This week we focus on the way that humans divide the world. Countries are areas of the world under the control of a common government. 193 countries are recognized by the United Nations, but even more might qualify depending on how you count them. Countries are defined by their laws, borders, governments, which in turn both influence and are influenced by the culture of the people who live there.
What's new this year?

- 6 new country profiles.
- Top ten lists.
- Links to useful online sources for more information on countries not in this packet.

What should you study to do well?

- Know about the languages, currencies, flags, and capitals of countries.
- Know the relative size of the area, population, and economy of different countries.
- Be able to find any country on a map.
- Know in which countries the landmarks from week one and two can be found.

What will the categories be?

- Superlatives (Be able to name the biggest in each category)
- Flags (Know a country by its flag)
- Tour Guide (Know a country by its landmarks)
- Fast Facts (Know the official languages and currencies of different countries)
- On the Map (Find countries on a map)
- Capitals (Name the capitals of countries or name the country by its capital.

Example Challenge Questions

- What are three countries where Elizabeth II is queen?
- What are three countries on three different continents that use the peso?
# Top Tens

These lists show the top ten countries (or cities) in a bunch of different categories.

## Largest Area

1. Russia
2. Canada
3. USA
4. China
5. Brazil
6. Australia
7. India
8. Argentina
9. Kazakhstan
10. Algeria

## Largest Population

1. China
2. India
3. USA
4. Indonesia
5. Pakistan
6. Brazil
7. Nigeria
8. Bangladesh
9. Russia
10. Japan

## Largest Economy

1. USA
2. China
3. Japan
4. Germany
5. India
6. France
7. United Kingdom
8. Italy
9. Brazil
10. Canada

## Biggest Cities

1. Tokyo
2. Dehli
3. Shanghai
4. Sao Paolo
5. Mexico City
6. Cairo
7. Mumbai
8. Beijing
9. Dhaka
10. Osaka

## Richest (Highest Average GDP-PPP)

1. Qatar
2. Luxembourg
3. Singapore
4. Brunei
5. Ireland
6. Norway
7. United Arab Emirates
8. Kuwait
9. Switzerland
10. United States

## Strongest Military (Annual Budget)

1. USA
2. China
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Russia
5. United Kingdom
6. India
7. France
8. Japan
9. Germany
10. South Korea

## Highest Standard of Living (Human Development Index)

1. Norway
2. Switzerland
3. Ireland
4. Germany
5. Australia
6. Iceland
7. Sweden
8. Singapore
9. Netherlands
10. Denmark

## Ethnic Diversity (Fearon Analysis of language diversity)

1. Papua New Guinea
2. Tanzania
3. DR Congo
4. Uganda
5. Liberia
6. Cameroon
7. Togo
8. South Africa
9. Republic of the Congo
10. Madagascar
The Countries of the World

If you read the introduction then you know that there are more than 193 countries in the world. There is no way we can have a detailed profile of every country in this packet with that many places! Instead we will have detailed profiles of a selection of countries. This will include the largest countries in the world as well as a selection of others that you will hopefully find interesting.

While you study, use a map to make sure you can find all of these places!

Flags of the World

With over 193 countries, it would take many pages to print pictures of all of their flags. Fortunately for us there have been many resources like this already made. The Ossining Public Library has a number of books on flags. Our government has also made an amazing compilation of flags. Search for CIA World Factbook or check out the link below to see the amazing variety of flags from countries around the world. You can also go from there to profiles of the different countries with tons of information from fast facts to history to current events. There is also a great collection of maps. The CIA World Fact Book is an amazing resource!


Country Fast Facts

This wonderful summary from Bank Exams will give you fast facts about all of the countries of the world. It includes capitals, currency, and languages about all the countries we couldn't include in depth profile.

China

Capital: Beijing  Largest City: Shanghai  
Location: A large country in Asia, China borders 14 countries as well as the East China Sea, South China Sea, and Yellow Sea.
Area: 3,705,407 square miles
Population: ~1,386,000,000 Chinese
Language: Mandarin. In Hong Kong Cantonese is the official language and other dialects are spoken regionally like Jin, Wu, Gan, Xiang, Min. and Hakka.
Currency: Yuan
Government: One-Party Socialist Republic
Landmarks: Forbidden City, Great Wall, Yangtze, Yellow River, Gobi Desert, Shanghai Tower, Pearl Tower, Hong Kong, Macao, 3 Gorges Dam, Leshan Giant Buddha, Terracotta Army, Grand Canal, Danyang-Kushan Grand Bridge, Guoliang Tunnel Road, Tiananmen Square, Bailong Elevator
Trivia: China was an imperial power in Asia for almost 2,000 years and has been a center of civilization for much longer than that. China has emerged in the 21st century as one of the dominant world powers. Tensions have arisen in China's territories and with its neighbors as the country has made moves to consolidate its power over the region. Recent actions in Hong Kong have sparked massive protests. China is the world's largest exporter by far. It is also the world's leading producer of minerals in general, gold, coal, and over a dozen different agricultural products.

