

Rural Asia

The location of the major countries of the Asia region in relation to Australia and the geographical diversity within the region (ACHGK031)



Elaboration

Exploring some rural environments in Vietnam (where only 31% of the population lives in urban areas) and the economic activities in these regions. Conducting research into two contrasting areas in a country of choice in the Asia region.

Key inquiry questions

- How do places, people and cultures differ around the world?
- How do people's connections to places affect their perception of them?

Geographical inquiry and skills

- Develop geographical questions to investigate and plan an inquiry (ACHGS040)
- Collect and record relevant geographical data and information, using ethical protocols, from primary and secondary sources, for example, people, maps, plans, photographs, satellite images, statistical sources and reports (ACHGS041)
- Evaluate sources for their usefulness and represent data in different forms, for example, maps, plans, graphs, tables, sketches and diagrams (ACHGS042)
- Represent the location and features of places and different types of geographical information by constructing large-scale and small-scale maps that conform to cartographic conventions including border, source, scale, legend, title and north point, using spatial technologies as appropriate (ACHGS043)
- Interpret geographical data and other information using digital and spatial technologies as appropriate, and identify spatial distributions, patterns and trends, and infer relationships to draw conclusions (ACHGS044)
- Present findings and ideas in a range of communication forms, for example, written, oral, graphic, tabular, visual and maps, using geographical terminology and digital technologies as appropriate (ACHGS045)

Geographical concepts

- place
- environment
- scale
- space
- interconnection
- change

Geographical vocabulary

- p. 11 coastline, mountains, tropical forests, wetlands, deltas, urban areas, waterways, nutrient-rich deposits, sediment, rice cultivation, fish farming, industry, bordering, tribal minority groups, domesticated animals, wet terraces (rice terraces), hillside slash and burn plots, Hmong, Dao and Cham people, terrestrial and marine biodiversity, economic activity, World Biosphere Reserve, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).
- p. 12 primary, secondary and tertiary industry, topographic (relief) map, capital city, dense population, intensive farming, emigration, flow map.
- p. 13 absolute location, population, density, main economic activities, rural, urban or natural environment, scale, north point

Teacher information

T Teaching notes

- Students will need internet or library access to complete the research tasks on page 13.
- The inquiries will require individual or group investigation, encourage students to plan their investigation and generate questions to answer with their research. You may like to designate countries and/or regions to students and ask them to report their findings to the class.

B Background information

- Standards of living are often quite different in Asian countries when you compare rural and urban areas. Facilities such as plumbing and sewerage systems as well as access to medical services and education are often lacking in rural areas. This disparity can be seen in the developing and less developed countries of Asia (Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Brunei and Hong Kong are developed countries—HK is actually a Special Administrative Region of China, not an independent country).

R Resources

- A site aimed at students with information on the countries of the world, which may be useful to complete page 13 <<http://www.factmonster.com/countries.html>>
- A video about Cambodian refugees which will support the inquiry activity on page 12 <<http://splash.abc.net.au/media/-/m/153804/cambodian-refugees?source=search>>
- A video about the descendants of refugees from Vietnam in Australia <<http://splash.abc.net.au/media/-/m/29097/vietnamese-refugees-and-their-children-s-future?source=search>>

Additional activities

- Connect with a school in the Asia region to find out about the daily lives of students. See this guide on the Asia Education Foundation's website for information about linking up with a sister school <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/teachers/sister_school_guide_china.html>
- Search Google™ images for "rice terraces Vietnam" to view photographs. Discuss with students how the people adapted their natural environment to enable rice farming. Pictures of Asian rice fields and terraces can be found here <<http://www.globalpost.com/photo-galleries/planet-pic/5679982/rice-fields-asia-above-and-below>>

Rural Vietnam

A long and thin country with a long coastline bordering the South China Sea, Vietnam is a land of mountains, tropical forests, wetlands and fertile deltas (river mouth landforms). Ho Chi Minh City in the country's south is the most populated city, with around 6 000 000 inhabitants. The majority (around 69%) of Vietnam's over 90 million people live outside of its major urban areas. Rice production is a major economic activity in Vietnam and has been for centuries. Rice is cultivated for local consumption and is also exported across the world.

