

European Union: Which Nation Should Join Next?

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With all the talk about Brexit, why do countries WANT to join the EU? This lesson will allow you to research the EU, member states, and candidates, examine the criteria and process for admittance, weigh the advantages and disadvantages of EU membership, and scrutinize the reasons for and decision-making involved in deciding Which Nation Should Join Next?

Time Frame: two class periods—after division into pairs or groups, parts of simulation may be assigned for homework.

Appropriate for Modern World History Class (tenth grade at my school)

Materials: internet sources and textbook if it treats the EU.

Lesson:

Step 1: Teacher should give an introduction to the EU. Using textbooks, the EU website https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en or teacher created materials (handouts, power points or short video on YouTube).

Step 2: Teacher should address the process for EU enlargement using the following sites:

EU Enlargement Fact Sheet: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/publication/factsheet_en.pdf

Policy EU Enlargement: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/eu-enlargement_en
https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-and-me/en/HOW_DOES_THE_EU_WORK.html

Step 3: Teacher should address the criteria for admittance.

To join the EU, a new Member State must meet three criteria:

- political: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;
- economic: existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union;
- acceptance of the Community *acquis*: ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

Step 4: Teacher assigns or lets students choose roles in the simulation:

The candidates are the following and the year they first applied.

- Albania (2009)
- Montenegro (2008)
- Republic of North Macedonia (2004)
- Serbia (2009)
- Turkey (1987)

- Potential candidate countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo

Students may work in pairs or small groups representing the candidate countries and the potential candidate countries if the class is large.

The EU Council of Ministers.

- Germany
- France
- Poland
- Hungary
- Croatia
- Greece
- and any other countries that you need represented.

Students may work in pairs or small groups representing the countries' ministers if the class is large.

Step 5: The candidate countries will research the following factors for comparison and add the information to a class spreadsheet that all students may use in their deliberations.

This can be done in class or as a homework assignment.

Factors for comparison:

Economic factors: GDP, income levels per person, make-up of economy (agriculture, manufacturing, trade/exports/imports)

Size: population and area

Social factors: religion, ethnicity, literacy rates, "health,"

Cultural factors: human rights, status of women, capital punishment

Political factors: voting rights, equality before the law, democratic vs. authoritarian factors in government and politics

Environmental factors: sources of energy, ability to pursue climate control goals

Use the any online source of information, for instance the CIA World Fact Book for your information:

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

Step 6: The candidate countries will then prepare a five-minute presentation arguing why their country has met the criteria and should be admitted to EU membership.

This can be done in class or as a homework assignment.

Step 7: The EU Council of Ministers will divide the candidate countries among themselves and research online current relevant information about the candidates that may impact their membership. For instance, their economic stability, human rights record, whether they are moving towards authoritarianism and so on. Sharing their findings in a google.doc will allow all to have further bases for decision-making. The ministers should then collaborate on questions they will ask the candidates and prepare the meeting of the council.

This can be done in class or as a homework assignment.

Step 8: Presentations (5 minutes) by candidates with brief questions by the Council of Ministers.

Step 9: After deliberating, the Council will give their decisions.

Assessment: have all students give written evaluation of THEIR choice of the strongest candidate and why that country would or would not be successful

Extensions:

There can be a discussion before or after the simulation about what is Europe. Is it a purely geographic construct? A historical idea? Students could discuss who is a European and how we should define European. What impact would these definitions of Europe or European have on EU enlargement? In particular, why has Turkey not been accepted when the country first applied in 1987?

To add complexity, you could use the options for EU relationships by Konstantinos Kourtikakis (see video here: https://mediaspace.illinois.edu/media/1_rxi7fcbp) and allow the candidate countries to consider these options:

EU membership	Norway model	Swiss model	Canadian model free trade agreement
Single market access	Ditto	Ditto	Trade in goods
Schengen zone member	Ditto	Ditto	Trade in services
Security cooperation	Adoption of EU rules: automatic	Ditto through bilateral treaties	Common standards Investments
Participation in decision making	De facto member but no decision making		Customizable