

Welcome to Azerbaijan

Lesson Objective & Summary

Objective: Students will learn about the basic history, geography, and cultural heritage of Azerbaijan. Students will use a map to locate Azerbaijan and its capital, as well as identify some of the unique aspects of the “land of fire.”

Summary: Students will identify Azerbaijan’s location on a world map, and will explain some of the major geographic features of Azerbaijan. Students will read the [Welcome to Azerbaijan](#) blog, watch the [Azerbaijan: Series Sneak Peek](#) video, and spend time previewing some of the other blogs and videos in ProjectExplorer.org’s Azerbaijan section. Students will share their observations and questions about Azerbaijan. Finally, students will try to learn several Azeri and Russian phrases from the videos [Let’s Learn Azeri](#) and [Let’s Learn Russian](#).

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

Nestled along the Caspian Sea, between Iran, Georgia, Armenia, and Russia, Azerbaijan boasts thousands of years of rich history and culture. Because of its well-preserved artifacts from ancient Sumerian and Babylonian civilizations, many archaeologists have called Azerbaijan one of the original “cradles of humanity.” Throughout its history, Azerbaijan’s culture has been shaped by its Turkic, Arab, Persian, and Russian ancestors. Today, the people of Azerbaijan, called Azeri, take great pride in their ancient history.

Azerbaijan has a vast wealth of natural resources, particularly petroleum and natural gas. The capital city of Baku is a vibrant metropolis, where architecture, such as the recently erected Flame Towers, pays homage to Azerbaijan's deep-rooted cultural fascination with fire. Although the predominant religion in modern-day Azerbaijan is Islam, many ancient fire temples still dot the land, as a celebration of the nation's petroleum and natural gas resources.

Outside of Baku, many Azeris still live a largely agrarian lifestyle, raising sheep, goats, pomegranates, and other livestock and produce. The town of Qobustan (also spelled Gobustan) boasts one of the world's oldest petroglyphs, or rock-carvings, as well as a unique stone that, when hit, sound much like a tambourine. Geologists and archaeologists alike have been mesmerized by these rock formations, as they reveal much about Azerbaijan's agrarian and warrior past.

In 1920, Azerbaijan came under the control of the USSR (Soviet Union) and was developed under communist ideology for more than 70 years before the USSR's collapse in 1991. Since the establishment of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1991, there remain ongoing tensions between the Azeri people and Armenian refugees in the southern part of the country, particularly in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Although a cease-fire was declared in 1994, there remains tension between the Azeri and Armenian people.

Guiding Questions	Key Vocabulary
<p>Where is Azerbaijan located? (map coordinates? Continent?)</p> <p>What is the capital of Azerbaijan?</p> <p>What are the national languages of Azerbaijan?</p> <p>What are some of Azerbaijan's important geographic features?</p> <p>How might these features affect how people live?</p> <p>What are Azerbaijan's bordering nations?</p> <p>What type of government does Azerbaijan have? How does it differ from your home country?</p> <p>What are some unique aspects of Azerbaijan's culture, history, and landscape?</p>	<p>Peninsula</p> <p>Bordering Country</p> <p>Caspian Sea</p> <p>Caucasus Mountains</p> <p>Natural Resource</p> <p>Petroleum</p> <p>Natural Gas</p> <p>Geographic</p>

Lesson Plan

1. Using a world map, ask students to locate Azerbaijan. Ask students to locate Azerbaijan's capital city (Baku). 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 Azerbaijan (peninsula; mountainous areas in the north; along the Caspian Sea). Have students locate and identify some of the neighboring countries with Azerbaijan. Ask students to think about how the geography of Azerbaijan might influence how the Azeri people live, or what their occupations may have traditionally looked like (i.e.: fishing, shepherding, etc).
3. Distribute the Azerbaijan Worksheet (pages 6 & 7) to students. Ask students to complete the information they have already discovered about Azerbaijan.
4. Read the [Welcome to Azerbaijan blog](#) and watch the [Azerbaijan Series Sneak Peek video](#). Ask students to write what observations they made from the video (i.e.: City Lights, chess, pomegranates, wrestling, bread cooked in a round oven, mosques, etc). Encourage them to consider aspects of culture that they observe: food, clothing, daily life, agriculture, etc. If needed, have students watch the [Azerbaijan Series Sneak Peek](#) video several times to note any other observations.
5. Briefly explain the history of Azerbaijan. Ask students to consider why the people of Azerbaijan may speak more than one language (Azeri and Russian).
6. Have students watch [The Caspian Sea episode](#) on [The Caspian Sea chapter page](#). Ask students to think about what the natural resources of Azerbaijan are.
7. Ask students to consider why Azerbaijan is called the “land of fire.” You may need to direct students’ attention to Azerbaijan’s petroleum and natural gas resources, or view some of the episodes on [The Land of Fire chapter page](#).
8. In small groups, ask students to preview some of the other chapters, blogs, and videos on ProjectExplorer.org’s Azerbaijan pages. Have students complete the Azerbaijan Worksheet (pages 6 & 7) with their learning and questions about Azerbaijan. Invite students to share their observations and questions on a class chart.
9. Watch [Let’s Learn Azeri](#) and [Let’s Learn Russian](#) videos. Have students practice speaking phrases along with the video.
10. Have students reflect on what they have learned about Azerbaijan so far. Write down additional questions students may have and encourage them to think about how Azerbaijan compares with their home country. Have students think about what they would like to see and do if they were to visit Azerbaijan.

Assessment / Evidence of Understanding

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

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>
Azerbaijan Worksheet	<p>With assistance, student is able to complete the Azerbaijan 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, Azerbaijan

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

Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

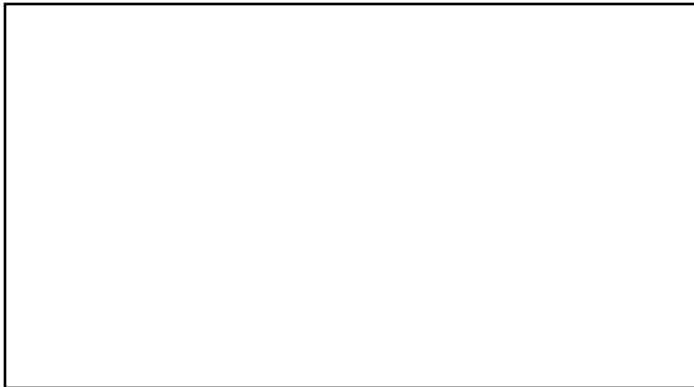
<http://www.azembassy.us/>

Lonely Planet Azerbaijan Overview

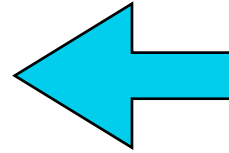
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/azerbaijan>

***** Azerbaijan Worksheet follows on next page *****

Azerbaijan Worksheet



Draw the flag of Azerbaijan 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 Azerbaijan?

What would I like to know about Azerbaijan?

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

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

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