Borders, boundaries, and barriers
from the Esri GeoInquiries™ collection for Human Geography

Audience – Human geography  Time required – 15 minutes

Activity
Identify major boundaries, borders, and barriers around the world.

APHG Benchmarks
APHG: IV.B2. Evaluate the nature & function of boundaries including types.
APHG: IV.B1. Explain the concepts of political power and territoriality.

Learning Outcomes
• Students will learn examples of boundaries, borders, and barriers around the world that exhibit the organization of the earth’s surface as identified through political geography.

Map URL: http://esriurl.com/humanGeolnquiry9

Ask

Why are boundaries important?
➔ Click the map URL above to launch the map.
➔ Zoom and pan the map to see the entire world.
What types of boundaries are on the earth? [Boundaries can be natural, cultural, geometric, or superimposed.]
Why do boundaries exist? [Boundaries divide land, establish territoriality, and so on.]

Acquire

What are examples of the different types of boundaries on the earth?
➔ With the Details button underlined, click the button, Show Contents of Map (Content).
➔ Check the box to the left of the layer name, World Administrative Divisions.
➔ Zoom in to the continent of Europe.
What types of boundaries can be seen? [Administrative boundaries, including province, county, and oblast.]
➔ Click a few administrative units to view the data.
➔ Hover the mouse over the layer name, World Administrative Divisions. Click the three dots and select the option, Transparency. Set transparency to 50%.
Where do you see geometric boundaries? [Northern Poland with Kaliningrad (a part of Russia)]
Where do you see physical boundaries? [Danube River between Hungary and Slovakia]

Explore

Are borders just boundaries?
➔ Disputed boundaries are often shown with dotted lines or notes on the map itself.
➔ On which boundaries do countries disagree? [United Arab Emirates and Oman, Western Sahara and Morocco, Pakistan and India in Kashmir]
➔ Filter the data in the World Administrative Divisions layer. (See Tooltip on page 2.)
➔ Build the following query from the drop-down lists: Disputed Is 1. Ensure that Unique is chosen for the third drop-down list.
➔ Click Apply Filter. If results do not appear, ensure that the map is zoomed in enough that the layer name appears in dark text.
What changed on the map? [Only places with disputes are shaded.]
Where are most of the disputed boundaries of the world located? [Africa and Asia, and some in Europe.]
Why? [Instability, territorial disputes, and resource disputes.]
➔ Turn off the layer, World Administrative Divisions.
What other types of boundaries and borders exist on the earth?

- Click the button, Basemap. Select the basemap, Imagery with Labels.
- Click the button, Bookmark. Select The Great Wall of China.
- What barrier do you see? How was this boundary useful for the time when it was built? [The Great Wall of China slowed invading northern parties.]
- Click the Republic of Chile bookmark.
- What type of border can be found here? [The Andes Mountains create a physical boundary.]
- Observe the border of Chile with Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of this border? [Its length, physical features, trade opportunities, and natural resources result in certain advantages and disadvantages.]
- Click the North and South Korea bookmark.
- What type of boundary is between these two countries? [This boundary is superimposed.]

How can borders change?

- Investigate the boundary of Western Sahara and Morocco.
- What would happen if Morocco controlled the area region? [Conflict, increased territory, and so on.]
- What natural, cultural, or political factors can affect boundaries? [Changing physical features, conflict, and territoriality.]
- How have trade and globalization affected borders and boundaries of countries around the world? [Opportunities for interaction, trade zones, and open borders.]