

GEOGRAPHY STANDARD 13: How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface



Image credit: J. Stoltman

The demilitarized zone (DMZ) dividing North and South Korea is a political geography and military flash point. The blue buildings are in the Joint Security Area where the North and South Koreans meet to discuss issues of concern to each side. Military units guard their respective territories. The buildings are bisected by the line of demarcation, with half the building in the south and half in the north. Beyond the blue buildings is Panmun Hall, from which North Korean military personnel observe activities in the south. The roadway in the foreground is in front of Freedom House (from where the photo was taken) on the South Korean side.



Image credit: D.J. Zeigler

People protesting in London's Trafalgar Square show support for southwest Asia's Kurdish population, a cultural group that does not have its own independent state.

The geographically informed person must understand how and why different groups of people have divided, organized, and unified areas of Earth's surface. Competing for control of areas of Earth's surface, large and small, is a universal trait among societies and has resulted in both productive cooperation and destructive conflict between groups. Conflicts over trade, human migration and settlement, ideologies and religions, and exploitation of marine and land environments reflect how Earth's surface is divided into fragments controlled by different formal and informal political, economic, and cultural interest groups.

Therefore, Standard 13 contains these themes: Territorial Divisions, Cooperation, and Conflict.

The primary political division of Earth is by state sovereignty—a particular government is recognized by others, such as members of the United Nations, as having supreme authority over a carefully delimited territory and the population and resources within that space. Regional alliances among nations for military, political, cultural, or economic reasons constitute examples of human cooperation on Earth's surface.

Events of the twenty-first century illustrate that the process of seeking to control parts of Earth's surface continues unabated at all scales of human society. World wars, regional wars, civil wars, terrorist attacks, and urban riots often are manifestations of the fierce intensity of feeling humans hold for the right to own and control parts of Earth according to their particular beliefs and values. Traditionally, most territorial disputes have been over the land surface, but with the increasing value of resources in the ocean and control of access to air and outer spaces, these regions have become arenas for international debate. Cooperation and conflict will occur in all of these spatial contexts.

Students must understand the evolution, structure, power, and implications of these divisions. Additionally, they must understand the ways in which divisions generate conflicts or encourage cooperation. They must appreciate their own roles within a world that is globally interdependent and yet locally controlled. Understanding these themes provides students with the contexts into which to set past, present, and future examples of cooperation and conflict between and among groups of people.

GEOGRAPHY STANDARD 13: How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface

4th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Territorial Divisions

1. There are multiple types of territorial divisions used to manage and control Earth's surface

Therefore, the student is able to:

- A. Explain different types of territorial divisions (e.g., township, city, county, state, and country) and how they are used to manage and control Earth's surface, as exemplified by being able to
 - ▶ Construct maps based on interviews with local school officials, fire-fighters, and police officers to show the spatial boundaries of their responsibilities (e.g., school district boundaries, local fire districts, police precinct districts, county jurisdiction for sheriff).
 - ▶ Describe the responsibilities of the set of governmental units within which the student lives (e.g., town or city, county, state, and country).
 - ▶ Describe how all continents, with the exception of Antarctica, are divided into nation states.

8th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Territorial Divisions

1. The types of boundaries used to define territorial divisions

Therefore, the student is able to:

- A. Explain the types of boundaries based on physical and human characteristics, as exemplified by being able to
 - ▶ Describe and explain the use of physical and human characteristics to establish political boundaries (e.g., streets as political boundaries between local units of government, water features as boundaries between countries, watershed divides as boundaries between countries, boundaries delimited by political agreement such as the 49th parallel between the United States and Canada).
 - ▶ Identify and describe examples of disputed borders and explain the reasons for the dispute (e.g., Kashmir border between India and Pakistan, border between Algeria and Morocco, border between El Salvador and Honduras).
 - ▶ Identify and explain the use of defense lines and frontier outposts to control Earth's surface (e.g., China's Great Wall, Hadrian's Wall, Berlin Wall, Maginot Line, Korean Peninsula Demilitarized Zone).
 - ▶ Explain why states in regions of the United States typically have different kinds of boundaries (e.g., the eastern state lines reflect metes and bounds, the Midwest has baselines of latitude and longitude and water boundaries, the use of township and range system in the West).

12th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Territorial Divisions

1. The functions and consequences of territorial divisions

Therefore, the student is able to:

- A. Explain how territorial divisions are used to manage Earth's surface, as exemplified by being able to
 - ▶ Analyze and explain the impacts of regional alliances intended for political, military, cultural, or economic control (e.g., the political integration of the European Union [EU] countries, United Nations [UN] oversight of the military division of the Korean Peninsula, the economic and cultural impacts of North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA]).
 - ▶ Explain where and how nations (i.e., ethnic groups) seek territorial and national identity (e.g., the Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran; Palestinians in Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan; Tamils in Sri Lanka and India).
 - ▶ Explain how the "Law of the Sea" defines the extent and rights of the territorial jurisdiction of a nation state (e.g., control of passage of warships, rights to minerals on the ocean floor).
- B. Compare the reasons for and consequences of different systems for dividing and controlling space, as exemplified by being able to
 - ▶ Compare the spatial expansion and extent of different empires and describe the reasons for and effects of the resulting boundaries (e.g., Chinese dynasties, Roman Empire, British Empire).
 - ▶ Analyze the patterns of territorial divisions that arose during the European colonialism era and compare the different responses to this expansion (e.g., the 1823 Monroe Doctrine against European expansion in the Western hemisphere, Berlin Conference 1884–1885, Battle of Adwa in Ethiopia, Sino-French War 1884).
 - ▶ Describe and compare the different forms of governmental structures for administering nation states (e.g., federations such as Canada versus unitary states such as France).