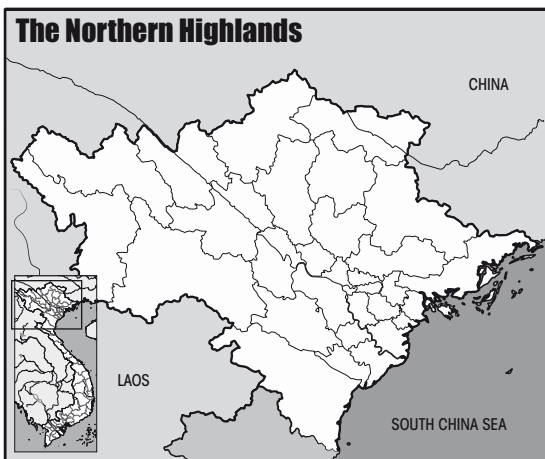
The Mekong Delta

At the southern tip of the country, where the Mekong River flows in to the South China Sea, the multiple waterways, flat landscape and the nutrient-rich deposits of sediment form the delta and make it perfect for rice cultivation and other farming. The agricultural use of the region makes it rural; however, the area is quite densely populated. In addition to food growing, fishing and fish farming are important industries.

Some people of the region live very close to the waterways in homes built on stilts and other homes even float on the water. Floating markets happen daily in various places in the Mekong Delta, people buy and sell and trade goods from their boats and vessels each morning.



The Northern Highlands



The Northern Highlands

Vietnam's northern highlands, located in the north-west of the country and bordered by Laos to the west and China to the north, are sparsely populated and home to many tribal minority groups. Rice is farmed in wet terraces, and other foods are grown in small hillside slash and burn plots. Domesticated animals are also kept.

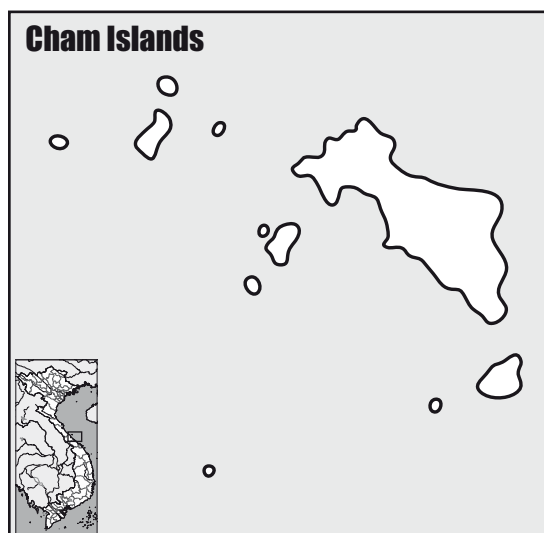
Central marketplaces allow the people to buy, sell and trade as well as to socialise with each other.

The Hmong and Dao are two tribal groups of people who live in this region. The women are known for their elaborately embroidered and brightly coloured clothing and headdresses.

The Cham Islands

Located off the coast of Hoi An in central Vietnam, the Cham Islands in the South China Sea are a group of eight islands identified as a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. The aims of establishing these world biospheres are threefold: conservation, economic development, and research and education. UNESCO aims to preserve the islands' vast terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

The largest island has two fishing villages on it. The Cham people inhabit the islands. In addition to fishing, another economic activity on the island is the harvesting of swallow's nests. These nests, constructed from the swallow's saliva strands, are an expensive delicacy and are used to make bird's nest soup. The harvesters climb bamboo scaffolds to remove the nests attached to cave walls and in crevices.



Regions of Vietnam

Answer the following questions based on the text on page 11.

