Introduction to the European Union

Overview
This lesson serves as an introduction to the European Union and many of the countries that are part of the European Union. Students will independently learn about the history, institutions, and policies of the European Union through a webquest. As a culminating activity, students will research an EU member country to create a travel brochure and jingle that will educate their classmates about the various EU member countries.

Grade
9

NC Essential Standards for World History
- WH.8.1: Evaluate global wars in terms of how they challenged political and economic power structures and gave rise to new balances of power.
- WH.8.3: Analyze the "new" balance of power and the search for peace and stability in terms of how each has influenced global interactions since the last half of the twentieth century.

Materials
- Chart paper
- European Union Webquest Handout (attached)
- Computers with Internet Access (preferably one for each student, but students can share if computers are limited)
- EU Tourism Project Handout (attached)
- Paper for brochures
- Crayons, markers, pens, colored pencils, crayons.
- Countdown Timer for the brochure jigsaw activity. Free timers are available at:
    - http://www.online-stopwatch.com/
- Printer (optional)

Essential Questions:
- What is the European Union?
- Why was the European Union created?
- What is the purpose of the European Union?
- What institutions make up the European Union?
- What countries make up the European Union?

Duration
90+ minutes (activities can be split over two days)

Student Preparation
Students should have already studied World War I, World War II, and the Cold War before completing this lesson.

Teacher Preparation
- Although the webquest answer key is attached, teachers should take time to complete the webquest before assigning it to students so they can familiarize themselves with the European Union and to ensure that the links are not blocked by the school's network administrators. All links were active as of May 2012, but teachers should also ensure this is the case on the date the lesson is administered.
- The ongoing Eurozone Debt Crisis or Euro Crisis is not addressed in this lesson. For more information about the Eurozone Debt crisis, see the Consortium's lesson "An Overview of the EU, Eurozone, and the European Debt Crisis", available in the Consortium's Database of K-12 Resources or by e-mailing cnorris@unc.edu.

Procedure

Warm Up: European Union KWL Chart

1. As a warm up, write the word "European Union" on the board or on a piece of chart paper. Underneath "European Union" create a Know-Want to Know-Learned (KWL) Chart. Instruct students to silently brainstorm what they know and what they would like to know about the European Union.

2. After allowing students time to brainstorm, solicit responses for the column "What do you know about the EU" and record them. Next, ask students what they "want to know" about European Union and record it in the appropriate column. Save the KWL chart to refer to throughout the lesson.

Overview of the European Union Webquest

3. The webquest activity is designed to be entirely student led. Before allowing students to work on their "Overview of the European Union Webquest" review the following instructions:
   - To answer the questions, visit the websites provided in the gray boxes above each section.
   - Feel free to visit any of the additional links at the end or various parts of the Europa.eu site that may interest you, but be sure to answer all of the webquest questions first before exploring on your own.

4. Assign students a computer and provide students with enough time to complete their webquests. As students are working, circulate throughout the room to answer questions and to ensure that students are staying on task.

5. At the conclusion of the webquest, return to the KWL chart from the warm up and solicit student responses to fill in the "what they learned" column. Ask students to review the "what they know" column and correct any previous misconceptions or incorrect information listed.

6. Review the webquest as a class using the attached answer key. If the teacher elects to assign the extra credit assignments, allow students to share their responses. Discuss the questions below to debrief the webquest:
   - How did World War II and the Cold War help lead to the creation of the EU?
   - What are some benefits of joining the EU?
   - What are some drawbacks of joining the EU?
   - What is "codecision"?

- - *This means that the directly elected European Parliament has to approve EU legislation together with the Council (the governments of the 27 EU countries)*
- What is the Eurozone and how is it different from the EU?
  - Eurozone refers to the countries that adopted the Euro as their currency. The EU refers to the political organization that countries belong to. Not EU members are members of the Eurozone (United Kingdom, for example).

➢ **Teacher Notes:**
  - Depending on the availability of computers and/or size of the class, the webquest activity can be completed individually or in pairs.
  - Although two class periods are recommended for the lesson, the webquest can be given to students to complete at home, while devoting class time to the "EU Tourism Project".
  - It is up to the discretion of the teacher to decide if students should complete the sections of the webquest labeled "extra credit".

