

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Kosovo on the Cusp of Independence, 01/22/08

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june08/kosovo_1-22.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

INITIATING QUESTIONS

- 1. Where is Serbia? Find it on a map. What are the surrounding countries and what region is it in?**
- 2. What is Kosovo? Why have you heard about Kosovo in the past?**
- 3. What does it mean if a country is sovereign?**

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

- 1. What is Kosovo planning to do in the near future?**

ANSWER

The Serbian province of Kosovo -- which is made up of a largely ethnic Albanian population -- is expected to declare its independence within the coming months, while Serbia and Russia push to keep the area under Serbian control.

- 2. How have other countries responded to Kosovo's plans? Which countries are supportive and which are not?**

ANSWER

Although the United States and Germany have said that they will recognize Kosovo if it does declare itself a sovereign nation, the move toward independence has sparked strong resistance from Russia and several other European Union countries.

- 3. What happened in Kosovo in 1999?**

ANSWER

Kosovo, an area populated by 2 million people, most of which are ethnic Albanians, was thrown into turmoil in 1999, when NATO forces, including American troops, launched a 78-day bombing campaign to stop Serbian forces from killing Albanians.

- 4. Who is Slobodan Milosevic and what was his role in the conflict?**

ANSWER

Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic, who died in 2004 while on trial for war crimes, brought the Albanian province under tighter Serbian control in 1989, removing its autonomy. Less than ten years later, Serbian and Kosovar Albanian military forces were openly fighting each other, according to NATO's Web site.

5. Who has been in control of Kosovo temporarily since 2000?

ANSWER

Since 2000, Kosovo has been administered by the United Nations

6. What is the significance of the upcoming Serbian election?

ANSWER

As the Kosovo situation simmers, Serbia is holding a presidential election that could help determine the future of relations among a complex web of European countries.

A close Jan. 20 election for a new Serbian president will go to a runoff vote on Feb. 3, with the Serbian people facing a choice between a leader with strong ties to Russia, or a Western-friendly incumbent.

"Serbs will have to choose between two concepts, for Europe or against it," Tadic said on Monday, according to Reuters. "There is no third way."

7. Why is Russia concerned about Kosovo becoming independent?

ANSWER

According to the Economist, Russia could be concerned that a successful Kosovo break could encourage other former Soviet territories to break away from Russia as well.

"If people believe that Kosovo can be granted full independence, why then should we deny it to Abkhazia and South Ossetia(areas south of Russia)?" Putin said, according to the news magazine.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. What role does ethnic division between Albanians and Serbs play in Kosovo's bid for independence?

2. Research the issue of sovereignty. How do you think sovereignty should be determined? Whose opinions should be considered in the decision?

3. Why do you think the different members of the international community have chosen to support or oppose Kosovo's independence?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.