

The “Haves” and “Have-Nots”: A Look at Inequality in the World Today

Introduction

This lesson examines demographic data and examines the issue of inequality in the world. It is an anticipatory set for an inquiry into the Age of Imperialism and bioprospecting. Students will use the website www.gapminder.org to find demographic data from various countries in order to determine which regions of the world tend to be developed and which tend to be developing. Although this lesson has been written for a World History class, it could easily fit into the curriculum for AP Human Geography.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Analyze current demographic data in order to determine the spatial aspects of world inequality
- Students will understand the key demographic factors used to compare levels of inequality between countries by completing an *Income Inquisition* graphic organizer
- Demonstrate an understanding of the geographic dimensions of inequality through the completion of research questions and a class discussion

Curriculum Alignment

World History:

WH.1: Apply the four interconnected dimensions of historical thinking to the Essential Standards for World History in order to understand the creation and development of societies/civilizations/nations over time.

- W.H. 1.2.4 - Use Historical Comprehension to: *Analyze visual, literary and musical sources*
- W.H.1.3.3 - Use Historical Analysis and Interpretation to: *Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causations*
- W.H.1.3.5 - Use Historical Analysis and Interpretation to: *Evaluate the influence of the past on contemporary issues*

AP Human Geography:

Goal #1: *Use and think about maps and spatial data.*

Classroom time required

90 minutes

Teacher preparation

The teacher needs to be familiar with Gapminder World, which can be found at www.gapminder.org. The students will be using this website extensively to find their data; however, there are other sites on the internet that can be used to find demographic data, and I have listed several in the Websites section of this plan. Gapminder is easy to use, and there is a quick tutorial that is very helpful. The teacher also needs to run copies of the sheets listed in the “Materials Needed” section.

Materials Needed

The teacher needs Post-It notes page markers in four different colors and a large map of the world. Furthermore, the teacher will need to make sure that every student receives a copy of the Student Instructions – Lesson One, Observations – Lesson One, and Graphic Organizer – Lesson One sheets.

Technology Resources

Students need computers with internet access. Have students work with a partner or in groups of three or four if the number of computers is limited. It is also helpful, but not necessary, to have a projector hooked up to the teacher’s computer that can display images from the internet.

Pre-activities

Students should have a basic knowledge of demographic data and what demographic data can tell us about a country. Particularly important to this lesson are Income per person, life expectancy, child mortality, literacy rate, and the Human Development Index. Students will also need to understand how these demographic statistics are related to “developed” and “developing” countries.

Activity

Exploration:

1. To begin, have students partner up and distribute six Post-It notes page markers to each group – three of one color, and three of another.
2. Explain to students that each color represents a different variable. For instance, green page markers represent wealthy countries, whereas blue page markers represent poor countries. Red page markers represent countries with high life expectancy, whereas yellow page markers represent countries with low life expectancy.

[As the teacher, choose two of the variables you are examining in the main activity: Income per person (GDP PPP per capita), Life expectancy, Child mortality (Infant mortality rate), or Literacy rate, I would not choose the HDI for the intro. It does not matter which two, but I would distribute the page markers equally throughout the class (half of the students have high income and half have low income, etc.). The purpose of this piece of the activity is to get the students interested in the main activity.]

3. Project a political map of the world on the wall. The bigger the map, the better. I found a pretty good one at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/world_maps/world_pol_2011_nov.pdf. However, these maps are pretty easy to find doing a quick search of “political world maps” on Google.
4. Explain to students that they will place all their page markers on the map based on where they believe their color/variable aligns with real-world conditions. There is no right or wrong, we are simply trying to get a feel for what the class thinks before doing any research.
5. For example, let’s say a pair of students has three page markers for wealthy countries and three page markers for low life expectancy; they should place the page markers on three separate countries they believe are wealthy and three they believe have a low life expectancy.

[To get a broader distribution, you might say that once a country has three page markers on it no one else is allowed to choose that one.]

6. Allow the students 5 – 10 minutes to place their page markers on the map.
7. Leave the map at the front of the room as the students work on the main activity.
8. Discuss the distribution of the Post-It notes page markers on the map. Ask probing questions to determine why the students placed the page markers where they did. The general idea is to find out what preconceived notions students have about global wealth distribution. Possible questions to ask are:
 - a. How did you go about deciding which countries to place your Post-it notes page markers?
 - b. Which parts of the world does the class believe to have a higher/lower standard of living? Why do you think this?
 - c. Any ideas as to why certain parts of the world tend to have a higher standard of living than others? Be careful with this question. Students can sometimes be uninformed and callous. However, if a student says something that is inappropriate, it can be a great teachable moment.

