

The European Union



Before Reading

Motivation / Purpose

The purpose of this text is to report on the political system of the European Union and its role in working together to give its citizens a better way of life. It links with the *Social Studies* theme *Our World*.

Text Type

Draw students' attention to the:

- chapter headings and subheadings
- fact boxes
- photographs and maps
- glossary and index.

Ask, "What type of book is this?" (Report).

Visual Literacy

Look at the cover. What do students think the book might be about? What is shown in the photograph on the back cover? (euro notes and coins.) What do you know about the euro? Look at the first few pages of the text. Talk about how the design links to the subject matter.

Background Knowledge

What countries make up the continent of Europe? On a map locate the countries mentioned in the text. Why is crossing a border in Europe different to crossing a border in Australia? What do you understand by the term European Union? Why would countries want to form a union?

Phonological Awareness

Ensure students know these phonological patterns:

- **long u:** European (p.4), eventually (p.9), new (p.17)
- **/air/:** share (p.11), area (p.14), compare (p.16)
- **/sh/:** education (p.5), issues (p.10), denominations (p.15)

Revise these sounds: /j/: Belgium (p.8), budget (p.12); /oi/: destroyed (p.8), coins (p.15); **long i:** signed (p.4), died (p.8); **long a:** obey (p.5), eight (p.15)

Say a word containing one of the phonological patterns, e.g. *education*. What letters represent the *sh* sound? ('ti') Have students suggest other words containing that phonological pattern. Write the words on a list. Repeat with other sounds listed above.

Vocabulary

anthem, budget, candidate, commission, cooperation, currency, diversity, euro, European, institutions, melody, member, motto, obey, parliament, politician, promoting, organisation, requirements, respect, rule, skills, stable, symbols, symphony, teaching, treaties, union, united, unity, values

High Frequency Words

aims, agreement, apply, approving, area, becoming, creating, countries, currently, creation, eventually, future, guarantee, human, join, ninth, November, previous, twelve

Write words onto cards. Show students a word card and have them use the word in a sentence. Challenge students by showing them two or more words to read and combine into a sentence.

During Reading

Vocabulary in Context

List vocabulary words onto a chart. Provide students with clues to the definitions of words. Ask students to supply the correct word from the list, e.g. a plan for spending and acquiring money – *budget*; a system of government that lets people vote on how their country is run – *democracy*. Repeat with other vocabulary words.

Write *Union*. List words from the list that belong to the same word family (*unity, united*). Identify the smaller word part 'uni'. How does the word origin of uni (meaning one) relate to the words *union, unity* and *united*?

Checking for Meaning

Literal:

What is the European Union (EU)? (The EU is an organisation made up of democratic European countries.)

What advantages are there for the citizens of the EU? (People, goods and services can move freely between the countries of the EU, saving time and money. The euro makes it easy for people to buy and sell goods in different countries. EU citizens can live, work and study in any EU country.)

How does a country become a member of the EU? (It must apply and meet the entry requirements. It must be a democracy, have a healthy economy, be able to apply

EU laws, and have institutions that guarantee the rule of law and respect for human rights.)

Inferential:

Why would the EU help to prevent wars between countries in Europe?

What would be the advantages of having the euro rather than countries having their own currencies?

Why would only democratic countries be allowed to join the EU? For what other reasons might a country be prevented from joining the EU?

Explain the EU's motto, 'United in Diversity'.

Response:

If you were a European citizen, would you want to belong to a country in the EU? Why/why not? Does Australia need a Union such as this? Why? What day in Australia is similar to Europe day?

Grammatical Patterns

Ensure students understand these components of a report:

- Introductory paragraphs defining the topic: *The European Union, or EU, is an organisation made up of democratic European countries.* (p.4)
- Passages describing various aspects of the topic: *states of the European Union* (p.6), *history of the EU* (pp.8-9), *the role of the European parliament* (p.11)
- Paragraphs with topic sentences: *Twenty seven countries are currently members of the European Union* (p.6), *Citizens of the EU enjoy many advantages.* (p.16)
- Use of timeless present tense: *Not all European countries are members of the EU, but any democratic European country can apply to join.* (p.5)
- Use of past tense action and relating verbs: *The first move towards the creation of the European Union began after World War II.* (p.8)
- Use of general nouns: *life* (p.4), *countries* (p.4), *years* (p.11)
- Use of technical language: *political* (p.4), *education* (p.5), *Commission* (p.12)
- Use of noun groups as the beginning focus of a clause: *European Union member states* (p.10), *Citizens of the EU* (p.16), *Europe day* (p.20)
- Use of connectives as sentence beginnings: *In 1951* (p.8), *Over time* (p.9)

Fluency / Punctuation Patterns

These punctuation patterns occur in the text:

- Use of capital letters for proper nouns, titles and abbreviations: *Austria* (p.6), *World War II* (p.8), *ECSC* (p.8), *The European Parliament* (p.11), *Ninth Symphony* (p.22)
- Use of lower case letters for short prepositions or articles in titles: *Council of the European Union* (p.11)
- Use of apostrophes of possession for singular nouns: *EU's political system* (p.4), *Commission's job* (p.12), *country's government* (p.12), *Europe's unity* (p.21)

- Use of commas to separate nouns and word groups in a list: *This is done in many ways, such as creating jobs, teaching people new work skills, working to protect the environment, and fighting crime.* (p.17)

In this text, abbreviations are used throughout the text, followed by an explanation: *The European Union*, or *EU*, (p.4), *The EU covers a large part of Europe*, (p.5); *the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)* (p.8). Ensure students understand the abbreviations in the text. Why would abbreviations be used? Why would they be first written in their expanded form?

Locate the fact boxes. Discuss the sequence in which they are read. What do you read first: the main text or the fact box? Does it matter in which order they are read?

Critical Literacy

What questions about the EU does the text answer? What do you think is the author's opinion of the EU? What difference would it make if this text was written by a person from a country that was not a member of the union? How might the information change?

Linking Visual and Written

Look at the map of the European Union on page 6. Point out that not all of the member states sit alongside each other. Why might this be the case?

After Reading

Using dot points, list reasons to explain a how a country benefits by being part of the European Union. Ask students to prepare an argument that would encourage countries to join the Union.

Activities

Students will:

- recall and write facts to demonstrate their comprehension of the text
- write words from the text containing specified phonological letter patterns
- change base words to fill gaps in sentences
- punctuate sentences using commas.

Comprehension (meaning) Vocabulary (structure) Phonics (visual) Writing (structure)

