

# UNIT 4: What Statistics Can Tell Us About Africa

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**Introduction:** Often when we study another place in the world, we are confronted with statistics about that place. These statistics use data, or facts or information collected for analysis or computation, to make objective comparisons of specific characteristics about a particular place or group of places. Students must understand how to use data and statistics in a study of world regions so that they can better interpret information presented to them in textbooks, newspapers, and other media forms.

This lesson is designed to promote number literacy in world studies. It challenges students to work with statistics and draw conclusions based on these statistics. It also warns students about the pitfalls in relying too much on statistics and challenges them to think about appropriate and inappropriate use of statistics in our world today.

**Unit Organization:** Unit organized by days. Objective, goals, materials, and assessment apply to the entire unit.

**Target Audience:** Grades 6-8

**Objectives:** Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:

- Understand some of the similarities and differences of countries in Africa, including Tanzania.
- Understand how conditions in those African countries compare with those in the US.
- Understand how statistics and related terminology are used in world studies.

**Goals:**

- Students will access statistics from the World Factbook on the Internet and rank African countries and the US using those statistics.
- Students will write comparisons of African countries using those statistics and decide which country they would like to visit using the statistics to explain why.
- Students will present their findings to the class.

**Materials:**

Included:

- Literacy Rates in SE Asia (page 4-7)
- Vocabulary Worksheet (page 4-8))
- Blackline Map of Africa (page 4-9)

- Exploring Africa with Statistics Worksheet (page 4-10/4-11)
- Checklist of African Countries (page 4-12)
- Peer Edit Essay Rubric (page 4-13)
- Audience Feedback Sheet (page 4-14)
- Statistics for the United States (page 4-15)
- Unit Rubric-What Statistics Can Tell Us about Africa (page 4-16)

Not Included:

- Overhead and transparencies
- Computers or print-outs of listed websites
- Graphic organizers
- Scratch paper
- Pencils/Pens

**Time Allotment:** Eight to ten 50-minute class periods (time will vary depending on period length and use of activities for homework)

**Unit Assessment:** Use the Unit Rubric (page 4-16) to assess student learning. Use a combination of your own observations and results from the Audience Feedback Sheets (page 4-14) collected from each student.

### DAY One

**Pre-Activity:** Put a bar graph up on the overhead that shows the education level of five countries in Asia (page 4-7). Ask students to turn to a partner and explain what it shows and what more they might infer from what the graph shows. Ask students to share what they discussed with their partner. Write their comments on the board or on the overhead. Review the responses and add any missing information or suggest other inferences. Tell them they will be using statistics like these to find out about countries in Africa. Add that they will use statistics to choose a country in Africa they would like to visit. Finally, explain that they will present their choice and their reasons why to the class.

### DAY One-Two

Put the following words up on the overhead: *mortality, life expectancy, median, population, literacy, per capita, consumption, agriculture, industry, domestic, GDP*. Pass out the Vocabulary Worksheet (page 4-8) and have students place the words in the column that best describes their knowledge of the word (this could also be a homework assignment). Once they have completed this task, have them partner with one or two other students. Ask them to compare their lists and then see if they can help each other move words from the left columns to the right as much as possible. If you have the time, have them meet with one or two other people they were not with before and go through the same process. Put the words up on a big sheet and have students tell what they mean. If there are terms that still stump the students, have them look the terms up in a dictionary or be prepared to give them the definitions.

If you have a computer connection in the room and a projector, bring up Tanzania on the CIA World Factbook site (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>). If not, make a copy of the site and use overheads to talk about the words that students have just looked up and the statistics they go with. For example, go to the "Infant Mortality" section under "People." Ask students to explain what the phrase "infant mortality" means. Discuss until students understand. Ask students what the numbers mean. Discuss until students understand. Continue this process with each category.

### **DAY Two-Three**

Put a transparency of the Blackline Map of Africa (page 4-9) on the overhead or pull down a map of Africa. Tell the students they each are to pick six African countries. You also could do this in pairs. Explain that you want them to choose countries in different parts of the continent, although some can be close together. Have them open to a map of Africa in their social studies book or atlas and hand out the Blackline Map of Africa (page 4-9). If they are working in pairs, have them decide together which countries to explore. Instruct them to outline and color in the six countries they have chosen. As they are doing this, hand out the Exploring Africa with Statistics Worksheet (page 4-10, 4-11) they will use to record data. Ask them to write their six countries on the lines provided on the worksheet. When they are done, ask them to respond to the second question on the worksheet. Ask students to share what countries they chose and why.

