

# Global Conflict: Kashmir

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**Grade Levels: 9-12**

## **Inquiry Question:**

What are the geographical characteristics of Kashmir that is causing the conflict between India and Pakistan over the region?

## **Geographic Standards:**

### **National:**

#13 - How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth.

# 18 - How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

# 4 - The physical and human characteristics of place.

## **Oregon (Common Curriculum Goals):**

Understand the social, cultural, and economic process that change the characteristics of place and regions over time.

Understand how differing points of view, self-interests, and global distribution of natural resources play a vital role in conflict over territory.

## **Overview:**

This assessment tool can be used in a variety of classes and contexts. It would be most beneficial for teachers of Global Studies courses that address world problems and conflicts. This lesson and assessment tool have been designed to be able to apply to any regional conflict that may become a "Hot Topic" in the news.

In this assessment students will be asked to analyze and gather important geographic information to help them answer the above inquiry question. Students must take into account the ongoing conflict between Pakistan and India over the Kashmir region and the variety of cultural differences between the two countries into their answers. Students must show understanding of the importance of Kashmir to this region and these two conflicting countries.

## Materials:

1. Variety of Atlases
2. Paper
3. Information packets on Pakistan, India, and Kashmir  
( may be provided by instructor or students may be asked to produce the material themselves if teacher would like to incorporate library and research time into activities)
4. Colored Pencils
5. Textbook(s)

## Time Allotted:

“Scaffolding” Activities - one to two periods  
Assessment Piece - one class period

## Scaffolding Activities:

1. Students will have an opportunity to analyze physical, cultural, and political maps of the region.
2. Students will create a timeline of the region in dispute focusing on:
  - a. the creation of Pakistan, India, and Kashmir.
  - b. previous conflicts between Pakistan and India over Kashmir.
3. Students will construct a Geographic Concept Map of Kashmir:
  - a. where is Kashmir
  - b. what is in the area (physical geography)
  - c. why is it important
  - d. what is the conflict about
4. Students will create a compare and contrast list of the countries involved in the dispute:

Pakistan

India

- a. Size
- b. Religion
- c. Population
- d. Location
- e. Military capabilities
- f. Desire in conflict

## **Assessment Tool:**

The students will take on the role of an advisor to the United Nations. Using the information they have gathered, they must create a proposal to the United Nations Security Council on what should be done to solve the conflict or come to a compromise in Kashmir. The proposal must include the following information and should show or reflect a variety of geographic knowledge and skill:

1. Who is involved in the conflict?
2. Why is there a conflict here?
3. Description of the area in conflict.
4. A brief history of the region.
5. Geographic importance of the area in conflict.

## **Follow Up Activities:**

1. Students could hold a "Mock" session of the United Nations Security Council.
2. Classroom poll/debate on what should be done to bring an end to the conflict.

## **Exemplary Response:**

To: United Nations Security Council

The region of Kashmir has been a disputed region between India and Pakistan since 1947. The United Nations has been involved in this dispute for many years without solving the conflict or helping the sides come to a compromise. I hope after reading my proposal it will allow you to see the various geographical factors that have caused the problem and how these factors can help us bring this conflict to an end.

Kashmir is a beautiful region nestled between Pakistan, India, and China. The majority of the region's 13 million people live between the Himalayan Mountains and the Pir Panjal Mountains in the Kashmir Valley. Kashmir has two important water supplies that flow through it, the headwaters of the Indus River and the Jhelum, which flows through the Kashmir Valley.

The climate of Kashmir is considered mild, which allows for moist soil year-round. The people of Kashmir are 70% Muslim with the remaining 30% primarily Hindu. Kashmir is largely a farming region that produces rich supplies of corn, wheat, rice, fruits and vegetables.

The region of Kashmir has changed drastically over the last fifty years, largely due to human actions and the redrawing of its political borders. In 1947 Lord Maharajah, who controlled the area, signed an "Instrument of Accession" to India, which would give control of Kashmir to India in exchange for India's military assistance. The reason Maharajah was seeking military assistance was that Pakistan had invaded the land to unite all land that contained Muslims.

The government of India promised the people of Kashmir that they would be able to vote for their future sovereignty. This never happened. Since 1947 the countries of Pakistan and India have fought three official wars with the United Nations stepping in and setting a "Cease Fire Line" each time. The conflict has never been settled and in 1998 both India and Pakistan detonated nuclear weapons during tests, which escalates the severity of the conflict.

Both Pakistan and India have laid claim to the region of Kashmir over the past fifty

years. Both nations claim to have vested interests in the region. Pakistan has two major concerns/interests to the region. The first major concern is that the headwaters of the Indus River begin in the Kashmir region. This is of huge importance to Pakistan because this river serves as a major resource to Pakistan. If the headwaters of this important river are in another country, especially a country with whom they have been in conflict since 1947, then ultimately the control of the river does not lie with Pakistan. Pakistan also claims that the majority of the population of Kashmir is Muslim and has taken a vow to unite all Muslim people in the region.

On the other side of the dispute lies India. India currently controls most of the territory of Kashmir, including the Valley of Kashmir and Indus and Jhelum rivers. India claims that Kashmir is an integral part of their territory and will not relinquish its control of the region. This claim is rooted in India's original control of Kashmir in 1947 and is fueled by its rivalry with Pakistan.

With the above information presented to you, a solution needs to be reached. India currently has over 500,000 troops in the region and Pakistan has "hired" Muslim mercenaries from neighboring regions to join in the fight. Added to the already tense situation, both of these countries are new members of the Nuclear Club. With neither nation agreeing to past United Nations decisions and cease-fires, I propose we take a stronger position to end the conflict in Kashmir.

Three main facts get to the root of the Kashmir conflict. First, the headwaters of the Indus River are found here. The importance of this river to Pakistan has already been discussed and is a major factor in the conflict. Secondly, the fact that over 70% of the Kashmir population is Muslim. With Pakistan being a Muslim state and India being a Hindu state (which controls the majority of Kashmir) the cultural factor of religion plays a huge factor in this conflict. The third fact is India's historic claim to the region and the fact that over 50 years they have not been willing to budge on this issue.

I propose that the United Nations take a stronger role in this conflict than it has in the past. The United Nations must demand that India and Pakistan allow the people of Kashmir to decide their sovereignty. The people of Kashmir should be given the opportunity that was promised to them when India took control in 1947 to decide who they will be governed under;

Pakistan, India, or to be their own nation. It is important that Kashmir is not divided by cultural differences, which may create an area of internal conflict in the future.

In this decision or vote by the people of Kashmir, I do feel that the needs of Pakistan and India must be addressed. Some type of assurance needs to be given to Pakistan that the very important Indus River (headwaters) is protected for the country of Pakistan. India's needs must be addressed as well. I would advise you to force India and Pakistan into accepting the vote of Kashmir as the final decision, which both countries must agree to, while still extending them an opportunity to express their individual needs.

I propose that the United Nations takes a strong stand to end the conflict in Kashmir and brings peace to a region and people who live in constant fear with many forced into fleeing their homeland. Outside of the area of South Asia this small region of Kashmir could, if allowed, bring the world into its first war between two nuclear powers who have not hesitated to threaten to use their newly found military power. The United Nations must take a strong decision and enforcement.