Vietnam

Capital: Hanoi  Largest City: Ho Chi Minh City
Location: A coastal country in southeast Asia, Vietnam borders China, Cambodia, Laos, and the South China Sea.
Area: 127,822 square miles
Population: ~96,000,000 Vietnamese
Language: Vietnamese.
Currency: Dong
Government: One-Party Socialist Republic
Landmarks: Ha Long Bay, Temple of Literature, Mekong River, Cu Chi Tunnels, Hue Imperial City, Ho Chi Minh Square, Hoi An
Trivia: Vietnam is the world's #1 exporter of rice and cashews and #2 exporter of coffee. The Vietnam War is over, but the dangers are not. Hundreds of landmines were never detonated and remain a plague on the country. Vietnam has incredible biodiversity for its size with about 16% of the world's land animal species found there.

United Kingdom

Capital and Largest City: London
Location: The entire island of Britain as well as the northern end of Ireland and some smaller isles. It borders the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea.
Area: 93,628 square miles
Population: ~66,000,000 British
Language: English (de facto)
Currency: Pound Sterling
Government: Parliamentary Constitutional Democracy
Landmarks: Stonehenge, Tower Bridge, Big Ben, London Eye, Oxford, Channel Tunnel, Thames River, Wimbledon
Trivia: The UK is actually four different countries ruled by a unified government. They are England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The UK was a member of the European Union, but voted to leave in 2016, a decision that has complicated relations on the continent. Scotland voted strongly to remain in the EU, which has reinvigorated the Scottish Independence Movement. Queen Elizabeth II is the monarch of the UK and 15 other countries around the world, but the position is largely ceremonial.
India

**Capital:** New Delhi  
**Largest City:** Mumbai  
**Location:** Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and Indian Ocean as well as Pakistan, Nepal, China, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, and a disputed border with Afghanistan.

**Area:** 1,269,219 square miles  
**Population:** ~1,339,000,000 Indians

**Language:** English and Hindi  
**Currency:** Indian Rupee  
**Government:** Parliamentary Republic  
**Landmarks:** Red Fort, Taj Mahal, Amber Fort, Swaminarayan Akshardham, Fateh Bur, Brihadeeshwara Temple, Mahabodhi Temple, Statue of Unity, Ganges

**Trivia:** The icon on the Flag of India is the Wheel of Ashoka, the symbol of an ancient Mauryan king. The gap in the east of the outline of India is the country Bangladesh. The modern country of India was formed by unifying lands from the former British Raj with ~565 independent principalities. China and India regularly skirmish over territory in the Himalayas that, due to the remoteness and altitude, leads to many non-combat fatalities. India is one of only two Hindu majority countries (Nepal is the other). Bollywood, India's film industry is the largest in the world. India is the second most populous country in the world and has the second largest English speaking population in the world.

South Korea

**Capital and Largest City:** Seoul  
**Location:** On the southern end of the Korean Peninsula, bordered by North Korea, the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, and the Sea of Japan.

**Area:** 38,750 square miles  
**Population:** ~51,000,000 Koreans  
**Language:** Korean  
**Currency:** South Korean Won  
**Government:** Presidential Constitutional Republic  
**Landmarks:** Gyeongbokgung Palace, Bukchon Hanok Village, Seongsan, Jeju Island, Gwanghwamun Square

**Trivia:** South Korea has emerged as a developed economy since gaining independence from Japan after World War II. The US and South Korea have had close ties since the Korean War with the US keeping major military bases in the country. Samsung is based in Seoul and is so successful that the company accounts for 17% of South Korea's economy.

Brazil

**Capital:** Brasilia  
**Largest City:** Sao Paolo  
**Location:** Brazil occupies a large section of South America. It borders the Atlantic Ocean and borders every country on the continent with the exceptions of Chile and Ecuador.

