

Political Geography

Absent Work #7

All questions require at least
THREE sentences on own paper.

PLACES & TERMS

state an independent unit that occupies a specific territory and has control of its internal and external affairs

nation a group of people with a common culture living in a territory and having a strong sense of unity

nation-state when a nation and a state occupy the same territory

democracy government in which citizens hold political power either directly or through elected representatives

monarchy government in which a ruling family holds political power and may or may not share the power with citizens

dictatorship government in which an individual or group holds complete power

communism government in which nearly all political power and means of production are held by the government

landlocked having no outlet to the sea

Nations of the World

***What** is a country?*

A country can be described in several ways. The political term **state** is used to describe an independent unit that occupies a specific territory and has control of its internal and external affairs. Often, the term country is used to mean state.

Nation refers to a group of people with a common culture living in a territory and having a strong sense of unity. When a nation and a state occupy the same territory, that territory is called a **nation-state**. Many countries of the world are nation-states. However, it is possible for a nation not to have a territory. A group like this is called a stateless nation.

1. What is a nation-state?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES
on own paper.

TYPES OF GOVERNMENT

***How** do types of government differ?*

Generally, a type of government falls into one of four categories. In a **democracy**, citizens hold political power either directly or through elected representatives. In a **monarchy**, a ruling family, king, or queen holds political power and may or may not share the power with citizens.

In a **dictatorship**, an individual or group holds complete political power. **Communism** is a system in which nearly all political power and means of production are held by the government.

2. What are the four types of governments?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES
on own paper.

Geographic Characteristics of Nations

What is a landlocked country?

Three geographic characteristics are important in describing a country: size, shape, and relative location.

A larger nation may be more powerful because it has more resources. It may also have more people to build military or economic power.

The shape of a country can have an impact on how easily it can be governed. A long narrow country may be difficult to rule because contact with people in a distant part of the country may be difficult. Shape may affect how goods are moved to all areas of the country or how the country relates to neighboring countries.

The relative location of a country can be very important. For example, a nation surrounded by hostile neighbors must deal with issues of protection and security. A **landlocked** country is one with no outlet to the sea. Access to water means easy access to shipping. A landlocked nation must find ways to get goods into and from its land.

3. What geographic characteristics describe a country?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

National Boundaries

Why do states set boundaries?

Boundaries or borders set the limits of the area controlled by the state. Inside the borders, the state can do such things as collect taxes, set up a legal code, or have an official language. A state may claim all of the resources found inside its boundaries. The two basic types of international boundaries are natural and artificial.

A natural boundary is based on physical features of the land. For example, rivers, lakes, or chains of mountains are natural boundaries. Traditionally, a boundary that uses a river or a lake divides the body of water in the middle.

Usually, an artificial boundary is a straight line following latitude or longitude lines. The 49° N latitude line that separates the United States and Canada is an example. These lines are often established in boundary treaties between countries. Sometimes a conquering country puts boundary lines on lands it has taken over.

4. What are some examples of natural and artificial boundaries?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.

Regional Political Systems

What other political units exist?

Countries often are divided into smaller political units. This is done to make governing more efficient. The most common local units of government are cities, towns, and villages.

Smaller political units often combine to form larger regional units. They may do this to promote *mutual* goals. Countries, provinces, and states are examples.

Countries may join with each other to form international political, military, or economic units. The largest political unit is the United Nations. This group has nearly 200 members who work to improve political, cultural, and economic conditions across the globe.

5. Why do countries sometimes join together?

Answer in at least THREE SENTENCES on own paper.