1. List the different ways mentioned in the text that people make their living in Vietnam.

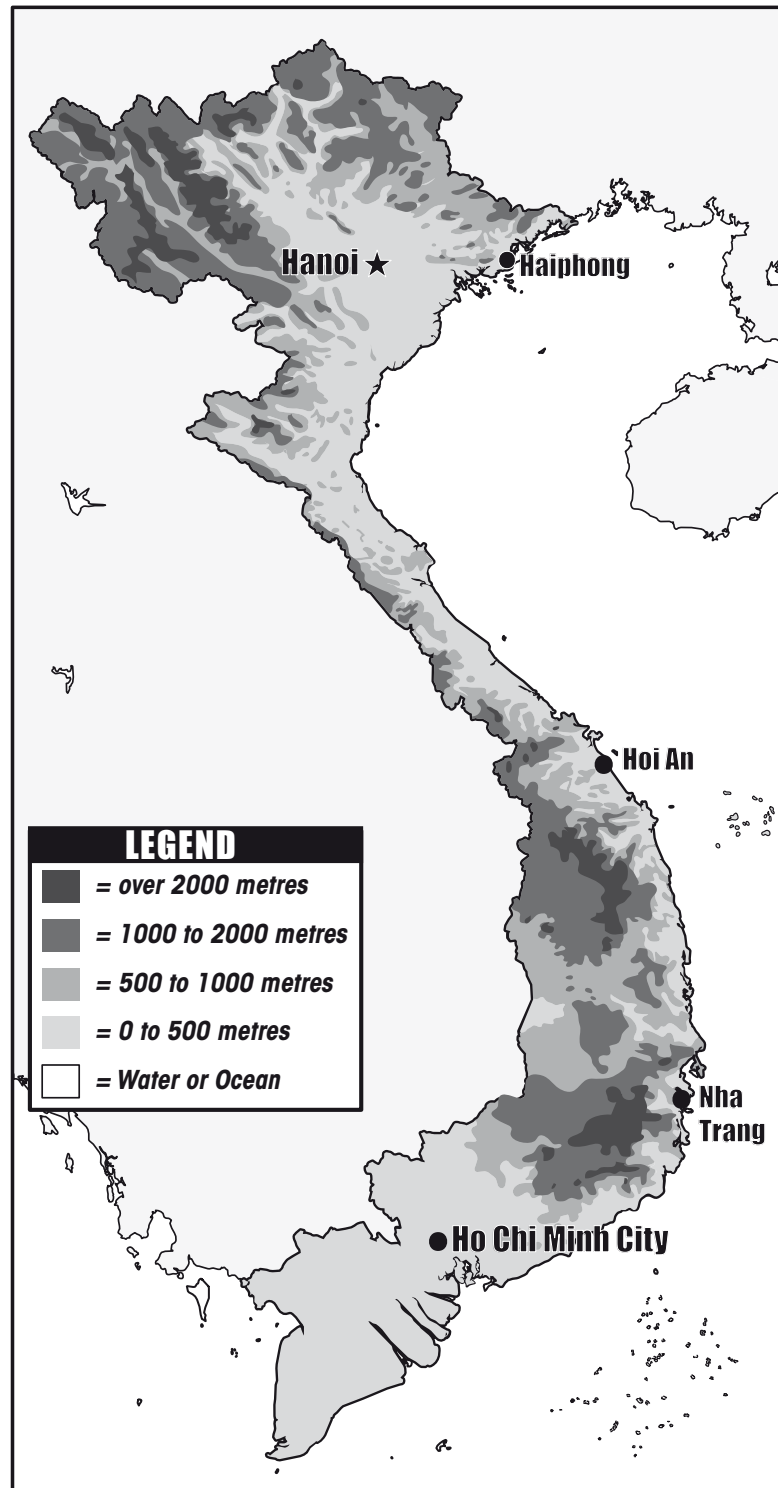
2. Three ethnic groups are mentioned in the text, what are they?

3. Based on the text, do you think most people in Vietnam are involved in primary, secondary or tertiary industry? Explain your answer.

4. Mark the Mekong Delta, Northern Highlands and the Cham Islands on the map.

Study the topographic map and answer the following questions on another sheet of paper.

5. In terms of location, how are Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi different from the other places marked on the map?
6. Based solely on the map, which areas do you predict would be the most densely populated? Explain your answer.
7. Based solely on the map, which areas do you predict would be the most intensively farmed? Explain your answer.



8. **?** Research the mass emigration of people from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Generate questions to plan your investigation. Construct a flow map to show the movement of the refugees from their origin to their destination.

Country research

Identify a country in the Asia region you are interested in finding out more about (use the list on page 3). As India, China and Vietnam are featured in the preceding pages, choosing another country will help you to learn even more about the region. Explore two environments in your chosen country and record your findings below. Add some information—for example a map, diagram or graph—to provide further information about your chosen places.

Country name: _____

1. Urban environment (city or town)

Name: _____

Absolute location: _____

Population: _____

Density (people per km²): _____

Main economic activities: _____

Interesting information: _____

2. Rural or natural environment; e.g. agricultural region, national park, desert, forest.

Name: _____

Absolute location: _____

Environmental characteristics: _____

Flora and fauna: _____

Interesting information: _____



Draw a map of your chosen country on another sheet of paper. Include borders, scale, north point and a title. Mark the features you identified above on your map as well as any other significant features (e.g. landforms and large cities).