

Welcome to Thailand

Lesson Objective & Summary

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

Summary: Students will identify Thailand's location on a world map, and will explain some of the major geographic features of Thailand. Students will read the [Sawasdee & Welcome to Thailand](#) blog and watch the [Thailand Series Sneak Peek](#), [Ayutthaya](#), [Songkran](#), [The Umbrella Market](#), and [Tuk-Tuks and Transportation](#) episodes, and spend time previewing some of the other blogs and videos in ProjectExplorer.org's Thailand section. Students will share their observations and questions about Thailand. Finally, students will try to learn several Thai phrases from the videos [Let's Learn Thai](#) and [Thai for Travellers](#).

Grade Level:
Upper Elementary

DURATION:
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

The Kingdom of Thailand, known as the "Land of the Free," was established in 1238 A.D. and is the only southeast Asian country to never have been colonized. Thailand's gorgeous beaches, rainforest-covered mountains, and colorful, vibrant culture draw thousands of visitors from all over the world every year. Bangkok is Thailand's thriving capital metropolis, and yet icons of centuries-old Thai culture, such as the Golden Pavilion and Buddhist temples, still hold a prominent spot amidst skyscrapers and multi-national corporations.

Thailand has a rich culture built upon deep-rooted Buddhist beliefs. Nearly 95% of the Thai population practices Theravada Buddhism, which is a form of Hinayana Buddhism which originated in India. Tens of thousands of wats, or temples, dot the Thai nation, and monks in saffron robes are often seen traversing the streets.

Silk, spices, and exotic produce have fascinated visitors to Thailand for centuries. Silk production first came to Thailand when Chinese immigrants settled in the area from the province of Kunming, in southern China. Today, Thai silk continues to mesmerize visitors, and the sale of this expensive commodity continues to draw people to Thailand from around the world.

Thailand is also well-known for its “gentle giants,” or elephants, which have played a vital role in both transportation and military security for Thailand. Although the population of Asian elephants in Thailand was nearly 100,000 in the early 1900s, hunting and deforestation have caused their population to dwindle to only about 3,000 elephants in Thailand today. Most of these elephants live on farms or camps, where conservationists are trying to protect these endangered creatures.

The Thai language is one of the most difficult languages to learn due to its tonal nature. Somewhat similar to Chinese, Thai has five tones that dictate the meaning of the spoken language. However, because Thailand draws so many tourists each year, many people speak, read, and write English as well, making Thailand more accessible to visitors.

Thailand is governed by a constitutional monarchy, which means that it has a king (King Phumiphon Adunyadet is the longest reigning monarch in Thai history, who came to power in 1946), but it also has a National Assembly overseen by a Prime Minister. The Thai people show great reverence to their King and celebrate his life and accomplishments throughout the year.

Guiding Questions	Key Vocabulary
Where is Thailand located? What is the capital of Thailand? What type of government does Thailand have? How is this different from your home country? What are some unique aspects of Thai culture?	Peninsula Kingdom Market Tourism Wat Buddhism

Lesson Plan

1. Using a world map, ask students to locate Thailand. Ask students to locate Thailand's capital city (Bangkok). 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 Thailand (peninsula; coastline; mountainous areas). Have students locate and identify some of the countries nearby. Ask students to think about how the geography of Thailand might influence how the Thai people live, or what their occupations may have traditionally looked like (i.e.: fishing, farming, etc).
3. Distribute the Country Profile Worksheet to students (attached at end of document). Ask students to complete the information they have already discovered about Thailand.
4. Read the [Sawasdee & Welcome to Thailand](#) blog and watch the [Thailand Series Sneak Peek](#). Ask students to write what observations they made from the video (i.e.: elephants, outdoor markets, Buddhism). Encourage them to consider aspects of culture that they observe: food, clothing, daily life, agriculture, etc. If needed, have students watch the Thailand Series Sneak Peek video several times to note any other observations.
5. Briefly explain the history of Thailand. Ask students to consider what makes Thailand different from some of its neighboring countries. Have students make comparisons between Thailand and their home country.
- 6.
7. Show students the episodes [Ayutthaya](#), [Songkran](#), [The Umbrella Market](#), and [Tuk-Tuks and Transportation](#) in ProjectExplorer.org's Thailand pages. Have students add thoughts and observations to their Country Profile Worksheet, particularly focusing on the geographical features.
8. In small groups, ask students to preview some of the other chapters, blogs, and videos on ProjectExplorer.org's Thailand pages. Have students complete the ProjectExplorer.org Country Profile Worksheet with their learning and questions about Thailand. Invite students to share their observations and questions on a class chart.
9. Watch [Let's Learn Thai](#) and [Thai for Travellers](#) videos. Have students practice speaking phrases along with the video.
10. Have students reflect on what they have learned about Thailand so far. Write down additional questions students may have and encourage them to think about how Thailand compares with their home country. Have students think about what they would like to see and do if they were to visit Thailand.

Assessment / Evidence of Understanding

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

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 (i.e.: lake, mountains, bordering nations) 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 (i.e.: lake, mountains, bordering nations) 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>
Thailand Worksheet	<p>With assistance, student is able to complete the Thailand 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, Thailand

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

Sawadee, Thailand

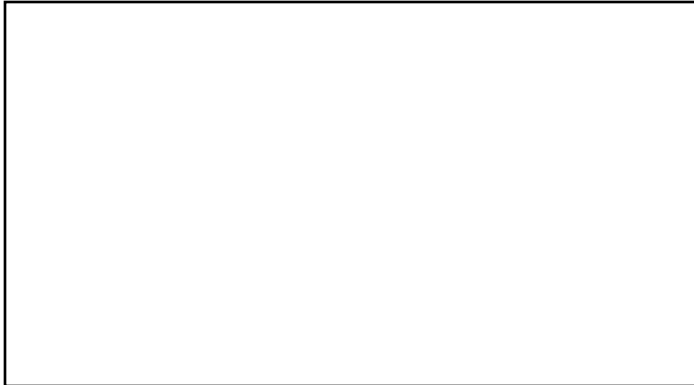
<http://www.sawadee.com/thailand/info/tat01.html>

Lonely Planet Thailand Overview

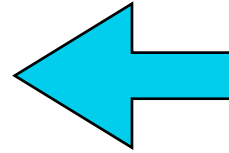
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thailand>

***** Thailand Worksheet follows on next page *****

Thailand Worksheet



Draw the flag of Thailand here



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

What do I think I know about Thailand?

What would I like to know about Thailand?

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

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

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