Point out the web address included with item #2 of the Exploring Africa with Statistics Worksheet (page 4-10, 4-11). If you have the capability to project the Internet onto a screen, open up to the website and remind students how to access a country. If not, remind them how to access their countries with a graphic of the homepage on the overhead or board.

Go over the worksheet with them. Explain that they will have to write down the country and the statistic being asked for on a piece of scratch paper so that they can put them in the requested order on the worksheet. Collect the worksheets so you can check which countries were chosen on the Checklist of African Countries (page 4-12). Upon their return, assign absent students the leftover countries.

### **DAY Three**

Prepare the computer lab or classroom computers by setting each computer to the CIA Factbook website at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>. Return the Exploring Africa with Statistics Worksheet to students. Using the computer lab or classroom computers, provide time for students to work alone or with a partner to complete the worksheet. Tell students they are not to leave the CIA Factbook website.

## **DAY Four**

Tell the students they are going to pick one of the six countries they researched to go visit. Model what they are supposed to do using this example:

- I would pick Botswana. English is the official language so I would probably be able to talk to many of the people there. Botswana is a big diamond exporter (90% of total exports) and I would like to learn more about diamond mining, and what diamonds are like before they become jewelry and I think I could do that in Botswana. Another reason is that Botswana has a GDP/capita of \$8500 (which is pretty high for African countries) and the factbook said that the country has been “transformed from one of the poorest nations in the world into a middle income country” and I would like to learn more about what that is like for people to experience that change. Also, Botswana has negative population growth rate (-.55%) and I think that is because of the very high level of HIV infection (38.8%) and it would be interesting to see what the government and people are doing to fight AIDS in Botswana.

Now, ask students to choose one country out of the six they picked that they would want to visit and work on a rough draft explaining their thinking. Instruct students to use their statistics to explain the reasons they picked their chosen country to visit, as you modeled.

## **DAY Five**

Hand out the Peer Edit Essay Rubric (page 4-13) to each student. Tell each student to write his/her name on the top line after Essay Writer’s Name. Pair students up and tell them to pass their rubric and draft to their partner. Each editor writes his or her name on the appropriate line. Students peer edit each other’s written work using this rubric. The students should swap back and then put the students into new pairs. Ask students to repeat the process (pass their rubric and draft to their partner and edit the partner’s draft). Students must have at least two peer edits before it is turned in to the teacher. They then use the feedback from the two peer edits to work on their final draft.

When students are done, they should brainstorm (alone or with a partner) questions they would like to know about their chosen country beyond the statistics (e.g., what are tourist attractions in the country? What are some interesting landmarks in the country?) They might take a statistic that jumped out at them and investigate the story behind that statistic. Students should then use the Internet or library resources to research the answers to their questions. Students also should come up with pictures of their country or other visual aides to use in their presentation to the class. Let students know that graphs showing what they learned about the countries will enhance their presentations.

## **DAY Six**

Depending on the expertise of the students and if there is computer access in the classroom or a lab, encourage the students to prepare PowerPoint presentations

on the countries they have chosen. Posters, pamphlets, etc. are other options for students to use as visual aides in their presentations. Encourage those students who finish early to enter their country comparison data into Excel to create graphs like the Literacy Rates in SE Asia (page 4-7) graph they saw on Day 1.

### **DAY Seven-Eight**

Make sure there is a map of Africa displayed for use during the presentations and hand out copies of the Audience Feedback Sheet (page 4-14). Go over the Audience Feedback Sheet with students. Students can score up to three points on each section. Explain the sections of the score sheet like this:

- Opening – how does the student introduce the topic? Is it clear? Is it exciting?
- Content – are there facts included? Is it clear why the student wants to visit this country?
- Props – these include graphs and any other visual aides
- Eye Contact – does the student look at the audience? Demonstrate to students by looking down at the floor while talking to them and then looking at them while talking to them.
- Voice – is the student loud enough? Is the student speaking clearly?

