Canada and Africa: A Contrast

In this lesson, students will examine statistics pertaining to nations in Sub-Saharan Africa to which Canada contributes foreign aid. The students will be expected to summarize the conditions of these nations and compare them with Canada. They will learn new human geography terms and have a better perspective about how individuals in Canada live compared with those in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Grade Level**
Grades 6–8

**Time Required**
160 minutes

**Curriculum Connection**
British Columbia: Social Studies 8

**Link to Canadian National Geography Standards**

*Essential Element #4 (Grades 6–8) – Human Systems*
- Regional development in Canada and the world

*Essential Element #5 (Grades 6–8) – Environment and Society*
- World patterns of resource distribution and utilization

*Geographic Skills #2 (Grades 6–8) – Acquiring Geographic Information*
- Use maps to collect and/or compile geographic information

*Geographic Skills #4 (Grades 6–8) – Analysing Geographic Information*
- Interpret and synthesize information obtained from a variety of sources: graphs, charts, tables, diagrams, texts, photographs, documents, and interviews

*Geographic Skills #5 (Grades 6–8) – Answering Geographic Questions*
- Develop and present combinations of geographic information to answer geographic questions
- Make generalizations and assess their validity

**Canadian Geographic–CIDA Map**
This lesson uses the Canadian Geographic–CIDA map *A Developing World*. Copies of the map have been distributed to schools across Canada. To view an on-line version of the map, please go to [www.canadiangeographic.ca/worldmap](http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/worldmap).
Additional Resources, Materials, and Equipment Required

- Hard copy versions of the map *A Developing World* or access to the Canadian Geographic website
- Map of Sub-Saharan Africa
  - Statistics and graphs on population, education, poverty and hunger, environment, health, and HIV/AIDS (These can be obtained by visiting [www.canadiangeographic.ca/worldmap](http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/worldmap) and following the links listed under “Themes.”)
- Copies of the attached Student Activity Sheets

Main Objective

Students will compare Canada with Sub-Saharan Africa by using maps and a variety of print information, and will gain a better understanding of some the concepts of human geography.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- use graphs, tables, legends, and various types of maps to collect geographic information;
- locate specific countries on maps;
- identify and clarify a problem, issue, or inquiry;
- gather and organize a body of information from primary and secondary print and non-print sources, including electronic sources;
- conduct a comparative analysis of a Sub-Saharan African country and Canada, using a variety of demographic, economic, social, and environmental indicators;
- cooperatively plan and implement a course of action that addresses the problem, issue, or inquiry initially identified.
Lesson

Introduction
- Ask students to get into pairs to discuss the following questions. You may choose to work through this activity as a Think–Pair–Share activity.
  1. How much money did each student spend yesterday? Last week?
  2. What kinds of things did students spend their money on?
  3. What things MUST people spend money on to survive?
  4. How do students generally get these things? (i.e. parents)
- Point to half of the students in the classroom. Tell them that if they lived in Sub-Saharan Africa, they would be living on less than a dollar a day.
- Ask them to consider what they could purchase for a dollar. Consider what things these people would need to buy with their dollar a day.
- Ask them how they think their lives would compare with the lives of those in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Background: Using the statistics from the poster map A Developing World, begin the lesson by giving the students an idea of what living conditions are like in Sub-Saharan Africa. Given the statistics on the map, and based on a class population of 30 students, 8 percent (2.4) of the students would have HIV/AIDS; only 51-75% (15.3-22.5) would have access to clean drinking water; 46% (13.8) would live on less than $1 per day; 50 percent of the girls would not be able to read and 30 percent of the boys would not be able to read.

Lesson Development
- Teach the following concepts using Student Activity Sheet #1: Human Development Index, literacy rate, standard of living, life expectancy, infant mortality.
- Assign each pair of students a country in Sub-Saharan Africa to compare with Canada. Teachers may choose to extend this activity to the entire world, rather than just Africa.

Conclusion
Ask students to write a response paragraph suggesting three ways that their country might be helped to overcome the problems it is facing.
- Teachers evaluate the students’ response paragraphs using the Ministry of Education written response criteria located at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/writeg8.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/writeg8.pdf)

Lesson Extension
- Students use the information they have gathered about their country to conduct further research for a project culminating in a PowerPoint presentation, poster, or any other media format. Projects will be presented to the class.
- Instruct students to develop an action plan outlining how their country can be helped. They could look at ways of helping as individuals locally, nationally, and internationally.

Assessment of Student Learning
- Teachers could evaluate the students’ written responses using the criteria given.
- Teachers could evaluate the students’ presentations or instruct students to create more detailed presentations on their assigned countries.
- Group work skills could be evaluated throughout the lesson.

Further Reading
Visit CIDA’s website at [www.cida.gc.ca](http://www.cida.gc.ca)
Student Activity Sheet #1: 
Human Geography Terms

**Literacy Rate**
Literacy rate is the percentage of adults in a given population who are able to read. Canada’s literacy rate is about 99 percent. What things might influence the literacy rate?

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

**Life Expectancy**
This statistic estimates the number of years that an average person is expected to live from the time of their birth. In Canada, life expectancy is 82 years for women and 78 years for men. What things might influence life expectancy?

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_________________________________________________________________________________

**Standard of Living (GDP Per Capita)**
Standard of living measures how well people live. It uses dollar amounts in a common currency (US$), adjusted to how much can be purchased in that country for US$1, to determine the average income of each person in a country (GDP per capita). The GDP per capita income for 2012 for Canada is $41,500. What things might influence standard of living?

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**Infant Mortality Rate**
Infant mortality is the number of infants who die before they reach age 1, per 1,000 live births. The infant mortality rate for Canada for 2004 is 4.8 babies/1,000 live births. What things might influence infant mortality?

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**Human Development Index (HDI)**
The HDI is an index designed to compare development between countries, using a variety of factors so that the countries can be ranked. The HDI compares life expectancy, adult literacy rates, school enrolment, and standard of living. A high HDI means that a country is well developed in these areas (e.g. Canada=0.943). A low HDI means that a country is not well developed in these areas, and that people often struggle just to survive (e.g. Ethiopia=0.359). Why is calculating the HDI useful?

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### Student Activity Sheet #2:
**Africa and Canada Comparison Organizer**

**Part 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Development Index (HDI)</th>
<th>Canada: ______</th>
<th>__________________: __________</th>
<th>(Name of African Country)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>What does this tell us about the country compared with Canada?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Surface Area</th>
<th>Canada: ______</th>
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<th>(Name of African Country)</th>
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<th>Population</th>
<th>Canada: ______</th>
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<td>What does this tell us about the country compared with Canada?</td>
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<tr>
<th>GDP Per Capita</th>
<th>Canada: ______</th>
<th>__________________: __________</th>
<th>(Name of African Country)</th>
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<td>What does this tell us about the country compared with Canada?</td>
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## Africa and Canada Comparison Organizer—Part 2

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<td><strong>Surface Area</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Life Expectancy</strong></td>
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<td><strong>GDP Per Capita</strong></td>
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### Let’s Explore Further

1. Explore other factors influencing the country, such as poverty and hunger, education and literacy rates, health (infant mortality), environment, HIV/AIDS.* Given the statistics on the map, are these things improving or getting worse, and how do they compare with Canada?

   (*Hint you will need to use the information for the Sub-Saharan African region here and not the data for your individual country.)

2. Try to explain the differences you see between the Sub-Saharan African country you have been assigned and Canada. The best way to do this is to take each indicator for each country in turn and ask yourself “Why is it like this?”