Visiting the EU – Create a Travel Brochure

7. Before dividing students into groups, explain to them that they are going to be learning about the individual countries that make up the European Union by creating a brochure and a jingle that will serve two purposes: 1) to educate their classmates about their assigned country and 2) to urge people to want to visit their assigned country. Distribute the attached "EU Tourism Project' handout, assign a due date, and review the instructions. Answer any questions about the project before moving on.

8. Divide students into groups of 2 – 4, provide them with a computer that has internet access, and assign them one of the following EU countries:
   - Germany
   - United Kingdom
   - France
   - Netherlands
   - Poland
   - Spain
   - Greece
   - Czech Republic
   - Sweden
   - Ireland
   - Italy
   - Hungary

   Depending on the size of the class, the following additional countries can be assigned:
   - Austria
   - Belgium
   - Bulgaria
   - Cyprus
   - Denmark
   - Estonia
   - Finland
   - Latvia
   - Lithuania
   - Luxembourg
   - Malta
   - Portugal
   - Romania
   - Slovakia
   - Slovenia

9. Allow students time in class to work on their brochures, but the teacher can decide if the project should be strictly an in class assignment or completed outside of class.

10. The day the brochures are due, instruct students to sit in their groups. Explain to each student that they will complete a jigsaw activity using the brochures.   They should trade their brochure with another group and examine the new brochure while taking notes. Once the timer sounds, pass the brochure to another group until every group has had a chance to examine all the brochures. Instruct students to draw the following notes sheet in their notebooks to use while they're viewing the brochures:

Country	Three Interesting Facts I Learned

11. Once students have completed the jigsaw, invite each group to present their jingle in front of the class. Review audience expectations below before choosing a group to present.
    - Respect the presenters by giving them your full attention
    - Refrain from talking during their presentations.
    - If you have any questions, wait until they're finished and then raise your hand to ask.
    - Clap for each group at the end of each presentation.

12. Once all the groups have presented, thank them for their hard work. To debrief, discuss the following questions as a class:
    - What are some similarities and differences you found between the countries you researched and the United States?
    - What was the most interesting thing you learned about the country you researched?
    - Would you ever like to visit the country you researched? Why or why not?
    - Of all the countries you viewed, which one was the most interesting? Why?

Additional Activities
- Have students plan a trip to an EU country of their choosing. They should research how to get there, what to see once they're there, how to get around, etc. Using their research, students should create a mock travel budget.
- An alternate kinesthetic warm up activity developed by the UNC Center for European Studies:
    - http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/teachingresources/workshops/1105Opening_Activity.doc

Resources
- Additional Teaching Resources (includes PowerPoints, websites, online modules, etc.) developed by the UNC Center for European Studies:
  http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/teachingresources/originalces.htm

Name/Group Members _____

Directions: Your task is to research the European Union by visiting the websites provided in the gray boxes and answering the questions below. If you have any additional questions about the European Union, visit the links at the end of the webquest and write your questions and answers in the space provided.

What is the EU?

Go to Europa.eu -> click "Basic Information" under "How the EU Works" or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/index_en.htm

1.   What is the European Union and how many countries belong to the EU?

2.   What was the original purpose of the European Union? Why do you think it was formed after World War II?

3.   How has the European Union changed since its inception?

History of the EU

Click "History" from the menu on the left or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/index_en.htm

4.   Read the short overview of the EU's history and write a paragraph or two that summarizes, in your own words, the history of the EU from 1945 – today.

EU Symbols

5. What does the EU flag look like and what does it symbolize?

6. What is the EU motto and what does it mean? How is it similar or different to the United States' motto – E Pluribus Unum?

EU Institutions

7. List the three main institutions involved in creating EU legislation and explain what they do.

8. Briefly describe, in principle, how decisions in the EU are made.

9. Choose three of the other EU institutions and briefly describe what they do.

Click "Countries" from the menu on the left or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm

10. List the 27 EU member countries and 5 EU candidate countries below. On the map, color the current EU member countries using one color and color the EU candidate countries using another color. Ignore the non-EU related nations.