Students finish up their projects and present to class. The presentation should include graphs, a map of Africa, pictures of the countries, and a written analysis of the data and their conclusions. The non-presenting students use the Audience Feedback Sheet to give feedback to the presenter. Collect the sheets after all students have presented to reflect responses in the final assessment.

### **DAY Nine**

Hand out Statistics for the United States (page 4-15). This handout is designed to cut into half-sheets. In partners or small groups, have students discuss how the statistics about the US compare with the African countries they studied. Ask each group to talk about their ideas and thoughts with the rest of the class and argue their points.

### **NOTE & POSSIBLE EXTENSION**

Make sure that you leave time to discuss the use of statistics in coming to conclusions about a place. Statistics give us wonderful data by which to compare one place with another, but statistics can also be used to lead people to wrong conclusions. Additionally, statistics are two-dimensional, not providing any of information about the reasons behind something, then again leading us to wrong conclusions. Issues to discuss include the following:

- How might statistics be used for good purposes?
- How might they be used for bad purposes?
- Why and when are they used?
- When are they not useful?
- What should you do when confronted with a statistic?

There exist hundreds of popular quotes about statistics, some of which can be found below. Share some of these with students and discuss what the authors of the quotes meant by them. Challenge the students to find ways to connect a quote or two with their study of a country in Africa.

### **Statistics-related Quotes**

Statistical thinking will one day be as necessary a qualification for efficient citizenship as the ability to read and write.

--*H.G. Wells*

There are five kinds of lies:

Lies

Damned Lies,

Statistics,

Politicians quoting statistics

and Novelists quoting Politicians on Statistics.

--*Stephen K Tagg*

Do not put faith in what statistics say until you have carefully considered what they do not say.

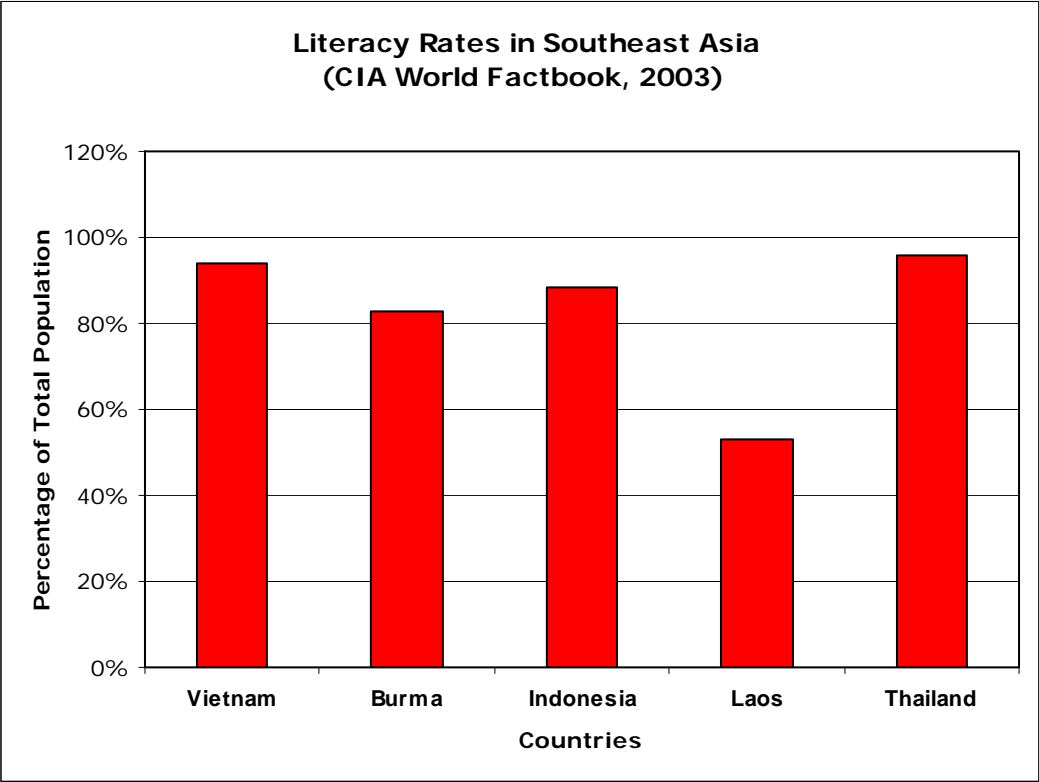
--*William W. Watt*

A single death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic.

