

Arctic Lesson 5 - Global Impact of Arctic Ice

Objectives

- Students will understand the environmental impact of the Arctic's melting ice
- Students will understand the socio-political importance of the Arctic's melting ice
- Students will begin to understand the conflicts and disagreements associated with borders in the Arctic
- Students will participate in a formal debate

Vocabulary

- Arctic Circle
- Argument
- Conservation
- Domestic
- Export
- Glaciers
- Icebreaker
- Import
- International Agreement
- NGO
- Sea ice
- Sheet Ice
- Trade

Materials

Student research resources, blackboard/whiteboard/smartboard

Warm Up

Using a semantic map exercise, write the word “Arctic” on the board and have students come up with all of the words they associate with the Arctic. Group certain themes together: animals, environmental factors, people.

Are there things they missed? Most students will omit politics because the Arctic is often thought of as apolitical. To encourage students to think about politics, ask discussion questions:

- *Who lives in the Arctic?*
- *Who visits the Arctic?*
- *Who owns Arctic land?*
- *Why would anyone want to go to the Arctic?*



Lesson

Watch Disappearing Ice's videos on the Arctic. As a class, read this interactive article: <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2017-arctic/>.

Assignment

Introduce the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum for countries that face issues related to the Arctic. Have students break into groups to represent the eight member countries constituted in the council: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States.

After forming groups, have students should prepare to debate for a mock Arctic Council meeting. Each country should be prepared to debate their country's legitimacy as an Arctic Council member. Tell students that on the day of the debate, you will surprise them with the agenda for the meeting. One of the countries will need to assert their membership in the Arctic Council. Students who are on that team will debate against the other member countries. All groups will need to prepare:

- 1) Land: How much of your country's land is part of the Arctic?
- 2) Trade: How important is your country for international trade?
- 3) People: How many citizens of your country live in the Arctic?
- 4) Politics: What is your country's position on other intergovernmental organizations? Make sure you stay consistent with your country's politics.
- 5) History: What are significant historical events that impacted your country's claim to the Arctic?

Wrap Up

Are your students citizens of one of the member countries? If your students want to actively engage with Arctic issues, take them to the Take Action section of Disappearing Ice.

Resources

<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2017-arctic/>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56195#.WdftRBNSyRs>

<http://arctic-council.org/index.php/en/>