Image credit: D.J. Zeigler

States serve as territorial and governmental units within the United States. The capitol building in Baton Rouge serves as the location for Louisiana's state government.

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4th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Cooperation

2. The role cooperation has in managing Earth's surface

Therefore, the student is able to:

A. Explain how people cooperate in managing and using Earth's surface, as exemplified by being able to

► Explain how international water boundaries are examples of people cooperating in dividing and using Earth's surface (e.g., 200-mile territorial limit, Great Lakes are divided between Canada and the United States, for river boundaries it is sometimes the center of the water in the river).

► Analyze activities in the local community to describe ways in which people solve problems by cooperating (e.g., working in groups to pick up trash along a road, participating in a neighborhood crime-watch group, participating in community house-building projects).

► Describe how communities and states cooperate in providing relief efforts during and after natural disasters (e.g., donations of money and food aid, sending medical teams and supplies, construction workers and equipment).

8th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Cooperation

2. Countries and organizations cooperate through treaties, laws, and agreements to manage resources, maintain the environment, and mediate disputes

Therefore, the student is able to:

A. Describe and explain examples of cooperation that focus on solving human and environmental issues, as exemplified by being able to

► Describe and analyze the positive and negative effects of cooperation in controlling territories (e.g., Great Lakes environmental issues are cooperatively managed by the United States and Canada, United Nations [UN] Heritage sites are cooperatively maintained by the UN and host countries, regional planning agencies coordinate local land use policies).

► Analyze the places where international monitors have maintained borders, keeping conflicting groups apart and maintaining peace (e.g., Cyprus Green Line, Golan Heights, Lebanon–Israel border, North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] in the Balkans in the 1990s).

► Describe and analyze the effectiveness of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in responding to human issues (e.g., Heifer International providing expertise on hunger mitigation, Doctors Without Borders providing medical assistance to countries, Oxfam providing food relief).

12th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Cooperation

2. Cooperation between countries and organizations may have lasting influences on past, present, and future global issues

Therefore, the student is able to:

A. Evaluate how countries and organizations cooperate to address global issues, as exemplified by being able to

► Evaluate the success of United Nations (UN) agencies in dealing with global issues (e.g., peacekeeping and prevention of terrorist activities, disease prevention, emergency aid, climate change, education).

► Analyze how globalization has contributed to the development of regional organizations and describe how those organizations have changed over time (e.g., European Union [EU], North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA], African Union, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries [OPEC]).

► Identify and describe the potential results of recommendations generated by international efforts to address global climate change (e.g., the series of agreements at Montreal, Kyoto, and Copenhagen).



Image credit: iStockphoto.com

Formed following World War II, the United Nations is an international organization that works to promote global cooperation.

International cooperation has brought vaccination programs and better health to people around the world.



Image credit: iStockphoto.com

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4th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Conflict

3. Conflicts arise when there is disagreement over the division, control, and management of Earth's surface

Therefore, the student is able to:

A. Analyze examples of disagreements over land uses in their community, as exemplified by being able to

► Identify and describe the reasons for disputes over play space on the playground or lunchroom, analyzing the situation from the perspectives of the key stakeholders.

► Identify local land-use issues in which there are disagreements and analyze the perspectives of the key stakeholders (e.g., protection of environmentally sensitive areas, land use for commercial purposes, locating waste disposal sites).

► Describe the means by which communities resolve disputes over land-use issues (e.g., decisions by planning commissions, by elected officials, by judges, by community voting).

8th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Conflict

3. There are multiple sources of conflict resulting from the division of Earth's surface

Therefore, the student is able to:

A. Explain how conflicting territorial claims can erupt over resources, land use, and ethnic and national identities, as exemplified by being able to

► Explain why countries have overlapping claims for island territories (e.g., the Spratly [claimed by six countries] and Kurile [claimed by two countries] island groups for their resources).

► Describe and explain examples of the different types of land-control conflicts that may erupt between and among countries (e.g., conflicts due to natural resources, water sources or access, economic sanctions or embargoes, religious or sacred sites).

► Analyze the types of conflicts that can occur over the use of rivers (e.g., US states competing for water from the Colorado River, ongoing conflicts over the Amur River between China and Russia, Jordan and Israel competing for water from the River Jordan).

12th GRADE

the student knows and understands:

Conflict

3. Changes within, between, and among countries regarding division and control of Earth's surface may result in conflicts

Therefore, the student is able to:

A. Explain the ways conflict affects the cohesiveness and fragmentation of countries, as exemplified by being able to

► Describe and explain the effects of interventionist policies by developed countries on lesser-developed countries (e.g., United States in Iraq, China in Tibet, Soviets in Afghanistan).

► Describe and explain the formation of alliances during World Wars I and II and explain how those alliances influenced the territorial divisions and occupations following the wars.

► Compare the positive and negative effects conflict has on the cohesiveness of countries (e.g., response to outside threat can lead to unifying effect of protecting a nation state, ultranationalism can lead to discrimination against immigrant groups).

B. Explain the causes and consequences of political and social revolutions resulting from issues of control of land and resources, as exemplified by being able to

► Explain the geographical reasons for and consequences of wars and revolutions (e.g., Eritrean war of independence, Vietnamese wars with France and the United States, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait).

► Analyze examples of how political and social unrest stem from competition for control of space and resources (e.g., Greeks and Turks in Cyprus; Taliban in Afghanistan, Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, actions of certain terrorist groups [Irish Republican Army or Hamas]).

► Analyze the effect that extracting and trading of resources has on conflicts in developing nations (e.g., lithium, conflict diamonds, petroleum, uranium).



Since 1947 unsettled border claims have remained in the region of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (outlined in red) between Pakistan and India as well as India and China.

Map credit: Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin