

A source-first classroom

Ages 13–18 • High school • Civics, comparative government, world cultures & Model UN

Inside this pack

A 35-minute source-audit lesson, measurable objectives, evidence rubric, access supports, four assignment templates and carefully scoped AP / Common Core connections. No student account or email subscription is required.

Start with one article

Visit www.maimaisglobaladventures.com/world-desk/the-world-compared. Choose minimum wage, parental leave, vacation, university costs, voting age, or healthcare. Open the sources before class: policies change, and legal scope matters.

Teach the difference between stories and evidence

MaiMai, Roly, and Bobo are fictional teaching characters. Family scenes and first-person research framing are prompts, not interviews or fieldwork. World Desk is secondary research. Laws and official tables can be primary evidence for their rules/data; government explainers and background analysis still need genre, purpose and scope checks.

Evidence of learning

Collect a paired two-country audit and an individual exit ticket. Use the four-criterion evidence rubric in this pack; assignment-specific weights apply only to the longer projects.

Responsible use

This is a supplementary teaching resource, not legal, medical, or financial advice. Suggested skill connections are not College Board endorsement, AP certification, or certified Common Core/state alignment. Teachers select grade-appropriate material and verify local curriculum requirements.

Before distributing

Select a current official source, choose a matched fictional profile, set an assignment deadline and length, and explain your assessment rubric. Offer accessible alternatives and avoid assignments requiring private family information.

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson and optional follow-up, learners can demonstrate the following.

1. Classify three statements as factual claim, value judgment or prediction, explaining the evidence needed to check the factual claim.
2. Produce a two-country comparison with jurisdiction, reference date, population, unit, eligibility and exception fields; flag any unmatched field.
3. Verify two claims against official sources (one per country), recording title, URL, date accessed and an exact passage/page/table locator; revise overbroad wording.
4. Write a bounded conclusion with two supported claims, one fair alternative interpretation and one evidence limitation. Complete this as a follow-up if lesson time is short.

Materials and preparation

Preparation: select two dated official excerpts and one fictional profile, verify links and definitions, and preteach jurisdiction, entitlement, outcome and eligibility. Full-article reading and independent web research are not part of the 35-minute core.

Evidence-checking routine

Read beyond the headline. Locate the exact passage or table row, record the source's date and authority, then rewrite the claim to match its scope. Distinguish a legal entitlement from observed take-up or an outcome. If sources conflict, compare dates and definitions; unresolved evidence is 'unknown', not permission to invent.

Worked correction — not a country fact

Fictional practice claim: 'Everyone gets 20 days off.' Fictional source: 'Eligible full-time employees receive 20 working days annually.' Revision: 'Eligible full-time employees in this fictional rule receive 20 working days; the excerpt does not establish eligibility for other workers or actual use.' Students then apply this routine to authentic sources.

Discussion facilitation

35 minutes: 5 opening + 5 model + 10 audit + 10 discussion + 5 exit ticket.

1. Before class: choose an entry and open its sources. Confirm policy date, jurisdiction, population, units, eligibility and exceptions. The article is secondary analysis. Laws and official tables can be primary evidence for rules/data; check the genre and purpose of guidance and background analysis.
2. 0–5 minutes | Opening: classify a fact, a value judgment, and an unanswered question. Identify the fictional scene as a prompt, not evidence. Do not rank the best country.
3. 5–10 minutes | Teacher model: open an official source and locate one exact passage, page or table row. Model jurisdiction, effective date, population, units, eligibility and exceptions. A government publisher alone does not make every interpretation primary evidence.
4. 10–20 minutes | Evidence pairs: audit one claim per country using preselected excerpts. Record the supported wording and missing details. Build two matched rows; write 'not comparable' rather than forcing unlike measures into a ranking.
5. 20–30 minutes | Discussion: compare the matched rows. Ask who benefits, which trade-off matters and what evidence could test a predicted effect. Summarize an alternative view fairly before rebuttal.
6. Redirect conflict: say, 'That is a policy preference. Which factual claim can we check?' or 'What evidence would change this explanation?' Assess reasoning, not agreement with any political position.
7. Protect students: do not request family income, immigration status, political affiliation, healthcare details, or debt. Use fictional profiles; offer an alternative task without requiring personal disclosure.
8. 30–35 minutes | Exit ticket: submit a corrected claim with a citation and passage locator, one limitation, and a next research question. Collect the paired comparison and individual ticket; recheck changing figures before reuse.

Board / exit-ticket prompts

What exactly is being compared? Which people and dates does the evidence cover? What trade-off is being proposed? What do we still not know?

Evidence rubric

Formative lesson rubric • 0–3 per criterion • 12 points total. Share before students start.

3 = secure evidence as described; 2 = developing; 1 = needs revision; 0 = no assessable evidence yet. A different political conclusion can earn the same score. The longer assignment weights are separate; use these descriptors to interpret their criteria.

Scope and comparability

- 3 — Both rows define jurisdiction, date, population, units and eligibility; material exceptions and mismatches are explicit.
- 2 — One scope field or exception is unclear; comparison is partly matched.
- 1 — Unlike measures are ranked or a legal floor is treated as everyone's experience.

Evidence and traceability

- 3 — Two claims have relevant official sources, passage locators and access dates; wording matches evidence.
- 2 — Sources are credible but one claim lacks a locator or exceeds the cited passage.
- 1 — Claims are unsupported, citations cannot be located or fiction is cited as evidence.

Reasoning and uncertainty

- 3 — Conclusion follows from evidence, addresses an alternative and states a limitation; predictions are labeled.
- 2 — Conclusion is plausible but an alternative or limitation is underexplained.
- 1 — Unsupported causal claim, certainty or country ranking replaces reasoning.

Communication and revision

- 3 — Reader can follow the claim table; student corrects a claim after feedback and fairly represents disagreement.
- 2 — Meaning is clear but a correction or fair alternative needs development.
- 1 — Claims remain unclear or uncorrected; disagreement is misrepresented.

Instructional response

Feedback: score reasoning, not policy preference, accent, disclosure or graphic design. If either scope or evidence scores below 2, reteach passage-to-claim matching and collect a revised ticket before extending inquiry.

Differentiation and access

Keep the evidence goal; adapt how students read, participate and respond.

Reading support: use short labeled excerpts with surrounding context, glossary, chunked directions, a worked row and the frame 'For [population] in [place/date], [source] states ...; this does not show ...'. Allow bilingual notes and check translated terms against the original.

Access: offer selectable-text/large-print excerpts and a linear text version of each chart; describe units and relationships aloud. Use the HTML teacher page when PDF reading order is unsuitable. Do not rely on color, flags or public speaking alone.

Equivalent participation: offer written, typed, audio or teacher-scribed responses with the same evidence requirements; allow processing time, a quiet partner role and a private alternative topic. Follow individual IEP/504 or local access plans.

Extension: older/advanced learners corroborate a claim with a second source, reconcile date/definition conflicts and evaluate an outcome measure. For ages 13–14, scaffold the same audit; do not imply high-school/AP grade expectations apply to every learner.

Safeguarding and discussion

Use fictional profiles, never classmates' circumstances. Offer an alternate policy without requiring an explanation. Assign no real benefit applications or financial decisions. Redirect: 'Which part is a value priority, and which claim can we verify?'

Research paper prompt

Assignment template • Adapt the length, country choices, and deadlines to your class.

Name: _____ Class: _____ Due: _____

Prompt

Choose one World Compared policy and ask a narrow question about two countries. Write 800–1,200 words explaining the rules, competing interpretations, and what the evidence can and cannot establish.

Process

1. Define your question, countries, reference year, and covered population. Example: how do statutory annual-leave rules compare for a full-year, five-day worker?
2. Find at least three authoritative sources, including an official source for each country. Record the title, publisher, URL, publication or update date, and date accessed.
3. Build a claim-to-source table. Distinguish legal entitlements from observed outcomes; keep currency, dates, eligibility, and units visible.
4. Develop a defensible thesis. Present a serious alternative explanation and explain limitations rather than assuming a rule caused an outcome.
5. Submit an outline, paper, bibliography, and a paragraph describing how a peer's source audit changed your draft.

Submit

800–1,200-word paper; three-source minimum; claim table; bibliography; revision note.

Suggested rubric

Accuracy and scope 30%; evidence/citation 30%; reasoning and counterargument 25%; clarity and revision 15%.

Student planning

Research question:

Countries, year, and population:

Claim and source to verify:

Possible alternative explanation:

Debate preparation

Assignment template • Adapt the length, country choices, and deadlines to your class.

Name: _____ Class: _____ Due: _____

Prompt

Prepare both sides of a narrowly worded policy proposal for a fictional jurisdiction. Example: should a fictional country add a statutory paid annual-leave baseline? Country rules are evidence to examine, not automatic prescriptions.

Process

1. Define the proposal, affected workers, exceptions, funding, and reference date. Agree on definitions before assigning sides.
2. Prepare a two-minute opening for each side, each with two supported claims and a clearly marked value priority.
3. Find at least three reliable sources. Label any predicted effect as a prediction; distinguish correlation from causal evidence.
4. Write three cross-examination questions about coverage, costs, implementation, or evidence quality. Prepare a fair response to your strongest opposing argument.
5. Debate the proposal, not classmates' identities. Afterward submit a reflection on the evidence that could change your view.

Submit

Two openings; evidence cards with citations; three questions; 150-word reflection.

Suggested rubric

Evidence and accuracy 40%; both-side reasoning 30%; respectful questioning 20%; reflection 10%.

Student planning

Proposal and covered population:

Strongest argument for:

Strongest argument against:

Evidence that would change my assessment:

Comparison essay

Assignment template • Adapt the length, country choices, and deadlines to your class.

Name: _____ Class: _____ Due: _____

Prompt

Write 600–900 words comparing one policy in two countries using matched units and a specified population. Explain meaningful similarities and differences without treating all residents as having identical experiences.

Process

1. Choose a shared question. Specify whether you are comparing a law, actual take-up, costs, or outcomes; these are different measures.
2. Build a side-by-side table with rule, jurisdiction, population, date, unit, eligibility, exceptions, and source for each country.
3. Use at least one official source per country and one additional contextual source. Resolve conflicting definitions or explicitly mark a comparison as unavailable.
4. Organize by comparison criteria rather than writing two disconnected country summaries. Explain why a headline number can mislead.
5. Conclude with a bounded finding, an uncertainty, and one question for further research. Peer-review each factual claim against its source.

Submit

600–900-word essay; matched comparison table; three sources; limitations paragraph.

Suggested rubric

Comparable definitions 30%; source accuracy 30%; explanation 25%; organization and limitations 15%.

Student planning

Shared comparison question:

Matched population and units:

Difference requiring a caveat:

Unanswered question:

Country deep-dive / Model UN dossier

Assignment template • Adapt the length, country choices, and deadlines to your class.

Name: _____ Class: _____ Due: _____

Prompt

Prepare a two-page policy dossier for one country. For Model UN, distinguish documented government positions from your own recommendations; do not invent a country's stance from its domestic policy alone.

Process

1. Identify the policy, responsible institutions, jurisdiction, and date. State who qualifies and which major exceptions matter.
2. Find three authoritative sources: an official policy source, a credible background source, and a relevant data source. If historical evidence is missing, say so.
3. Create a timeline with two documented milestones. Explain context without claiming a historical cause you cannot support.
4. Identify implementation challenges and one outcome measure. Explain the measure's population and limitations; do not equate enactment with effectiveness.
5. Draft a 90-second briefing and three questions for a committee or class. Any Model UN position needs a separate official diplomatic or UN source.

Submit

Two-page dossier; sourced timeline; bibliography; briefing; three inquiry questions.

Suggested rubric

Policy and institutional accuracy 30%; evidence quality 30%; context and uncertainty 25%; briefing clarity 15%.

Student planning

Country, policy, and reference date:

Official rule and institution:

Historical milestone and source:

Government position: verified / still to research:

Framework connections

Suggested supplementary skill practice, not formal approval or a guarantee of alignment.

College Board: AP Comparative Government and Politics Course and Exam Description

Suggested practice: source audit — Source Analysis; matched course-country rows — Country Comparison; interpreted numeric chart — Data Analysis; explanation using a political concept — Concept Application; written thesis and counterargument — Argumentation. The AP countries are China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom; other cases extend inquiry, not replace required study. Political institutions, participation, and political/economic change offer contexts.

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap-comparative-government-and-politics-course-and-exam-description.pdf>

Common Core: English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Suggested connections: claim/source audit — RH.9-10.1 / RH.11-12.1; comparison chart plus prose — RH.9-10.7 (quantitative with qualitative analysis) / RH.11-12.7 (integrate and evaluate diverse formats); written claim and counterclaim — WHST.9-10.1 / WHST.11-12.1; inquiry project — WHST.9-10.7 / WHST.11-12.7; bibliography and source evaluation — WHST.9-10.8 / WHST.11-12.8. At 11-12, evaluate source strengths/limitations and avoid overreliance on one source. A short discussion alone does not demonstrate the full writing standards.

https://www.thecorestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards1.pdf

Scope and teacher verification

The AP framework's required country set is narrower than World Desk's examples. Use outside-country cases to extend comparisons; assign separate research for required countries not covered. These activities do not constitute complete AP exam preparation.

Common Core connections describe disciplinary literacy practice, not evidence that a whole lesson or curriculum meets every standard. Check the precise 9-10 or 11-12 wording and your state's adopted requirements. No state-specific alignment is claimed.

Student evidence record

Copy one record per country. Mark unknowns; never invent a source or missing policy detail.

Claim-to-source audit

Claim to check: _____

Publisher / title / genre: _____

URL: _____

Published / effective date: _____ Accessed: _____

Exact passage / page / table row: _____

Jurisdiction / population: _____

Units / eligibility / exceptions: _____

Supported wording or correction: _____

Limitation or uncertainty: _____

Matched comparison

Shared question: _____

Country A / country B: _____

Matched date, unit and population: _____

Mismatch / missing evidence: _____

Bounded finding and alternative: _____

Individual exit ticket

One corrected claim + citation + locator: _____

One limitation: _____

Next research question: _____