

Developed with Tyler Duffy at the University of Oregon, Spring 2013.

Background

This out-of-class assignment was developed for use in World Regional Geography and is based on the online game Geoguessr. It requires students to apply knowledge about physical and built landscape, language and other cultural markers, and other insights about regional geography to identify landscapes in Google Street View. It is best used towards the end of a term.

Exercise

1. Visit <http://geoguessr.com/> This website is a game that drops you into 5 random locations via Google Street View. You have to place a marker on the map for where you think you are, and you get points for how close you are to the actual location. Take notes on your choices, results, and reactions as you go along as you will have to comment on these in your write-up.

You can move around just as you can in Google Street View, so feel free to move about looking for clues (language on written signs, building style, landscape, vegetation, etc.) before making a guess. You can zoom in on the map to choose a fine location, or leave it zoomed out to choose a coarse location if you're stumped. Do a practice round to get familiar with the controls.

2. Read this quick list of tips and tricks for doing well: (may need to copy and paste URL) http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2013/05/google_maps_guessing_game_geoguessr_tips_and_cheats_to_beat_the_game.html

3. Play at least two full rounds (you'll guess 10+ locations in all). Choose five places that you guessed and explain in a sentence or two (or bullet points) your thought process for making your guess. Did you notice Portuguese on a sign but realize you were in a tropical climate and so you guessed Brazil? Did you recognize the distinct shape of the Kremlin in Moscow? Or did you have to go off your gut? Try to think through your gut reactions as best you can. An explanation of: "I just went with my gut" for all the spots will not get you a top grade. In your write-up you will have to explain your thought process for 5 of the 10 locations you were given.

4. What was the right location? Were you surprised by this? Why or why not?

5. Check out this map of places for which Google Street View exists:

<http://www.google.com/help/maps/streetview/learn/where-is-street-view.html>

What patterns do you notice? Why do you think Google Street View photographers go to some places and not others? In what ways might this be problematic? Write a paragraph answering these questions.

Include the following in your written response:

a. Reactions and thought processes for 5 location guesses. Choose the 5 most interesting/surprising/confusing results and respond to the following:

Description of place:

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Thought process for guess:

Actual location:

Response: Were you correct? Surprised/not surprised? Did you learn something?

b. Paragraph response to point 5 above (Street View Coverage Map).

c. Have fun! Caution: this game has been shown to be moderately addictive.