**Area:** 3,287,956 square miles  
**Population:** ~209,000,000 Brazilians  
**Language:** Portuguese  
**Currency:** Real  
**Government:** Presidential Constitutional Republic  
**Landmarks:** Cristo Redentor, Amazon River, Amazon Rainforest, Maracanã Stadium, Iguaçu Falls, Itaipu Dam, Sugarloaf Mountain, Teatro Amazona

**Trivia:** Brazil gets its name from the Brazilwood tree, one of the thousands of species of trees found in the country. Brazil holds the world's largest carnival in Rio de Janiero. Brazil is the world's largest exporter of coffee. The city of Manaus is in the middle of the Amazon Rainforest and has a population of 2.5 million. The Amazon covers about 60% of the country, with most people living near the coast.
**Pakistan**

**Capital:** Islamabad  
**Largest City:** Karachi  
**Location:** Central Asia, north of the Arabian Sea. Pakistan also borders Iran, Afghanistan, India, and has a disputed border with China.  
**Area:** 340,509 square miles  
**Population:** ~197,000,000 Pakistanis  
**Language:** Urdu and English  
**Currency:** Pakistani Rupee  
**Government:** Parliamentary Republic  
**Landmarks:** Lahore Fort, Shalimar Gardens, Badshahi Mosque, Tomb of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, K2, Faisal Mosque  
**Trivia:** The country of Bangladesh used to be East Pakistan before it gained independence in 1971. Control of the Kashmir region is disputed between India and Pakistan and remains a source of conflict. Pakistan is home to the world's highest roadway, which makes sense as it is home to one of the world's highest mountains (K2).

**Canada**

**Capital:** Ottawa  
**Largest City:** Toronto  
**Location:** Northern North America, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Arctic Ocean, and the United States of America.  
**Area:** 3,855,100 square miles  
**Population:** ~37,000,000 Canadians  
**Language:** English and French  
**Currency:** Canadian Dollar  
**Government:** Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy  
**Landmarks:** CN Tower, Banff National Park, Old Quebec, Mount Royal, Niagara Falls, Stanley Park, St Lawrence River  
**Trivia:** Canada is a commonwealth realm, meaning that it is independent, but it recognizes the Queen of England as its queen. There are 16 of these realms in the world. Some of the world's largest islands are in Canada (such as Baffin island), but they are arctic and mostly uninhabited. Canada has a large native American population, which they refer to as "First Nations" people. In spite not having a huge population, Canada is one of the largest economies in the world.

**Indonesia**

**Capital and Largest City:** Jakarta  
**Location:** A group of islands south of continental Asia, including all of Sumatra, Java, and Sulawesi, as well as parts of Borneo, Timor, and New Guinea.  
**Area:** 735,358 square miles  
**Population:** ~264,000,000 Indonesians  
**Language:** Indonesian/Malay. Hundreds of other languages are spoken.  
**Currency:** Rupiah  
**Government:** Presidential Republic  
**Landmarks:** Prambanan, Borobudur, Komodo National Park, Javan Rainforests, Sangiran Early Man Site, Krakatoa, Punak Jaya  
**Trivia:** The oldest cave paintings in the world are found on Java in Indonesia. Human remains dating back 1.7 million years were found on Java. Their are ~17,000 islands in the archipelago. While many people tend to think of the Middle East as where most Muslims live, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, with 87% of the country identifying as Muslim. Indonesia is the world's leading exporter of palm oil, coconuts, and cinnamon. 10% of the world's languages are native to Indonesia, second only to Papua New Guinea.
**Russia**

**Capital and Largest City:** Moscow  
**Location:** Crossing the Eurasian landmass, Russia extends from Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean. It borders the Baltic Sea, Caspian Sea, Black Sea, Arctic Ocean, Bering Sea, Sea of Okhotsk, and Kera Sea. Like China, it borders 14 countries.  
**Area:** 6,612,073 square miles  
**Population:** ~146,000,000 Russians  
**Language:** Russian  
**Currency:** Ruble  
**Government:** Federal Dominant-party semi-presidential Constitutional Republic  
**Landmarks:** Kremlin, Mt. Elbrus, Red Square, St. Basil’s, Hermitage, Yenisei, Motherland Calls  
**Trivia:** Russia is the Largest country in the world. It is larger than the entire rest of Europe. Much of this territory is Siberia and which has little population. In 2015 Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula which was a part of Ukraine. While not at the level of power it held as part of the USSR and has seen its role in diplomatic organizations decline, Russia has continued to be a factor in world politics. A recent change to their constitution will allow Vladimir Putin to be president for life.