Member Countries

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____
21. _____
22. _____
23. _____
24. _____

25. _____
26. _____
27. _____

Candidate Countries

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

11. Click "Joining the EU" from the menu on the left. How does a country join the EU?

12. Click the hyperlink titled "conditions for membership". What are the conditions for membership to the EU?

Money and the EU

Click "Money and the EU" under "Basic Information" from the menu on the left or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/money/index_en.htm

13. How is the EU's budget funded? What does the EU's budget pay for?

14. Click the link for "Euro/monetary Union". What is the Euro and how many EU countries use it?

15. What is the Eurozone? List three countries that are part of the Eurozone:

16. What is the purpose of the Euro?

17. Who manages the Euro and what is their main goal?

EU Policies

18. Click "policy areas". Choose three policy areas and summarize what the EU does in that area.

EU Treaties

19. What is a treaty and what does it do?

20. Research the following EU treaties and write a short summary of the purpose and main changes of each treaty below.

- **Treaty of Lisbon: (2009)**

- **Treaty of the European Union – Maastricht Treaty: (1993)**

- **Treaty of Rome: (1958)**

Extra Credit:
EU Kid's Corner

21. Choose one of the games for ages 12+ (outlined in blue) on this page and briefly describe what it's about and what you learned from it.

Extra Credit:

22. What are some similarities between the US and EU?

23. What are some differences between the US and EU?

To read more about the EU links:

- BBC News: Profile – The EU: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/3498746.stm
- New York Times: The European Union:
  http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/e/european_union/index.html
- UNC Center for European Studies: http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/
- About.com: Overview of EU: http://geography.about.com/od/geographyintern/a/euoverview.htm

WEB QUEST ANSWER KEY

What is the EU?

Go to Europa.eu -> click "Basic Information" under "How the EU Works" or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/index_en.htm

1. What is the European Union and how many countries belong to the EU?
   The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 27 European countries.

2. What was the original purpose of the European Union? Why do you think it was formed after World War II?
   The EU was created in the aftermath of the Second World War. The first steps were to foster economic cooperation: countries that trade with one another are economically interdependent and will thus avoid conflict.

3. How has the European Union changed since its inception?
   What began as a purely economic union has evolved into an organisation spanning all areas, from development aid to environmental policy.

   The EU actively promotes human rights and democracy and has the most ambitious emission reduction targets for fighting climate change in the world.

History of the EU

Click "History" from the menu on the left or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/index_en.htm

4. Read the short overview of the EU's history and write a paragraph or two below that summarizes, in your own words, the history of the EU from 1945 – today.

EU Symbols

Click "EU Symbols" under "Basic Information" from the menu on the left or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/index_en.htm

5. What does the EU flag look like and what does it symbolize?
   The European flag consists of 12 golden stars in a circle on a blue background. The stars symbolise the ideals of unity, solidarity and harmony among the peoples of Europe.

   The number of stars has nothing to do with the number of member countries, though the circle is a symbol of unity.

6. What is the EU motto and what does it mean? How is it similar or different to the United States' motto – E Pluribus Unum?
   "United in diversity" is the motto of the European Union. It signifies how Europeans have come together, in the form of the EU, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages.

   E Pluribus Unum means "out of many, one" which signifies the diverse roots of the American out of many peoples, races, religions and ancestries has emerged a single people and nation.

EU Institutions

Click "Institutions and Bodies" from the menu on the left or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/index_en.htm

7. List the three main institutions involved in creating EU legislation and explain what they do.
   - ***European Parliament – represents EU's citizens and is directly elected by them.***

- *Council of the European Union – represents the governments of the individual member countries. The presidency of the Council is shared by member states on a rotating basis.*
- *European Commission – represents the interests of the Union as a whole.*

8. Briefly describe, in principle, how decisions in the EU are made.
In principle, the European Commission proposes new laws, and the Parliament and Council adopt them in a process called "co-decision" or "Ordinary Legislative Procedure". The Commission and the member countries then implement them, and the Commission ensures that the laws are properly applied and implemented.

