The Balkan Situation
Grades 9-12

Introduction

The situation in the Balkans is changing constantly and can be a major source of confusion for everyone. Students will gain a better understanding of the conflicts in this part of the world by studying maps of the region and looking at ethnic and religious statistics for the countries involved. They’ll also research current events in the Balkans to see what’s been going on very recently.

Time Frame: 2-4 class periods (including research)

Objectives and Standards

Students will:

• Label the countries of the former Yugoslavia on outline maps.
• Examine historical maps of Europe and state who has controlled this region in each time period shown on the maps.
• Explain whether the Balkans have had a stable past.
• Examine ethnic and religious statistics for the countries of the former Yugoslavia.
• Explain how ethnic and religious differences have contributed to the current situation in this region.
• Research and report on current events in the Balkans.

National Social Studies Standards:

• 2: Time, Continuity, and Change: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.
• 3: People, Places, and Environments: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.
• 6: Power, Authority, and Governance: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
• 9: Global Connections: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.
National Geography Standards:

- 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
- 10: The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth’s cultural mosaics.
- 13: How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth’s surface.
- 17: How to apply geography to interpret the past.
- 18: How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Maps and Materials Needed

Materials Needed:


The following maps may be printed and distributed to students (one map per group), or you can have students view them online:

Additional Map Resources Used:

- Europe map in the World Reference Atlas: 
  http://www.maps101.com/index.php?option=com_flexicontent&view=items&id=3386:europe&cid=169:world (students should refer to this map online)

Assessment Suggestions

Check to make sure that students have:

- Participated cooperatively in their groups.
- Accurately labeled the countries on their outline maps.
- Completely filled in both tables of their handout with accurate information.
- Thoughtfully answered the questions on their handout.
- Successfully located articles on the current situation in the Balkans and wrote thoughtful and coherent reports on the situation.

Procedure

1. Ask students to describe some of the things they know about the former Yugoslavia and the conflict going on in the Balkans. Spend about five minutes discussing recent news events and the history of the region to see how much students know about the situation and to provide an introduction to the lesson.

2. Divide the class into small groups.

3. Give one Eastern Europe outline map to each student 

4. Ask students to label the following countries on their outline maps, referring to the Europe map in the World Reference Atlas: 
   (http://www.maps101.com/index.php?option=com_flexicontent&view=items&id=3386:europe&cid=169:world). Remind students that these countries were all part of the country called Yugoslavia until that country’s breakup in the late 1980s and early 1990s.
   
   - Croatia
   
   - Slovenia
   
   - Macedonia
• Bosnia & Herzegovina
• Yugoslavia

5. Now have students look at the following historical maps and, on their handout, explain which entities controlled the former Yugoslavia for each period. They'll then answer the question on their handout asking whether this region has had a stable past. You can either print and copy these maps, distributing one copy to each group, have groups share maps, or have groups look at the maps online.

    - Europe 1560:  
    - Europe 1648:  
    - World War I:  
    - World War II:  
    - Cold War Europe:  

6. Have students look up each of the above countries in the World Reference Atlas (http://www.maps101.com/index.php?option=com_flexicontent&view=items&id=3346:world&cid=8:reference-atlas) to find out about ethnic divisions and religions in each country. They should record the ethnicities and religions on their handout and explain how they think these differences affect events in the region.

7. Ask students to find out more about the status of the Balkan region today. Have them research articles on CNN Online: http://www.cnn.com and write reports discussing the current status of this region and how it’s affected by its past.
1. Label the following countries on your outline map:
   - Croatia
   - Slovenia
   - Macedonia
   - Bosnia & Herzegovina
   - Yugoslavia

2. Your teacher will give you some historical maps of Europe to examine or will ask you to look at these maps on the Internet. For each time period, explain whose control the Balkan region was under.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Who controlled the Balkan region?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe 1560</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe 1648</td>
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<tr>
<td>World War I</td>
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<tr>
<td>World War II</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cold War Europe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Has the Balkan region had a stable past? Consider the evidence you’ve seen in the historical maps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ethnic Divisions</th>
<th>Religions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Look carefully at your table from section 4. How do these ethnic and religious differences contribute to events in the region?

6. Find out more about the status of the Balkan region today, and write a report discussing the current status of this region and how it’s affected by its past. Refer to the tables you’ve created on this handout and to information you find on the Internet. Use the following Web sites:
   - CNN Online (find current articles on the Balkans) [http://www.cnn.com/]