Model System:

1. Explain to students that we are now going to explore global inequality by collecting demographic data on the internet.
2. It is up to the teacher how the students will be organized. I would recommend letting the students work in groups of two or three to complete the research.
3. Distribute the Student Instructions – Lesson One sheet as well as the Graphic Organizer – Lesson One, and Observations – Lesson one sheets to each student.
4. Have students go to www.gapminder.org.
5. The teacher may need to show students how to use the website to obtain information; this is why it is important for the teacher to complete the online tutorial on the website before launching the lesson in class.
6. Students collect the data and fill in their data sets.
7. After all data has been collected, the students should complete the Observations sheet together.

Content Wrap-up:

After students have had time to complete their observations, the teacher should point out great inequalities exist between the developed and the developing world; one can see this by examining various demographic statistics. The teacher should allude to the fact that there are historical reasons for these inequalities, and the purpose of this examination has been to serve as a jumping off point for an exploration of why these inequalities exist. Finally, the teacher should tell the students that a major cause for modern inequalities in the world today is the historical period known as the Age of Imperialism, which will be the next unit of study. Some questions you might ask at this point are:

1. Based on your observations, what parts of the world tend to be developed? How did you come to this conclusion?
2. Based on your observations, what parts of the world tend to be developing? How did you come to this conclusion?
3. Did you find any surprises as you completed your research? What were they?
4. What most shocked you about the data?
5. Has anyone ever heard of the term imperialism? Does anyone know what this term means?

[At this point, say to the students that current global inequality has its roots in the Age of Imperialism, which we will be studying over the course of the next several class periods.]

Guided Practice

One objective of this assignment is to get students to understand where the developed world is and where the developing world is. In the second lesson of the unit plan, the teacher will draw the link between current inequality and its historical roots in imperialism. For this section, the students will complete Data Set #3 on the [Graphic Organizer – Lesson One](#) sheet. They will choose four countries to research on their own and find the relevant demographic statistics. The students will need to choose two countries they believe are developed and two they believe are developing. They should answer the questions below Data Set #3 when they are finished.

Assessment

The assessment for this lesson is an informal formative assessment. You may choose to do this with the class as a whole, or walk around the room as students are working and talk with each group individually. It is important to ensure that students understand what parts of the globe are considered developed and developing and the importance of demographic statistics in examining the situation of a particular country. In order to gauge student understanding, I would suggest asking the following questions:

1. How can we use demographic data to make conclusions about global inequality? Can you think of any other demographic factors one might examine to determine global inequality?

2. Which two countries did you predict were developed? Which two countries did you predict were developing?
3. Were your predictions correct? Explain what your thought process was in making this prediction?
4. Did anyone make an incorrect prediction? If so, why do you think this happened?
5. What conclusions can we make about the world based on the factors we have examined?

[When listening to the students' responses, the teacher is checking to make sure that students understand how demographic statistics give us a window into the wealth and well-being of a country. Furthermore, the students need to understand that the Developed World typically consists of the countries of Western Europe, North America (excluding Mexico), Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea while the Developing World consists of the rest of the world's countries with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa tending to be the least developed. It is also important for the students to understand that there are varying degrees of development amongst countries.]

If the teacher prefers a summative type of assessment, I would give the students a daily grade for completion of the data sheets and Observations sheet using the following rubric:

√+ = 100, all of the assignment has been completed

√ = 80, at least 80% of the assignment has been completed

√- = 50, between 50% and 80% of the assignment has been completed

0 = 0, less than 50% of the assignment has been completed

Modifications

For a smaller class, I would consider allowing the students to work individually so that we would have a broader distribution on the world map during the Exploration section of the lesson plan. Furthermore, for a high achieving class, I might ask the students to do internet research as a homework assignment the night before the activity. I would ask them to determine what constitutes a developed/developing country and what demographic variables are used to determine whether a country is developed or developing.

