

Lesson 4

Europeans are different and equal

What we have in common and what not

Learning objectives	In a plenary discussion, the students understand that Europe has a variety of characteristics. They reflect upon the fact that Europeans have got some things in common but are also very different from each other.
Student tasks	The students look at the photo of the physical map. The teacher engages them in a discussion about similarities and differences in a) a geographical context, and b) a social context. The students discuss the social differences in Europe and try to find solutions for dialogue and mutual understanding.
Resources	Photo of the physical map, country portraits, blackboard or flipchart, slips of paper.
Methods	Plenary discussion, group work.

Lesson description

The students sit in a circle. The teacher presents the photos that were taken of the physical map. It is the students' task to look at the photos and think about the similarities and differences on the map. They should try to answer questions such as:

- Which parts of Europe have high mountains?
- Where are the longest rivers?
- Which countries have similar landforms?
- In which countries do people speak the same language?
- Which countries share a sea?

They use their country portraits in order to gather information. They present their country in the form of a presentation or in the form of a performance.

As a second step, the teacher introduces another set of questions to start a new discussion. Apart from natural and geographical similarities and differences, there are other differences in Europe, such as social differences or phenomena like prejudice. The teacher motivates the students to voice their thoughts about the social differences in Europe by raising questions such as:

- Are there rich and poor countries in Europe? Which are rich? Which are poor?
- Is life more difficult in some European countries than in others? Why?
- Why do many people leave their country to live somewhere else? What are the reasons for this?

After having collected the students' thoughts about these non-geographical differences and similarities, the students should sit together in groups of four and come up with ideas on how to create an understanding of these social differences in Europe without denying national identities, thereby fostering intercultural dialogue. They write down their ideas on little slips of paper and present their ideas in front of the class. Then they stick the slips of paper next to the photos of the physical map (this helps with visualisation).