--*Stalin*

### **DAY 10**

Instruct students to write a reflection paragraph about their learning and about how the use of statistics influenced their understanding of life in various African countries, and how these statistics compare with those of the United States. Collect the paragraphs once complete.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Vocabulary Worksheet

**Words:** *mortality, expectancy, median, population, literacy, per capita, consumption, agriculture, industry, domestic, GDP*

**Directions:** Put each of the words in the column that fits what you know about the word.

<b>NO IDEA!</b> I don't know what this word means	<b>MAYBE?</b> I think I know what this word means	<b>YES, BUT...</b> I know a definition, but I'm not sure if it works here	<b>OH YEAH!</b> I definitely know what this word means

## Blackline Map of Africa



Outline the six countries you have chosen, color them in, and label them.  
Map can be found at <http://abcteach.com/Maps/africa.htm>, 2004.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Exploring Africa With Statistics

1. List the six African nations you have chosen to explore on the lines below:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Of the six countries you have chosen, predict one that you think you will want to visit. Explain why.

_____
_____
_____

Go to following website: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html> . Use the information there to fill in the rest of this worksheet. For each question, use scratch paper to correctly rank the countries in the proper order. Then, write them in the correct order on the worksheet.

3. Find the area of each country. Use scratch paper to correctly rank the countries from largest to smallest, and then list them here in that order. Do the same for population.

Country	Area

Country	Population

4. In addition to the size of the countries and how many people live there, what else might this information tell you about the countries? Put differently, what can you infer from these two sets of statistics?

_____
_____

5. Rank your countries according to median age (oldest to youngest) and according to birthrate (lowest to highest).

Country	Median Age

Country	Birthrate/1000

What might cause the median age to change? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the birthrate tell you? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the infant mortality rate in countries and the life expectancy at birth? Rank your countries from lowest infant mortality rate to highest. For life expectancy, list the countries from highest to lowest.

Country	Infant Mortality Rate/1000 births	Female	Male

Country	Life Expectancy at birth	Female	Male

What might these statistics tell you about life in these countries?

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7. List the countries' literacy rates, by gender from the highest to the lowest percentage. Also list the countries' official language(s).

Country	Literacy Rate (%)	Female	Male	Official Language(s)

How do literacy rates relate to other statistics? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. List countries from highest to lowest GDP per capita, related GDP figures, and poverty level for each country.

Country	GDP per capita	GDP Agriculture	GDP Industry	GDP Services	Poverty level

How does the per capita information relate to agriculture, industry, services, and the poverty level?

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## Checklist of African Countries

**Note to teacher:** Mark off each country as students select them. Upon their return, assign countries that have not been selected to absent students.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algeria  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mauritania                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angola   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mauritius                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benin  | <input type="checkbox"/> Morocco                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Botswana   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mozambique                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burkina Faso   | <input type="checkbox"/> Namibia                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burundi  | <input type="checkbox"/> Niger                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cameroon   | <input type="checkbox"/> Nigeria                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cape Verde   | <input type="checkbox"/> Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Central African Republic                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Reunion                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chad   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rwanda                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Republic of the Congo<br>(Kinshasa, formerly Zaire) | <input type="checkbox"/> Senegal                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Djibouti   | <input type="checkbox"/> Seychelles                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sierra Leone                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equatorial Guinea  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sao Tome & Principe                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eritrea  | <input type="checkbox"/> Somalia                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethiopia   | <input type="checkbox"/> South Africa                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gabon  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sudan                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gambia   | <input type="checkbox"/> Swaziland                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ghana  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tanzania                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guinea Bissau  | <input type="checkbox"/> Togo                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guinea   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tunisia                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ivory Coast  | <input type="checkbox"/> Uganda                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kenya  | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Sahara*                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesotho  | <input type="checkbox"/> Zambia                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liberia  | <input type="checkbox"/> Zanzibar                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Libya  | <input type="checkbox"/> Zimbabwe                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Madagascar   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malawi   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mali   |  |

\* *Disputed and often not counted*

Essay Writer's Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Edit Essay Rubric