**Turkey**

**Capital:** Ankara  
**Largest City:** Istanbul  
**Location:** Turkey is mostly in Asia, though a small part is in Europe. It is adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and the Sea of Marmara as well as Greece, Syria, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Iran, and Iraq.  
**Area:** 302,455 square miles  
**Population:** ~82,000,000 Turks  
**Language:** Turkish  
**Currency:** Lira  
**Government:** Presidential Constitutional Republic  
**Landmarks:** Hagia Sophia, Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Gallata Tower, Bosporus, Dardanelles, Ephesus, Pamukkale, Mount Nemrut, Aspendos  
**Trivia:** The city of Istanbul was named Constantinople for over a 1,500 years by both the Ottomans and the Byzantines until the Turks changed it in 1923. Its original name, though, was Byzantium. Turkey has made efforts to join the EU, but progress has halted as the country deals with human rights issues. Many Kurds, the world’s largest ethnic group without a home country, live in Turkey.

**Singapore**

**Capital and Largest City:** Singapore  
**Location:** An island along the Strait of Malacca near Malaysia  
**Area:** 279 square miles  
**Population:** ~5,000,000 Singaporeans  
**Languages:** English, Malay, Chinese, Tamil  
**Currency:** Singapore Dollar  
**Government:** Dominant Party Parliamentary Republic  
**Landmarks:** Esplanade, Merlion Park, Kranji War Memorial, Singapore Flier, CHIJMES, National Library, Jnah-Singapore Causeway  
**Trivia:** While Singapore is an island, it is connected to Malaysia by bridge. Thousands of Malaysians travel to Singapore for work. Singapore is one of the richest countries in the world. Singapore became independent from Malaysia in 1965. Singapore is known for its restrictive laws and harsh criminal justice system, but also extremely low political corruption.
Mexico

**Capital and Largest City:** Mexico City  
**Location:** In the Middle of North America, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, United States of America, Guatemala, and Belize.  
**Area:** 761,610 square miles  
**Population:** ~126,000,000 Mexicans  
**Language:** Spanish  
**Currency:** Mexican Peso  
**Government:** Presidential Constitutional Republic  
**Landmarks:** Paricutin, Chichen Itza, Rio Grande, Tulum, Crystal Caves, Coba, National Palace, Res Zapotes, Cancun, Xcarat, Tulum  
**Trivia:** Mexico's official name is “Estados Unidos Mexicanos”, meaning there are two countries in North America that call themselves the “United States”. The Yucatan and Baja California are Mexico's two major peninsula. Mexico was the center of the Aztec empire and parts of the Mayan civilization. Mexico City has been the seat of power in the region for hundreds of years. Mexico is the most populated Spanish speaking population in the world.

Argentina

**Capital and Largest City:** Buenos Aires  
**Location:** Argentina is on the southern end of South America. It borders the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans as well as Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia.  
**Area:** ~1,073,500 square miles  
**Population:** ~44,000,000 Argentinians  
**Language:** Spanish  
**Currency:** Argentine Peso  
**Government:** Presidential Constitutional Republic  
**Landmarks:** Patagonian Desert, 9 de Julio Avenue, Aconagua, La Boca, Talampaya Canyon, Iaguazu Falls, Perito Moreno Glacier, Teatro Colon  
**Trivia:** Argentina is home to the widest street in the world, 9 de Julio Avenue in Buenos Aires. It has 7 lanes in each direction plus a 2 lane parallel street on each side, making it a total of 18 lanes across. Argentina is almost the southernmost country in the world, with Tierra del Fuego at the bottom of South America, but a tiny piece of Chile is further south. An Argentinian baby named Emilio was the first person to be born in Antarctica.

Ecuador

**Capital and Largest City:** Quito  
**Location:** On the Pacific coast of South America bordered by Peru and Colombia  
**Area:** 109,484 square miles  
**Population:** ~17,000,000 Ecuadorians  
**Languages:** Spanish  
**Currency:** US Dollar  
**Government:** Presidential Constitutional Republic  
**Landmarks:** Andes Mountains, Amazon Rainforest, Galapagos Islands, Cotopaxi, Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, Iglesia y Monesterio de San Francisco  
**Trivia:** Ecuador divides itself into three different geographic regions: La Coasta (the Coastline), la Sierra (the Mountainous central land), and El Oriente (the Eastern area in the Amazon Basin). The Galapagos Islands, the world's first UNESCO world heritage site. Quito was the second site designated, both part of Ecuador. From 1819-1830 Ecuador was part of Gran Colombia, a country that consisted of what is now Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. Quito and Guayaquil have a fierce regional rivalry, so national political campaigns often try to include people from both places to attracted voters.
Italy

**Capital and Largest City:** Rome

**Location:** Italy is a peninsula on the Southern end of Europe. It also includes the major islands Sicily and Sardinia. It borders the Mediterranean, Adriatic, and Tyrrhenian Seas. It also borders Switzerland, San Marino, Slovenia, Austria, and France.

