

Google Earth Mapping Activity

Ages 10 and Up



Use this interactive map with your students to help them learn about Madagascar, lemurs, wildlife habitats, as well as Madagascar and this region of the world. This is a great activity for [World Lemur Day](#), and can be adapted for other wildlife days.

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Teaching Activity

1. Give students this interactive map and allow them to explore it on their own for 10 to 30 minutes.
2. Depending on your students and your teaching style, either provide the below discussion questions to the students during their activity, or use these questions to form a class discussion after students explore the map on their own.

Discussion Questions

1. Use this map to zoom in and out of Madagascar. How big do you think Madagascar is? Can you compare it to the size of another country or a U.S. state? What other countries are close to Madagascar?
2. Based on your research with this interactive map, how are lemur species different from each other? Why do you think there are so many different types of lemurs?
3. What different habitats do lemurs live in? What are these habitats like? Can you think of any other places that have habitats like these?
4. What did you learn about the people that live in Madagascar? Are you surprised to learn that there are so many people and cities in Madagascar? What types of work do you think Malagasy people do?

Answer Key

1. Madagascar is 44% larger than California and about the size of France. Other countries that are located close to Madagascar are Mozambique, South Africa, the Seychelles, the Comoros, and Mauritius.
2. Lemurs vary in many ways, including what they eat, when they are active (during the day or night), and how big they are. When lemurs got to Madagascar 65 million years ago by floating on rafts of vegetation from the east coast of Africa, they evolved into over 100 species based on where they live on the island, what they eat, and what else lives in their habitat.
3. There are four main habitats in Madagascar, all of which have lemurs: rainforest, dry forest, spiny desert, and plateau. Rainforests are found in many places in the world, including the Amazon.
4. There are 26 million people that live on the island of Madagascar. Malagasy people have a variety of jobs. Farming (especially rice and vanilla), mining, tourism, fishing, sales, and scientific research are some occupations that are common among Malagasy people.

Supplementary Activities

1. Of the lemur species featured on the map, pick one species and do more research about it. Can you discover anything new about this species that isn't described in this Google Tour?
 2. Is there another lemur species, or a different animal, that you would like to add to the map? Where would it go on the map? What information would you include?
 3. What other cities are there in Madagascar? What can you find out about them?
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Adapt This Activity for Other Wildlife Days

To adapt this for other wildlife days, have the students create their own maps or Google Earth Tours and then share their maps with the class. This would be a larger research activity which would likely need more than one class session to complete.

Example 1: Red Panda Day

Red Panda Day focuses on only one species, so students could create a map which shows different national parks where red pandas live, or different zoos that have red pandas. If highlighting where red pandas live, they could add information about

each country and region including what the habitat is like, if there are cities nearby, and what other animals or human communities live in the area.

Example 2: World Gorilla Day

There are a few species of gorilla that live in different countries. So, students could create a map that shows each country and region where different species of gorilla live. Or, they could pick one gorilla species and use a map to explore that region in more depth, showing parks where that species lives, and other places and things in the country or countries where they live.

Resources for Google Earth

- [Google Earth Resource Center](#)
- [Google Earth Help Center](#)