First Editor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Exceeds standard</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Approaching standard</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>
Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction tells the reader what countries are chosen and what the process was in making that choice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One or two paragraphs analyzes the reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion shows how the writer felt about the process of coming to his/her decisions <u>and</u> what he/she learned in the process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction tells the reader what countries are chosen and gives some idea about the process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One or two paragraphs give reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion shows how the writer felt about the process of coming to his/her decision <u>or</u> what he/she learned in the process of looking at the statistics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction doesn't set up the rest of the paragraphs and/or just jumps right into the reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An attempt is made to create one or two paragraphs, but the reasoning for the choices isn't very clear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion lacks reflection and/or a sense of what was learned</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Most facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No clear introduction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No paragraphing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explanations aren't clear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lacks a conclusion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are inaccurate</li> </ul>

Second Editor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Exceeds standard</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Approaching standard</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>
Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction tells the reader what countries are chosen and what the process was in making that choice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One or two paragraphs analyzes the reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion shows how the writer felt about the process of coming to his/her decisions <u>and</u> what he/she learned in the process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction tells the reader what countries are chosen and gives some idea about the process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One or two paragraphs give reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion shows how the writer felt about the process of coming to his/her decision <u>or</u> what he/she learned in the process of looking at the statistics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction doesn't set up the rest of the paragraphs and/or just jumps right into the reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An attempt is made to create one or two paragraphs, but the reasoning for the choices isn't very clear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion lacks reflection and/or a sense of what was learned</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Most facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No clear introduction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No paragraphing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explanations aren't clear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lacks a conclusion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are inaccurate</li> </ul>



## Statistics for the US

AREA: 9,629,091 sq km

MEDIAN AGE: 35.8

BIRTHRATE: 14.14/1000

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 6.75 DEATHS/1000 LIVE BIRTHS  
7.46 DEATHS/1000 LIVE BIRTHS MALE  
6.02 DEATHS/1000 LIVE BIRTHS FEMALE

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 77.14 YEARS  
74.37 YEARS MALE  
80.05 YEARS FEMALE

LITERACY: 97% FOR BOTH MALE AND FEMALE

GDP PER CAPITA: \$37,600

GDP AGRICULTURE: 2%

GDP INDUSTRY: 18%

GDP SERVICES: 80%

POVERTY LEVEL: 12.7%

From the *CIA World Factbook*, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>, 2003.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Unit Rubric - What Statistics Can Tell Us about Africa

	<b>Exceeds standard</b>	<b>Meets standard</b>	<b>Approaching standard</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>
<b>Worksheet 2 Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All 7 areas for statistics are correctly filled in</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All questions are answered with clear reasoning that shows thoughtful analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All 7 areas for statistics are correctly filled in</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All questions are filled in with clear reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some mistakes are made filling in the statistics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Answers to questions are attempted, but not always clear as to the thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Multiple mistakes are made in filling in the statistics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Answers to questions are not attempted or do not make sense</li> </ul>
<b>Essay 4 points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction tells the reader what countries are chosen and what the process was in making that choice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One or two paragraphs analyzes the reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion shows how the writer felt about the process of coming to his/her decisions <u>and</u> what he/she learned in the process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction tells the reader what countries are chosen and gives some idea about the process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One or two paragraphs give reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion shows how the writer felt about the process of coming to his/her decision <u>or</u> what he/she learned in the process of looking at the statistics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction doesn't set up the rest of the paragraphs and/or just jumps right into the reasons why the two countries were chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> An attempt is made to create one or two paragraphs, but the reasoning for the choices isn't very clear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conclusion lacks reflection and/or a sense of what was learned</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Most facts are accurate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No clear introduction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No paragraphing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explanations aren't clear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lacks a conclusion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facts are inaccurate</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation 4 points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organized and engaging opening captures the interest of the audience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Easy to follow ideas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visual aides such as maps, graphs, and/or pictures</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eye contact and voice keep the audience engaged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opening and ideas presented are well-organized</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At least one visual aide is used to illustrate the main idea</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> For the most part eye contact and voice keep the attention of the audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opening and ideas are somewhat organized</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A visual aide is used, but it does not necessarily add to the presentation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Eye contact and/or voice aren't always strong enough to keep the interest of the audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opening and ideas are not well organized</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visual aides are not used</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Too little eye contact and/or monotone voice detract from the presentation</li> </ul>

**Total \_\_\_\_\_/10 points**