**Area:** 116,350 square miles

**Population:** ~60,000,000 Italians

**Language:** Italian

**Currency:** Euro

**Government:** Parliamentary Republic

**Landmarks:** Coliseum, Pantheon, Tower of Pisa, Uffizi, Alps, St. Peter's Basilica, Tiber, Rialto Bridge

**Trivia:** Italy completely surrounds two smaller countries, San Marino and Vatican City. The Vatican is so small the entire city fits into just a handful of blocks in Rome. Italy was the center of the Roman Empire, one of history's most studied civilizations. They spoke Latin, though, not Italian. Italy is part of the European Union. Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean, is part of Italy and to the south. Sardinia is the other major Italian island. While it looks like it could be part of Italy, the island of Corsica is part of France.

France

**Capital and Largest City:** Paris

**Location:** In the western end of Europe, north of Spain. It borders the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, as well as Belgium, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Monaco, and Andorra.

**Area:** 247,368 square miles

**Population:** ~67,000,000 French

**Language:** French

**Currency:** Euro

**Government:** Semi-Presidential Republic

**Landmarks:** Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triumphe, Notre Dame, Louvre, Pyrenees, Rhine, Seine, Channel Tunnel, Versailles, Millau Viaduct, Pont du Gard, Mont Blanc

**Trivia:** France’s territory includes French Guyana in South America making it one of only a few countries with significant territory in both the Eastern and Western Hemisphere. France is the most popular tourist destination in the world, helped greatly by being part of the European Union's free travel agreement. The metric system was invented in France, which the majority of humans use to measure their world.

Germany

**Capital and Largest City:** Berlin

**Location:** Located centrally in Europe. Germany borders the Baltic Sea and North Sea as well as Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Czechia, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Lichtenstein, and Luxembourg

**Area:** 137,988 square miles

**Population:** ~82,000,000 Germans

**Language:** German

**Currency:** Euro

**Government:** Parliamentary Republic

**Landmarks:** Brandenburg Gate, Reichstag, Neuschwanstein Castle, Rhine, Danube, Berlin Wall Memorial, Cologne Cathedral

**Trivia:** Germany is the only country both the Rhine and the Danube pass through. After World War 2, Germany was divided into two countries. They reunified in 1989. Germany has hundreds of castles, many of which can be visited by tourists. Oktoberfest is a folk celebration that draws thousands to drink and party. Germany is the largest economy in the EU.
Tanzania

Capital: Dodoma Largest City: Dar es Salaam
Location: On the east coast of Africa just south of the equator. Tanzania is bordered by Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, and the Indian Ocean.
Area: 365,756 square miles
Population: ~55,000,000 Tanzanians
Language: Swahili, but most people also speak Bantu languages or English too.
Currency: Tanzanian Shilling
Government: Single Party Socialist Republic
Landmarks: Mount Kilimanjaro, Serengeti, Ngorongobo Wilderness Area, Ngorongobo Crater, Stone Town, Unguja, TAZARA Railways, Lake Victoria
Trivia: Tanzania formed when Tanganyika merged with the city of Zanzibar after the city overthrew its monarch. Tanzania is a socialist republic and all land in the country is owned by the government. 25% of the land in Tanzania is dedicated to national parks and reserves, an area bigger than Germany. This includes the famous Serengeti. Human footprints that are 3.6 million years old were found in Tanzania.

Nigeria

Capital: Abuja Largest City: Lagos
Location: An East African country, Nigeria borders the Gulf of Guinea as well as Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.
Area: 356,669 square miles
Population: ~190,000,000 Nigerians
Language: English is official, but ~520 languages are spoken.
Currency: Naira
Government: Presidential Republic
Landmarks: Zuma Rock, Yankari National Park, Benin Moat, Tafawa Balewa Squarare, Sungbo’s Eredo, Niger River
Trivia: Nigeria is on pace to be the third most populous country in the world by the year 2050. Nigeria has the largest population and economy in Africa. Nigeria’s population is split in number and geography between Christian and Muslim, with religious tension between the groups common. Nigeria is home to staggering variety of ethnic groups, diversity of genetics, and range of languages. Nollywood, Nigeria’s film industry, is the second largest in the world.

