

Lesson Plan

Special Report: Central America

Book: *Central America*

Series: World Studies

Level: Voyager

Objective

To help students research and write a report on one of the countries in Central America, and to practice choosing trustworthy sources.

Supplies

- *Central America* book
- Computer access for students
- National Geographic Kids “Countries” web page: <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/>

Before the Activity

Read *Central America* as a class, or assign it to students to read on their own. Display the map on page 7 so students can see it.

Activity

Central America is made up of seven different countries. Each student should choose one of the countries to research in more depth. Students will write an essay about this country. This essay will use the same structure as the book:

- an introductory paragraph that introduces readers to the country and gives descriptive details about it
- a paragraph about the country’s history
- a paragraph about the country’s geography and climate
- a paragraph about the plants and animals that live in the country
- a paragraph about the country’s natural resources and economy
- a paragraph about the country’s government and politics
- a paragraph about the country’s people and culture
- a concluding paragraph that ties the essay’s ideas together in a way that creates a sense of closure

Students should use the internet to research facts about their chosen country, making sure to record the source where they found each piece of information. Students should find at least three different sources. They should make sure each source is trustworthy.

Remind students that the ending of a website address tells where it comes from or who made it. Websites with addresses ending in “.edu” or “.gov” come from educational and government sources. They tend to be trustworthy. Addresses ending in “.org” or “.com” are made by organizations or other businesses. They can be trusted if experts write or review articles put on the site, or if the organization is known for being accurate. For example, show students the National Geographic Kids “Countries” page. *National Geographic* is a magazine published by a well-known organization. So, information from its website is likely trustworthy, too.

After students have their sources, they should take notes. They should make sure to write information about all six body paragraph topics. And they should record the website where they found each fact. Then, students should use this information to write an essay. At the end of the essay, they should include a bibliography. This page should list all the sources they used. For each source, students should type both the name of the website and the URL.

Evaluation

Collect the essays and note pages. Use the following system to give each student up to 40 points:

- 3 points (1 point for each source) for choosing trustworthy sources
- 12 points (2 points for each topic) for the information on the note page
- 6 points (1 point for each topic) for including the sources on the note page
- 16 points (2 points for each paragraph) for the essay
- 2 points for citing the sources in a bibliography at the end
- 1 point for using good spelling and grammar

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards’ reading standards for informational texts, grade 6 (RI 6.2, 6.7), and writing standards, grade 6 (W 6.2, 6.8).