9. Choose three of the other EU institutions and briefly describe what they do.
- *the Court of Justice upholds the rule of European law*
- *the Court of Auditors checks the financing of the EU's activities.*
- *the European Economic and Social Committee represents civil society, employers and employees*
- *the Committee of the Regions represents regional and local authorities*
- *the European Investment Bank finances EU investment projects and helps small businesses through the European Investment Fund*
- *the European Central Bank is responsible for European monetary policy*
- *the European Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration by EU institutions and bodies*
- *the European Data Protection Supervisor safeguards the privacy of people's personal data*
- *the Publications Office publishes information about the EU*
- *the European Personnel Selection Office recruits staff for the EU institutions and other bodies*
- *the European Administrative School provides training in specific areas for members of EU staff*
- *a host of specialised agencies and decentralised bodies handle a range of technical, scientific and management tasks*
- *the European External Action Service (EEAS) assists the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Catherine Ashton. She chairs the Foreign Affairs Council and conducts the common foreign and security policy, also ensuring the consistency and coordination of the EU's external action.*

Joining the EU

Click "Countries" from the menu on the left or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm

10. List the 27 EU member countries and 5 EU candidate countries below. On the map (see next page), color the EU member countries using one color and color the EU candidate countries using another color. Ignore the non-EU related nations.

Member Countries

1. Austria	*13. Ireland*	*25. Spain*
2. Belgium	*14. Italy*	*26. Sweden*
3. Bulgaria	*15. Latvia*	*27. United Kingdom*
4. Cyprus	*16. Lithuania*	
5. Czech Republic	*17. Luxembourg*	*Candidate Countries*
6. Denmark	*18. Malta*	*1. Croatia*
7. Estonia	*19. Netherlands*	*2. Macedonia*
8. Finland	*20. Poland*	*3. Iceland*
9. France	*21. Portugal*	*4. Montenegro*
10. Germany	*22. Romania*	*5. Turkey*
11. Greece	*23. Slovakia*	
12. Hungary	*24. Slovenia*	

11. Click "Joining the EU" from the menu on the left. How does a country join the EU?
A country wishing to join the EU submits a membership application to the Council, which asks the Commission to assess the applicant's ability to meet the Copenhagen criteria. If the Commission's opinion is positive, the Council must then agree upon a negotiating mandate. Negotiations are then formally opened on a subject-by-subject basis.

Due to the huge volume of EU rules and regulations each candidate country must adopt as national law, the negotiations take time to complete. The candidates are supported financially, administratively and technically during this pre-accession period.

12. Click the hyperlink titled "conditions for membership". What are the conditions for membership to the EU?
The conditions for joining the EU, also called the "Copenhagen criteria", include:
- *stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;*
- *a functioning market economy, as well as the ability to cope with the pressure of competition and the market forces at work inside the Union;*
- *the ability to assume the obligations of membership, in particular adherence to the objectives of political, economic and monetary union*

Money and the EU

Click "Money and the EU" under "Basic Information" from the menu on the left or type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/money/index_en.htm

13. How is the EU's budget funded? What does the EU's budget pay for?
The EU budget is funded from sources including a percentage of each member country's gross national product, import duties, and a percentage of the value-added tax.
It is spent on efforts as diverse as raising the standard of living in poorer regions, ensuring food safety, rural development, environmental protection, protection of borders, and promotion of human rights.

14. Click the link for "Euro/monetary Union". What is the Euro and how many EU countries use it?
The euro is the most tangible proof of European integration – the common currency in 17 out of 27 EU countries and used by some 327 million people every day.

15. What is the Eurozone? List three countries that are part of the Eurozone:
The Eurozone are the 17 countries that use the Euro as their official currency.

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemborg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain.

16. What is the purpose of the Euro?
A single currency offers many advantages, such as eliminating fluctuating exchange rates and exchange costs. Because it is easier for companies to conduct cross-border trade and the economy is more stable, the economy grows and consumers have more choice. A common currency also encourages people to travel and shop in other countries. At global level, the euro gives the EU more clout, as it is the second most important international currency after the US dollar.