Ethiopia

Capital and Largest City: Addis Ababa
Location: Part of the horn of Africa, Ethiopia is a landlocked country surrounded by Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan.
Area: 426,400 square miles
Population: ~105,000,000 Ethiopians
Language: Amharic
Currency: Birr
Government: Parliamentary Republic
Landmarks: Steele, Obelisk of Aksum, Stone Hewn Churches of Labella, Simien Mountains, Lake Tana, Blue Nile Falls, Aksum
Trivia: Ethiopia is both the place where the oldest example of human life were discovered and the home of the longest lasting sovereign nation in history. The camel and the donkey were first domesticated here. Ethiopia is the only country in Africa that was never colonized. Hallie Selassie, former emperor of Ethiopia, is revered as a god in the Rastafarian religion. The African Union headquarters is in Addis Ababa.
South Africa

**Capital and Largest City:** Bloemfontein, Pretoria, Johannesburg

**Location:** The southern end of Africa, bordering the Indian and Atlantic Oceans as well as Eswani, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. It also completely surrounds Lesotho.

**Area:** 471,444 square miles

**Population:** ~57,000,000 South Africans

**Language:** Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans, English, Northern Sotho, Tswana, Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Swazi, Venda, Southern Ndebele

**Currency:** Rand

**Government:** Parliamentary Constitutional Republic

**Landmarks:** Cradle of Humanity, Robben Island, Cape of Good Hope, Islandwana Battlefield, Kruger National Park, Drakensburg, Kalahari

**Trivia:** Dozens of ethnic groups are native to the lands of South Africa, explaining why the country has 14 official languages. The Zulu is the most numerous and the best known outside of Africa, thanks to their historic military victory against the British at the Battle of Islandwana. South Africa has many natural resources and is a top producer of many different metals.

Egypt

**Capital and Largest City:** Cairo

**Location:** The North-east corner of Africa as well as a small area of the Middle East (Asia). Egypt is bordered by Sudan, Libya, the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, and Israel.

**Area:** 390,121 square miles

**Population:** ~94,000,000 Egyptians

**Language:** Arabic

**Currency:** Egyptian Pound

**Government:** Semi-Presidential Republic

**Landmarks:** Nile River, Great Pyramid, Valley of Kings, Sphinx, Karnak, Suez Canal, Egyptian Museum, Luxor, Abu Simbel, Alexandria Library

**Trivia:** Egypt is the only transcontinental country between Africa and Asia. The Upper Kingdom of ancient Egypt was south of the Lower Kingdom, which looks odd on our maps where up is North, but makes sense since the Nile flows in that direction. Egypt was of course home to the ancient Egyptians, one of the most advanced early civilizations. Along with the Mesopotamia, they created many world firsts like writing systems, plows, calendars, irrigation systems, and much more.

Kenya

**Capital and Largest City:** Nairobi

**Location:** On the eastern coast of Africa, Kenya borders Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, and the Indian Ocean.

**Area:** 224,018 square miles

**Population:** ~47,000,000 Kenyans

**Language:** Swahili and English

**Currency:** Schilling

**Government:** Presidential Republic

**Landmarks:** Masai Mara, Nairobi National Park, Lami Fort, Mount Kenya, Kauruna Forest

**Trivia:** Kenya is one of the world's leading exporters of tea, which may be partly explained by the fact that it is a former British Colony. Many of the world's oldest human remains and artifacts were found in Kenya, including the oldest tools ever discovered. Safari is the main source of tourism in Kenya, with Masai Mara being one of the few places you can see all 6 big game animals. The world's second largest lake, Lake Victoria, is in Kenya.
**Thailand**

**Capital and Largest City:** Bangkok  
**Location:** Located in south-east Asia, Thailand borders the Gulf of Thailand as well as Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar.  
**Area:** 198,120 square miles  
**Population:** ~68,000,000 Thai  
**Language:** Thai  
**Currency:** Baht  
**Government:** Constitutional Monarchy under a Military Junta  
**Landmarks:** Erawan, Wat Arun, Grand Palace, Temple of the Emerald Buddha, Wat Rong Khun, The Bridge of the River Kwai, Ko Ta Pu, Cheonmachong  
**Trivia:** The word Thai can mean both Thai people and free, so Thailand [Prathet Thai] means both “Land of the Free” and “Land of the Thai People”. Thailand was formerly known as Siam and was an important trade hub that was never colonized by Europeans. There are over 35,000 Buddhist temples in Thailand with about 95% of the population being Buddhist. 10% of all bird species live in Thailand, more than the entirety of Europe or North America.

