

Bienvenue à Maurice

Lesson Objective & Summary

Objective: Students will learn about the basic history, geography, and cultural heritage of Mauritius. Students will use a map to locate Mauritius and its capital, as well as identify some of the unique aspects of this island nation.

Summary: Students will identify Mauritius's location on a world map, and will explain some of the major geographic features of Mauritius. Students will read the [Bienvenue a Maurice blog](#) and watch the [Mauritius Series Sneak Peek video](#), and spend time previewing some of the other blogs and videos on ProjectExplorer.org's Mauritius section. Students will share their observations and questions about Mauritius. Finally, students will try to learn several Mauritian Creole and French phrases from the videos [Let's Learn French](#) and [Mauritian Creole for Travellers](#).

Grade Level:
Upper Elementary

DURATION:
1 - 2 Lessons

SUBJECTS:
English Language Arts,
Social Studies, Geography

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Standards & Benchmarks

From the Common Core Standards for Language Arts in History / Social Studies

- Students will quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (*Key Ideas and Details, Grade 5*)
- Students will draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently. (*Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Grade 5*)

From the New York State Social Studies Standards, Standard 3: Geography

- Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live - local, national, and global - including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

Background Information for Educators

Mauritius is an island nation located east of the African continent, in the Indian Ocean. Created by volcanic activity about 8 million years ago, Mauritius was home to many indigenous species of plants and birds, including the now-extinct dodo bird.

Visited by Arab sailors during the Middle Ages, Portuguese, Dutch, and Chinese sailors during the 1500s, and later colonized by France in 1715, Mauritius enjoys a diverse multicultural heritage. To work the tea and sugarcane plantations that dotted Mauritius, African slaves from Madagascar and other parts of southeast Africa were brought

to Mauritius. Because of Mauritius's diverse population, there emerged a strong need for a common language of communication. As French and phrases from the dialects of different slave populations merged together, the language of Mauritian Creole was formed.

Following the Napoleonic Wars, the British obtained control of Mauritius in 1810. Slavery continued until 1835, when the British abolished the practice of slavery. To help continue to harvest its abundance of sugarcane, the British imported nearly half a million indentured servants from the nearby Indian subcontinent from 1834 to 1921. Modern day Mauritius is a colorful conglomeration of cultures, boasting a rich heritage that stems from Indian Hindu, Chinese, Muslim, French-Creole, and British influences.

| Guiding Questions | Key Vocabulary |
|--|---|
| <p>Where is Mauritius located?</p> <p>Which countries influenced the development of Mauritius? How?</p> <p>Who are the Mauritians?</p> <p>How has Mauritius changed over time?</p> | <p>Island</p> <p>Indentured Servants</p> <p>Sugar Cane</p> <p>Influence</p> <p>Arab</p> <p>Indian Ocean</p> |

Lesson Plan

1. Using a world map, ask students to locate Mauritius. Ask students to locate Mauritius's capital city (Port Louis). How do they know it is the capital? What usually happens in a capital city?
2. Have students look at some of the geographic features of Mauritius (island; mountainous areas; located in the Indian Ocean, east of Africa). Have students locate and identify some of the countries nearby. Ask students to think about how the geography of Mauritius might influence how the Mauritian people live, or what their occupations may have traditionally looked like (i.e.: fishing, trading, etc).
3. Distribute the Mauritius Worksheet (page 6 & 7) to students. Ask students to complete the information they have already discovered about Mauritius.
4. Read the [Bienvenue a Maurice blog](#) and watch the [Mauritius Series Sneak Peek](#) video. Ask students to write what observations they made from the video (i.e.: Indian sari, tortilla-like bread, tea, sugar cane). Encourage them to consider aspects of culture that they observe: food, clothing, daily life, agriculture, etc. If needed, have students watch the [Mauritius Series Sneak Peek](#) video several times to note any other observations.

5. Briefly explain the history of Mauritius. Ask students to consider why the people of Mauritius may speak more than one language (French, Mauritian Creole, English).
6. Show students the episodes, [How Mauritius Formed](#) and [The Seven-Colored Sands](#) on the Mauritius' Chapter called [Fire & Earth](#). Have students add thoughts and observations to their Mauritius Worksheet (pages 6 & 7), particularly focusing on the geographical features.
7. In small groups, ask students to preview some of the other chapters, blogs, and videos on ProjectExplorer.org's Mauritius pages. Have students complete the Mauritius Worksheet (pages 6 & 7) with their learning and questions about Mauritius. Invite students to share their observations and questions on a class chart.
8. Watch [Let's Learn French](#) and [Mauritian Creole for Travellers](#) videos. Have students practice speaking phrases along with the video.
9. Have students reflect on what they have learned about Mauritius so far. Write down additional questions students may have and encourage them to think about how Mauritius compares with their home country. Have students think about what they would like to see and do if they were to visit Mauritius.

