

Strength in Numbers? – European Union Lesson Plan

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Grade Level: High School (9-12)

Course(s): World History and/or Economics

Overview of lesson: Students will complete a WebQuest to gain knowledge about the history and functions of the European Union. After this research, students will discuss the pros and cons of such an organization. *(Can be specifically tailored to focus on economic aspects of the EU)*

Objective: For students to understand the history and functions of the European Union, while also considering why some groups support or oppose the organization.

Learning statement: I can understand the functions and objectives of the European Union. I can develop an argument about the advantages and disadvantages of belonging to the European Union.

Materials: Copies of handout (see pages 3-4); internet access

Length of lesson: Two 45-minute class periods

Procedure:

Day One – Getting the Basics

Part I – The “Big Ideas” about group membership

- 1. Ask students enter, display this question on the board: Why is joining a group a good idea?**
 - Allow students to develop their own answers and share with a partner or small group (Think-Pair-Share)
- 2. Call on students randomly to summarize their responses about the benefits of group membership**
- 3. Pivot the conversation to focus on countries ask students why individual nations might join organizations**
 - Have students consider the economic, political, and social consequences of membership in multinational organizations

Part II – The Basics of the European Union

- 1. Display a map of Europe on the board and ask students why these countries may have decided to form an organization**
- 2. Pass out “An Introduction to the European Union WebQuest” Handout – See page 3**
- 3. Encourage students to work in pairs to complete the assignment**
 - Students need access to the internet for the WebQuest
 - The handout includes factual questions as well as opinion-based reflections
- 4. Walk around the room to monitor students and answer questions**
- 5. Have students turn in their worksheets at the end of class**

Day Two – Debating the Merits of the EU

Part I – Reflection and Discussion Preparation

1. As students enter the room, pass back their WebQuests from yesterday
2. Put students into small groups and have one student in each group serve as secretary
3. Allow students time to weigh the pros and cons of European Union membership
 - The secretary will make a T-chart – PROS will go on one side and CONS on the other
 - Students should come up with at least 4 benefits of membership and 4 potential negative consequences of membership

Part II – Class Discussion

4. Set up for a “Four Corners” Debate
 - Hang signs in all four corners of the classroom. Each corner will contain one of the following labels: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree
 - Ask students to move to one of the four corners based on their reaction to this statement:
Membership in the European Union is a good idea for European countries.
5. Conduct a “Four Corners” debate
 - Call on students randomly to summarize their reaction to the statement. Their responses should include a specific reason why EU membership can be beneficial or detrimental
 - While students state their ideas, keep a T-chart of the pros and cons they mention on the board
 - Encourage students to respond directly to the student who speaks before them (summarize another idea and then build off it or deconstruct it with their own opinions)
 - Students can move corners if a classmate makes a persuasive argument to change their mind
6. Wrap up the discussion
 - Summarize the key arguments expressed by students and emphasize the nuances of membership in multinational organizations
 - Students can complete an exit ticket where they answer two questions
 - 1. What was an interesting argument one classmate brought up today?
 - 2. Do you believe countries should be members of the EU? Why or why not?

OPTIONAL: Use Poland as an example to explore different perspectives on EU functions. This article provides an overview of arguments, but students will need to research specific terms and groups for a better understanding of the content: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-election-poland/polish-nationalists-win-eu-vote-set-stage-for-national-ballot-idUSKCN1SW0T>

An Introduction to the European Union WebQuest

Access the European Union's official website here: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en. Some answers can be found on the website, while other answers will ask for your thoughts and opinions.

I. The Basics of the EU

1. How many countries are members of the EU?
2. Color in and label all countries in the European Union



3. What major event prompted the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), a predecessor to the EU?
4. *Why might this event trigger the need for economic cooperation?*

5. There are many goals of the EU – List three that you find most important:

6. *Why did you choose these three goals?*

7. There are many values of the EU – List three that you find most important:

8. *Why did you choose these three values?*

II. Advantages and Disadvantages of the EU

9. If you were the leader of a European country, what are TWO reasons why you would support membership in the EU?

10. If you were the leader of a European country, what are TWO reasons why you would oppose membership in the EU?