**Iran**

**Capital and Largest City:** Tehran  
**Location:** The Middle East between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. Iran also borders Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan.  
**Area:** 636,372 square miles  
**Population:** ~81,000,000 Iranians  
**Language:** Persian  
**Currency:** Rial  
**Government:** Presidential Islamic Republic  
**Landmarks:** Persepolis, Golestan Palace, Mount Damavand, Naqsh-e Jahan Square, Azadi Square, Imam Reza Shrine  
**Trivia:** Iran in home to one of the world's oldest continuous civilization, dating back to 4000 BC which grew into the Persian Empire that was the largest civilization in the world in about 500 BC. Iran is one of the driest countries in the world with less than 4 inches of rain per year. It is also one of the hottest with an average July temperature of 95F. Iran has the largest population of refugees in the world with most coming from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

**Saudi Arabia**

**Capital and Largest City:** Riyadh  
**Location:** On the Arabian Peninsula, bordering Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan as well as the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf.  
**Area:** 830,000 square miles  
**Population:** ~33,000,000 Saudi Arabians  
**Language:** Arabic  
**Currency:** Saudi Riyal  
**Government:** Islamic Absolute Monarchy  
**Landmarks:** Masjid al-Haram, the Kaaba, Medina, Arabian Desert, Kingdom Center Tower  
**Trivia:** Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries in the world still ruled by a monarch with absolute authority. Brunei, Oman, the Vatican, Eswatini, and the United Arab Emirates are the others. For many decades Saudi Arabia was the world's leading producer of oil, but recently US has taken that distinction thanks to the development of shale oil production. That said, oil exports make up about half of the country's GDP and they have about 22% of the world's reserves. Saudi Arabia leads the Middle East in tourism, in Egypt, mostly due to pilgrims on the Hajj.
**Cuba**

**Capital and Largest City:** Havana

**Location:** The largest island in the Caribbean Sea, adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico and south of Florida.

**Area:** 42,426 square miles

**Population:** ~11,000,000 Cubans

**Language:** Spanish

**Currency:** Cuban Peso

**Government:** One-Party Socialist Republic

**Landmarks:** El Capitolio, El Floridita

**Trivia:** Cuba has a complicated history with the US. It was annexed by the US after the Spanish-American War and later was the site of extreme tensions between the US and the USSR, with events like the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Bay of Pigs Invasion that threatened to lead to nuclear war. The US resumed relations with Cuba in 2015. Cuba has the most doctors per capita in the world and has one of the highest literacy rates in the world.

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**Bahamas**

**Capital and Largest City:** Nassau

**Location:** A group of islands in the Atlantic Ocean east of Florida and North of Cuba.

**Area:** 5,358 square miles

**Population:** ~391,000 Bahamians

**Language:** English

**Currency:** Bahamian Dollar

**Government:** Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy

**Landmarks:** Andros Barrier Reef, Thunderball Grotto, Bimini, Fort Montagu, Atlantis, Queen's Staircase

**Trivia:** The Bahamas is the third wealthiest country in the Western hemisphere after the US and Canada. The Bahamas are a commonwealth realm, meaning Elizabeth II is Queen here too. Hurricanes are a major threat to the island. Tourism makes up half of the Bahamas economy and there is no income or sales tax, the government relying entirely on tariffs for income.

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**Taiwan**

**Capital and Largest City:** Taipei

**Location:** An island east of China between the South China Sea, East China Sea, and Philippine Sea.

**Area:** 13,976 square miles

**Population:** ~23,000,000 Taiwanese

**Language:** Mandarin Chinese

**Currency:** New Taiwan Dollar

**Government:** Semi-Presidential Republic

**Landmarks:** Taipei 101, National Palace Museum, Guandu Temple, Elephant Mountain, Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall, Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall

**Trivia:** Taiwan is the home of the government of the Republic of China that was forced off of the mainland during the Chinese Communist Revolution. Taiwan's position is that it is the legitimate government of all of China, even though that territory is entirely in the control of the People's Republic of China. Taiwan is not a member of the UN in spite of the fact that it meets all qualifications, mainly due to China's refusal to recognize Taiwan's independence, claiming that the island is their territory.
Malaysia

Capital and Largest City: Kuala Lumpur
Location: Found in southeast Asia, Malaysia is split between the Malay peninsula bordering Thailand and the Island of Borneo bordering Indonesia and Brunei.
Area: 127,724 square miles
Population: ~33,000,000 Malaysians
Language: Malay. Arabic, English, and Mandarin are all commonly spoken.
Currency: Ringgit
Government: Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
Landmarks: Petronas Towers, Kuala Lumpur Tower, Batu Caves, Cheong Fatt Tze Museum, Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque, Genting Highlands
Trivia: Malaysia is an extremely bio-diverse country, containing an estimated 20% of the world's land species. It also has so many highways that if put in a line they world circle the entire world. Malaysia is split into two landmasses and piracy between them is common. Malaysia is one the rainiest countries in the world and the city of Kuching holds the record of rainiest with 253 days of rain in a year.

