



The Gang of 14: A Simulation for Teaching World Climates

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Description: This simulation helps introduce students to different climates God has “installed” on Earth in an interesting and engaging manner. Groups attempt to round up a gang of spies located in 14 cities around the globe. Fourteen sets of clues, one for each city, will assist students to find the location. A notorious spy ring known as “The Gang of 14” has planted an explosive device in a 15th city. None of the spies knows the exact location of the bomb, but each carries a partial clue as to its whereabouts. Each time student groups find one of the Gang of 14, they receive that spy’s information about the city where the actual bomb is located. Classroom teams use the clues, a set of climographs, an atlas, and their own background knowledge of world geography to solve this problem of international espionage. The first group to find the bomb wins the favor and adoration of the world.

Grade Level: Intermediate through High School

Class Time: 45 minutes

Objectives: As students complete the simulation, they will have located places by analyzing data on climographs. They will also apply previous knowledge of the world’s latitude and longitude coordinate system.

Skills: This simulation requires the student to:

- ask geographic questions;
- acquire geographic information;
- organize geographic information;
- analyze geographic information;
- answer geographic questions; and
- apply social skills in a team setting.

5 Themes of Geography: Students make use of the themes of Location, Place, Interaction, Movement, and Region in this simulation.

Needed Materials: Teams need the simulation worksheet, a current world atlas, a pertinent set of climographs, and visual access to location clues.

Scenario: [Read the following instructions to your students.]

1. "Your group is trying to locate a bomb placed in an unknown city by the Gang of 14, a notorious spy ring."
2. "No spy knows the precise location of the bomb, but each spy in the Gang of 14 has a partial clue to its location."
3. "I am providing you a set of fourteen climographs, a team worksheet, and an atlas. These will assist you in finding the bomb's location."
4. "Each set of clues I read refers to one of the cities featured on the fourteen climographs."
5. "I will reveal the first four clues every two minutes. After that I will read a new clue every 90 seconds. Your group may work on any set of clues in any order. As soon as your group can correctly match a set of clues to one of the climograph cities, write the name of the city on your group worksheet and present it to me."
6. "If you have correctly identified the city, then you have captured the member of the Gang of 14 who is hiding in that location. The spy will reveal his or her information to you in the form of a clue slip you will receive from me. Be sure that no other group gets access to this secret information."
7. "If you think that your group can correctly identify the city in which the bomb is located, write the name of the city and its country on the blank at the bottom of your team worksheet. There is no penalty for incorrect guesses. The first team to identify the city and country in which the bomb is located will win the favor and adulation of the world and enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done." [Some teachers begin accepting bomb location guesses after the 8th clue to give the groups more practice working with the climographs and atlases.]
8. "The bomb is not in any of the cities listed on the climographs." [Introduce or review the five pieces of information a climographs reveals: city name; latitude & longitude; elevation; average monthly temperature {line graph}; and average monthly precipitation {bar graph}. Field any questions at this time.]
9. "Here is the first set of location clues." [Show and read the bulleted information. Some of the location clues may prove to be challenging. Encourage students to match the four pieces of information with the available climographs. Some groups may have to tender several guesses before they receive their spy information from you. Use a timer to keep the activity moving. You may choose to provide paper copies of the location clues or allow groups to review previous location clues, so that they don't become frustrated.]

Note: This simulation is not original. Two San Antonio teachers, Rick Montgomery and Peggy Weyel, working with James F. Petersen of Southwest Texas State University, developed the lesson as part of a summer geographic institute in 1987. The activity appeared in the *Journal of Geography*, vol. 87, no. 5, pp. 174-178 in 1988. God bless you as you share it with your students in your own classroom.