17. Who manages the Euro and what is their main goal?
The independent European Central Bank is in charge of monetary issues in the EU. Its main goal is to maintain price stability. The ECB also sets a number of key interest rates for the euro area. Although taxes are still levied by EU countries and each country decides upon its own budget, national governments have devised common rules on public finances to be able to coordinate their activities for stability, growth and employment.

18. Click "policy areas". Choose three policy areas and summarize what the EU does in that area.

Agriculture

Audiovisual and media

Budget

Climate action

Competition

Consumers

Culture

Customs

Development and Cooperation

Economic and monetary affairs

Education, training, youth

Employment and social affairs

Energy

Enlargement

Enterprise

Environment

EU citizenship

External relations

Fight against fraud

Food safety

Foreign and security policy

Humanitarian aid

Human rights

Information technology

Institutional affairs

Internal market

Justice, freedom and security

Maritime affairs and fisheries

Multilingualism

Public health

Regional policy

Research and innovation

Sport

Taxation

Trade

Transport

EU Treaties

Type in the following website:
http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/decision-making/treaties/index_en.htm

19. What is a treaty and what does it do?

A treaty is a binding agreement between EU member countries. It sets out EU objectives, rules for EU institutions, how decisions are made and the relationship between the EU and its member countries.

20. Research the following EU treaties and write a short summary of the purpose and main changes of each treaty below.

- **Treaty of Lisbon: (2009)**

  Purpose: to make the EU more democratic, more efficient and better able to address global problems, such as climate change, with one voice.

  Main changes: more power for the European Parliament, change of voting procedures in the Council, citizens' initiative, a permanent president of the European Council, a new High Representative for Foreign Affairs, a new EU diplomatic service.

  The Lisbon treaty clarifies which powers: belong to the EU, belong to EU member countries, are shared.

- **Treaty of the European Union – Maastricht Treaty: (1993)**

  Purpose: to prepare for European Monetary Union and introduce elements of a political union (citizenship, common foreign and internal affairs policy).

  Main changes: establishment of the European Union and introduction of the co-decision procedure, giving Parliament more say in decision-making. New forms of cooperation between EU governments – for example on defence and justice and home affairs.

- **Treaty of Rome: (1958)**

  Purpose: to set up the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

  Main changes: extension of European integration to include general economic cooperation.

EU Tourism Project

Directions: After learning about the European Union, your job is to research your assigned EU country and create a tri-fold brochure and a short radio jingle that will attract tourists from all the over the world to visit your country. Be sure to complete the requirements below.

Brochure Requirements

Front Panel:
- Country name
- Drawing of Country
- Illustration that represents the country (e.g. flag, famous landmark, words from country's official language)

Panel 1, 2 (inside left and middle panels):
- History of Country from 1945. Include what you think other people should know about your assigned country's history.

Panel 3 (inside right panel)
- Three famous people from your country and what they're famous for
    - (e.g. Beethoven – Composer).
    - Can be from any era, not just post-WWII era.
- Three famous landmarks and why they're famous
    - Can include geographic features (mountains, etc.), buildings, museums,
- Two famous types of food from your country

Panel 4 (outside right panel; when properly folded, this will be the first panel you see after you open the front panel):
- Year of Country's entry into the EU
- Capital City
- List of major cities
- Population
- Languages Spoken
- Type of Government
- Current Leader
- Currency used
- Major Industries and/or Exports

Back Panel (outside middle panel):
- Names of group members

Radio Jingle Requirements

- Should be 30 seconds long.
- Include two reasons why people would want to visit your country.
- Includes a catchphrase relating to your country.
- All group members must participate in the jingle.

Research Websites

- http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm (includes links to country's official tourist site)
- https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page (Note: Wikipedia doesn't always contain accurate information. It is a good place to start and it includes official links at the bottom of the page, but be sure to verify the validity of the information using one of the above sites.)

Due Date: _____