Ghana

Capital and Largest City: Accra
Location: Found in Western Africa, Ghana borders Ivory Coast, Togo, Burkina Faso, and the Gulf of Guinea.
Area: 92,497 square miles
Population: ~31,000,000 Ghanaians
Language: English. Akan is spoken by the majority of people as well.
Currency: Cedi
Government: Presidential Constitutional Republic
Landmarks: Cape Coast Castle Independence Square, Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park, Elmina Castle
Trivia: Ghana's nickname is the Gold Coast. The Ghana Empire was known for its incredible wealth due to the gold trade. Gold is still Ghana's biggest export. It is the 8th largest producer of the precious metal and it is also the world's second largest producer of cocoa beans. Ghana is rated the most peaceful country in Africa, a continent where civil unrest is common. Lake Volta, the world's largest artificial reservoir, is in Ghana.

Norway

Capital and Largest City: Oslo
Location: A country in Scandinavia bordering Sweden, Finland, and Russia as well as the North Sea, Barents Sea, and Norwegian Sea.
Area: 148,729 square miles
Population: ~5,000,000 Norwegians
Language: Norwegian and Sami
Currency: Norwegian Krone
Government: Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy
Landmarks: Viking ship museum, Aurlandsfjellet, Nordland Turselskap, Fredriksten Festning, Castle Rock
Trivia: Norway is the highest rated country on the Human Development Index, a measure of overall quality of life in a country. A combination of valuable natural resources, low population density, a long period of peace, a lack of imperial exploitation, a commitment to civil rights, and well funded government social programs seem to be the winning formula.
**North Korea**

**Capital and Largest City:** Pyongyang  
**Location:** Occupying part of the Korean Peninsula, North Korea borders South Korea, Russia, and China as well as the Yellow Sea and Sea of Japan.  
**Area:** 46,540 square miles  
**Population:** ~26,000,000 Koreans  
**Language:** Korean  
**Currency:** North Korean Won  
**Government:** Dictatorship  
**Landmarks:** Juche Tower, Mansu Hill  
**Trivia:** North Korea was formed in a communist revolution which led to the Korean War and the peninsula being divided into two countries. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has devolved into a military dictatorship that doesn't have any of the democratic values its name implies or socialist values that defined its creation. It is possibly the poorest country in the world, but the country rarely shares information so it hard to be sure. North Korea's attempts to create nuclear missiles is a constant concern to the international community. North and South Korea are still officially at war. Discussion about reunification of the countries is common, but no significant progress has ever been made.

**Poland**

**Capital and Largest City:** Warsaw  
**Location:** A large country in central Europe, Poland borders Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Germany, Czechia, Ukraine, Slovakia, and the Baltic Sea.  
**Area:** 120,733 square miles  
**Population:** ~38,000,000 Poles  
**Language:** Polish  
**Currency:** Ztoly  
**Government:** Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy  
**Landmarks:** Wieliczka Salt Mine, Moszna Castle, Warsaw Old Town, Wawel Castle, Auschwitz  
**Trivia:** Poland is loaded with castles, with over 100 that you can visit. Poland is a member of the EU. Poland is the only European country that did not work with the Nazis at any level. While the country was quickly conquered when invaded in 1939, they never surrendered and actively resisted for the entire war. Nicolaus Copernicus, an important figure in geographic history, was born in Poland.

**Uruguay**

**Capital and Largest City:** Montevideo  
**Location:** A small country in South America bordering Brazil, Argentina, and the Atlantic Ocean  
**Area:** 68,037 square miles  
**Population:** ~4,000,000 Uruguayan  
**Language:** Spanish  
**Currency:** Uruguayan Peso  
**Government:** Presidential Constitutional Republic  
**Landmarks:** Palacio Salvo, Casapueblo, Palacio Taranco, Rambla de Montevideo  
**Trivia:** Uruguay is an industrial economy, but is also a major exporter of livestock. Even though it was a dictatorship until 1985, Uruguay has become one of the least corrupt governments in the world, while also having the lowest poverty and highest wealth of any country in South America. Uruguay was the first country in the world to give every student a laptop.