off the layer, Languages.
- Turn on the layer, Religions. View its legend.
- Name two pairs of countries separated by an anthropographic boundary based on religion. **[Finland and Russia; Ireland and the United Kingdom]**
Political boundaries can split large countries into smaller ones, a small country may combine to form a larger one, and territories of one country may be incorporated into another.

Describe three political boundary changes between 1992 and 2019. (Use the Zoom and Pan tools to get a closer look and the Identify tool to identify countries.) [Answers will vary but should focus on the changes in Eastern Europe and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).]

Name two countries that existed in 1992 but do not exist in 2019. [USSR, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia]

Turn on the two layers, Country Boundaries 2016 and Languages.

Explore countries with the most and fewest language groups represented.

Identify three culturally uniform countries based on language group. [Answers may include Japan, France, Argentina, Italy, and Hungary.]

Identify three culturally diverse countries based on language groups. [Answers may include Canada, Spain, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Syria, Turkey, India, Sudan, Sri Lanka, and Namibia.]

Analyze

Act

What type of country boundary changes occurred in the 1990s?

→ Political boundaries can split large countries into smaller ones, a small country may combine to form a larger one, and territories of one country may be incorporated into another.

→ Describe three political boundary changes between 1992 and 2019. (Use the Zoom and Pan tools to get a closer look and the Identify tool to identify countries.) [Answers will vary but should focus on the changes in Eastern Europe and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).]

→ Name two countries that existed in 1992 but do not exist in 2019. [USSR, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia]

SELECT A BOOKMARK

• Click Bookmarks.
• Click a bookmark name to zoom to a map location and scale.

LEGENDS, LAYERS, AND SYMBOLS

• To the left of the map, click Details and then click Content. The Contents pane allows you to turn on and off layer visibility.
• Click the Show Map Legend button. The Legend pane allows you to identify symbols.
• In the map, click symbols for more information that will appear in a pop-up.

Next Steps

DID YOU KNOW? ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to public, private, and home schools. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at http://www.esri.com/schools. THEN TRY THIS...

• Use the Proximity Analysis tool and create 50-mile buffers on the Religions or Languages layers.
• Use the Country Boundaries 2016 layer to explore the 2016 country borders that fall within the buffers.

TEXT REFERENCES

• World Cultures and Geography by McDougal Littell
• My World Geography by Pearson