Alternative Assessments

If the teacher would prefer a more formal assessment, have the students write a discussion question on the following prompt:

Explain the difference between the developed and developing world using the following key terms: Income per person, life expectancy, child mortality, and literacy rate. In your response, you should also describe the geographical locations of the developed and developing worlds.

Supplemental Information

As stated earlier, this lesson is designed for a World History class; however, it would fit nicely into an AP Human Geography course. There are several AP Human Geography textbooks that do a good job of discussing development and the differences between rich and poor countries. Below, I have listed some of the most commonly used textbooks in AP Human Geography. As an extension to this lesson, the teacher might ask the students to find additional variables one might look at in order to determine the level of development of a country. For example, the students may look at the number of cars per person or the average caloric intake of individuals in a society. They must find data that is reliable and accepted as a measuring stick of development.

Fellmann, Jerome D., et al. *Human Geography: Landscapes of Human Activities*. 11th ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2010.

Fouberg, Erin H., Alexander B. Murphy, and H. J. de Blij. *Human Geography: People, Place, and Culture*. 9th ed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009.

Rubenstein, James M. *The Cultural Landscape: An Introduction to Human Geography*. 10th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2010.

Critical Vocabulary

Income per person (GDP PPP per capita): “GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity (PPP). PPP GDP is gross domestic product converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity rates. An international dollar has the same purchasing power over GDP as the U.S. dollar has in the United States. GDP at purchaser's prices is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in current international dollars.” -- definition taken from www.nationmaster.com

Life expectancy: “the average life span of an individual.” -- definition taken from www.merriam-webster.com

Child mortality: “the number of deaths of infants under one year old in a given year per 1,000 live births in the same year.” -- definition taken from www.cia.gov

Literacy rate: “the ability to read and write at a specified age.” -- definition taken from www.cia.gov

[Different countries have varying standards for what constitutes literacy and use different ages as benchmarks.]

Websites and Resources

These are some other websites that contain excellent demographic data that can be used in conjunction with or in lieu of www.gapminder.org.

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/world_maps/world_pol_2011_nov.pdf: The University of Texas Library, which I used to find the political world map.

www.prb.org: Population Reference Bureau – This website has a lot of great teacher resources and a wealth of demographic statistics.

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>: The United Nations Development Programme is a great website for exploring the Human Development Index of members UN countries. It has many great visuals, including graphs which show how a country's HDI has changed over time.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>: The Central Intelligence Agency's World Fact Book has a wealth of information in regards to demographic statistics, and it has many great maps as well.

www.nationmaster.com: Nationmaster.com is a great resource for demographic statistics. What I love most is that you can compare two countries side by side in terms of their levels of development.

Comments

If it is not possible to project an image of a political map of the world on the wall, consider printing off copies of a blank world map and have students complete this part of the lesson at their desks. Discuss which countries the students chose by writing their answers on the board. I found a good outline map of the world with political boundaries at the following address:

<http://www.studentsfriend.com/aids/curraids/maps/sfworldp.pdf>.

Author Information

Mr. Walter teaches Social Studies at Gray Stone Day School, a college preparatory charter school in Misenheimer, North Carolina. Mr. Walter received his Bachelor of Arts in History from UNC – Chapel Hill in 1999 and completed his MAT in Secondary Social Studies Education in 2004, which he also received from UNC – Chapel Hill. During his externship with the Kenan Fellowship, Mr. Walter worked in the research laboratory of Dr. Mary Ann Lila, who is the Director of the Plants for Human Health Institute located on the North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis, North Carolina. In this role, Dr. Lila leads a team of researchers who examine the medicinal qualities of plants such as blueberries and currants. At the center of Dr. Lila's work is a respect for the traditional ecological knowledge one typically finds in the developing world. Furthermore, Western pharmaceutical companies are becoming ever more aware of the medicinal benefits of traditional knowledge, and are developing new medicines based on this knowledge. However, the financial benefits of these new pharmaceuticals are

rarely seen in the home countries. As a result of this paradigm, Dr. Lila has developed the “Reversing the Flow” concept, which attempts to keep all intellectual property rights and any possible financial benefits derived from traditional knowledge in the home country. At the heart of this concept are the Screens-to-Nature biosassays. These assays are field-deployable, inexpensive, and easy to use. Through her work with the Global Institute for Bioexploration and the Plants for Human Health Institute, Dr. Lila is truly affecting much needed change.