Challenge Questions / Lesson Extensions

- What might some of the challenges and benefits of being an island nation be? (e.g.: preservation of species; seclusion, limited interaction with outsiders, limited resources)
- What challenges do you think may have occurred with so many different cultures interacting in one place?
- What cultures do you notice in your own community? What cultures influence you personally?
- Optional Activity: Pick two of the nations that impacted Mauritius's culture and use a Venn Diagram to compare/contrast the two. Consider how the differences may have affected interactions between people.

Assessment / Evidence of Understanding

- Student will identify the location of Mauritius and its capital city, Port Louis, using a world map.
- Student will identify the geographic features of Mauritius and make inferences about how the Mauritian people live and what natural resources they have.
- Student will identify some of the major features and facts about Mauritius

| Assessment Rubric | Below Expectations | Meets Expectations | Exceeds Expectations |
|---------------------|--|--|--|
| Geography Skills | <p>With assistance, student can locate country and capital city on a map.</p> <p>Student may be able to identify some geographic features, but may require guidance to make inferences about people's daily life due to the geography.</p> | <p>Student can locate country and capital city on a map. With assistance, student can identify the longitude/latitude coordinates of the country. Student can identify some of the specific geographic features (volcanos, mountains) independently. Student can make basic inferences about how people's daily life is shaped by their geography.</p> | <p>Student can locate country and capital city on a map. Student independently identifies the longitude/latitude coordinates of the country, and can identify numerous specific geographic features (volcanos, mountains) independently. Student makes clear observations and inferences linking the geographical landscape with the way local people live their lives. Student may also be able to share other observations about how bordering nations may influence the local people, culture, and way of life.</p> |
| Mauritius Worksheet | <p>With assistance, student is able to complete the Mauritius Worksheet, completing all required sections.</p> <p>With assistance, student can identify several interesting facts about the country.</p> | <p>Student is able to complete the worksheet independently, using available resources in the classroom & online (i.e.: Atlas, CIA Fact Book, ProjectExplorer.org).</p> <p>Student uses observations and resources to identify interesting facts about country. Student makes connections and asks questions that are grade-level appropriate.</p> | <p>Student completes the worksheet independently, using available resources in the classroom & online (i.e.: Atlas, CIA Fact Book, ProjectExplorer.org), but student may make connections with other countries or with prior knowledge. Student uses observations and resources to identify interesting facts about the country while also making insightful inferences that reflect higher-level connections and thinking. Student makes connections and asks questions that exceed grade-level expectations.</p> |

Additional Resources

CIA World Fact Book, Mauritius

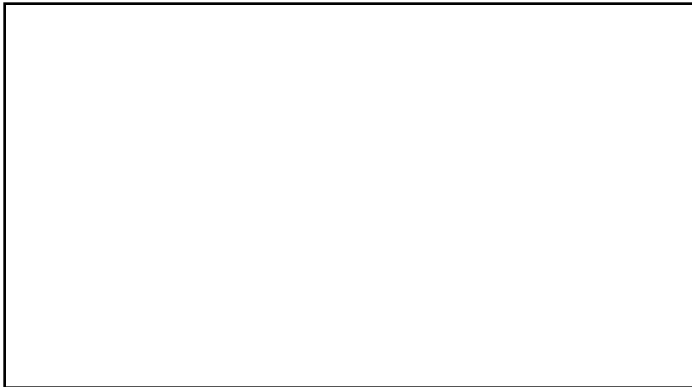
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mp.html>

Lonely Planet: Mauritius

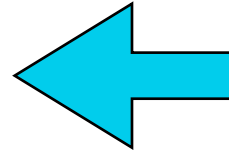
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mauritius>

***** Mauritius Worksheet follows on next page *****

Mauritius Worksheet



Draw the flag of Mauritius here



| | |
|----------------------|--|
| CAPITAL CITY: | |
| CONTINENT: | |
| MAP COORDINATES: | |
| LANGUAGE(S): | |
| GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES: | |
| NEARBY COUNTRIES: | |
| NATURAL RESOURCES: | |
| TYPE OF GOVERNMENT: | |
| INTERESTING FACTS: | |

What do I think I know about Mauritius?

What would I like to know about Mauritius?

What do I think I will learn about Mauritius a from the ProjectExplorer.org team?

What other questions do I have Mauritius that I may need to research further?

If I visited Mauritius, I would like to see...