



COVER STORY: World Affairs Atlas and Almanac (pp. 8-29)

► **NCSS STANDARD**
Global connections

Our handy, information-packed World Affairs Atlas and Almanac can be used throughout the school year.

■ Objectives

- Practice gleaning information from maps and tables.
- Use statistical data to support a thesis, opinion, or argument.

■ The Basics

- **Maps of the World (pp. 8-19):** Have students consult the introductory page, especially the guide to interpreting the fonts and colors used in the maps. Remind them that each map has its own key.
- **The World in Focus (pp. 20-29):** Go over the blown-up sample entry on pp. 20-21 to ensure that students understand how to read and interpret the data provided.

■ Atlas: The Haves and the Have Nots

The Economic Map of the World (pp. 18-19) is color-coded according to the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of each country. The dollar figures have been divided into five categories, making it easier for readers to find countries in similar economic ranges, and to compare the relative wealth or poverty of regions.

■ Almanac: Who's in Charge?

Many countries have a separate **head of government** and **head of state**. The head of government runs the day-to-day operations of the country. Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom is an example. The head of state can be a largely ceremonial position: for instance, the U.K.'s Queen Elizabeth II. The head of state can also be a person of actual authority, such as President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, who oversees the country's foreign policy. (Presidential systems such as the one in the U.S. combine the two roles in one person.) Whenever a country has both figures, the World in Focus lists the more powerful of the two.

■ Content-Area Questions

CULTURE/SOCIAL STUDIES

1. What challenges affect a country with a high percentage of its population under age 15? (*trouble filling jobs, educating youths, providing food, and*

performing other functions filled by adults)

2. What do you think causes such an imbalance? (*birth rate too high; decimation of adult population by war, disease; other*)

GEOGRAPHY

1. Which country is partly in Asia and partly in Oceania? (*Indonesia*)
2. Which continent has the greatest number of poor countries? (*Africa*)

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. What do some geographers call the single land-mass that includes both Belgium and Bhutan? (*Eurasia*)
2. What does *per capita* mean? (*per person*)

MATH

1. How can you figure out a country's population density (number of people per square mile)? (*Divide population by land area.*)
2. What is the population density of Australia? (*about 7.3 people per square mile*)

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Governments in Action: People and Power (pp. 4-7)

► NCSS STANDARD

Power, authority, & governance

As part of our new series on types of government worldwide, this feature offers background on 11 major types of government in power today.

■ Objectives

- Compare and contrast 11 different types of government.
- Consider the impact (positive and negative) that each type of government has on people who live under it.

■ Backstory

For more on types of government, see the profiles on the U.K. (Sept. 7, 2009, issue), China (Oct. 5), and the U.S. [scholastic.com/js/ourgovt].

■ Rapid Review

- What is the difference between a monarchy and a constitutional monarchy? (In both, the ruler usually has inherited the position. In a monarchy, he or she controls the government. In a constitutional monarchy, a constitution defines and limits the ruler's role.)
- What is the difference between a presidential-legislative democracy and a presidential-parliamentary democracy? (In the former, an elected President shares power with a legislature. In the latter, authority is split between a President who serves as head of state and a Prime Minister who handles day-to-day workings of the government.)

- What does *transitional* indicate? (a government in the process of changing from one form to another)
- In which forms of government are the principal leaders not chosen by the people? (monarchy, presidential dictatorship, military, Communist one-party state, dominant party)

WEB LINKS

- Freedom House Country Reports: freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2009
- The World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>



Skills: Snapshots From Around the World (pp. 30-31)

► NCSS STANDARD

Culture & cultural diversity

This feature presents statistical data in visual formats.

■ Objective

- Use graphs and charts to raise and answer questions, make inferences, and draw conclusions.

■ Backstory

Statistical data can be both revealing and misleading. Remind students that, while statistics can be used to help tell a story, they cannot tell the *whole* story.

■ Rapid Review

- Which language has the most speakers as their primary language? (*Chinese*) Which two

languages are a distant second? (*Spanish and English*)

- After the United States, which country on this chart shown had the greatest percentage of its children enrolled in secondary school? (*Egypt*)
- What happens to the population when the birth rate is much greater than the death rate?

■ Talk It Over

- How might having a small percentage of its population using the Internet affect a poor country's chances of getting ahead?
- Which set of statistics provided here did you find the most interesting or surprising? Explain.

■ DIY Infographics

Refer students to our sources for these charts and graphs, some of which are listed in Web Links below, and others in the Useful URLs at scholastic.com/js/urls. Have them create a chart or graph based on data other than those we used. Encourage them to be creative as well as informative. Then display and discuss students' work.

WEB LINKS

- Internet World Stats: internetworldstats.com/stats.htm
- Languages of the World: ethnologue.com/ethno_docs/distribution.asp?by=size