

Countries Around the World™

The Netherlands

Program Summary

Meet 11-year-old Lieve. She and her family live in Woerden, a town in the Netherlands. Join Lieve as she and her mother travel to the capital city of Amsterdam to find her father a present for his birthday. Students will learn about the population, language and the government of the Netherlands while Lieve and her mother stroll through the streets of Amsterdam. Lieve introduces students to the historic importance of the ocean to the Netherlands when she explores a replica of an old merchant ship and browses the items in the Naval Museum shop. Then, Lieve pays a visit to the house where Anne Frank and her family hid during World War II and recounts the poignant events surrounding the creation of Frank's world-famous diary. Lieve and her mother gaze at masterworks of art in the Royal Museum before they journey across the Dutch countryside on their bicycles and stop to discover the history, practicality and versatility of one of the Netherlands' trademarks — windmills! After a trip to Madurodam, a theme park with replicas of famous Dutch buildings, Lieve and her mother round out their adventure by visiting a witch's house and trying their hand at making cheese.

Country Information

- **location:** Western Europe, bordering the North Sea; bordered by Belgium and Germany
- **capital:** Amsterdam
- **official languages:** Dutch and Frisian
- **type of government:** constitutional monarchy
- **total area:** approximately 41,526 sq km
- **climate:** temperate; marine; cool summers and mild winters
- **terrain:** mostly coastal lowland and reclaimed land (polders), with some hills in the Southeast
- **natural resources:** includes natural gas, petroleum, peat, limestone, salt, sand, gravel and arable land
- **industries:** includes agro-industries, metal and engineering products, electrical machinery and equipment, chemicals, petroleum, construction, micro-electronics and fishing
- **agricultural products:** includes grains, potatoes, sugar beets, fruits, vegetables and livestock

Vocabulary

euro — The currency of the Netherlands and several other member nations of the European Union.

European Union (EU) — A family of democratic European countries that are committed to working together for peace and prosperity. The Netherlands is a member of the European Union.

canal — A man-made waterway that is created to connect two or more already existing waterways.

replica — A copy or reproduction of something.

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Nazi — A member of a political group led by Adolf Hitler that persecuted and killed six million European Jews.

Bergen-Belsen — A concentration camp located in northwestern Germany.

concentration camp — Nazi-run work and death camps in which millions of people were imprisoned and died during World War II.

Aeolian — A name for a type of modern windmill used to generate electricity.

polder — An area of low-lying land that has been reclaimed from a body of water and is protected by dykes.

Madurodam — A theme park in the Netherlands that features miniature replicas of famous Dutch buildings.

IJsselmeer — A large, man-made lake located in the central Netherlands.

dyke — An embankment built to protect against floods.

Gouda — A mild, smoothly-textured, pale yellow cheese named for a town in the Netherlands.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Engage students in a discussion about the modes of transportation that they use. How do you normally get to where you're going? What do you think is the main form of transportation in the United States? In other countries? How do different forms of transportation fit people's travel needs? How do you think your life would change if you could no longer use transportation like cars or airplanes? How would you adapt? Have students watch for the types of transportation used in the program and compare them to their own lives.
- Provide students with an outline map of Europe. Have them find and label all the countries in the European Union. Ask students questions, such as: Where is the Netherlands located on the European continent? How many countries border the Netherlands? How close is the Netherlands to the Scandinavian Peninsula?
- Lead a discussion about the places where people choose to live. Begin by having students generate a list of things that they think influence people when they decide where they want to live. Expand the conversation with questions, like: Why do you live where you do? Do people always have a choice about where they live? Why do some people live in the country while others live in the city? How is climate a factor? If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Follow-up Activities

- Believe it or not, much of the Netherlands is actually below sea level — and it's right on the North Sea! Have students compile a list of other places around the world that are below sea level. Working from their lists, students can pick ten places below sea level and create a bar graph that compares them. Then, have students pick other aspects of their places, such as the population of each location or the natural resources and industrial activities that drive their economies, and create a companion graph.
- During the Age of Exploration, the Dutch sailed all over the world and established colonies in many places. Have students investigate the different places that the Dutch colonized and create a flip book about them. Each flip book can contain the location of a colony, its name, the reason it was established and any other pertinent information. Students can also create time lines to accompany their flip books. As an extension, students can examine the time lines of their different colonies and create comparison charts that measure aspects of their colonies, such as which ones were among the first established, which ones lasted the longest, which centuries or decades saw the establishment of the most colonies, etc.

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- In the program, Lievijne visits Madurodam, a theme park that features miniature reproductions of many of the Netherlands' most famous structures. Invite students to create a diminutive version of their community by building replicas of well-known buildings. Begin by having students brainstorm a list of major buildings in the community and assign each student a structure. Students can use shoeboxes, cereal boxes, and craft materials to make their buildings. Students can also create placards with information about their buildings. As a culmination, arrange the buildings in the classroom according to scale to make a giant, three-dimensional floor map.
- Find out for what life is like in the Netherlands firsthand by starting a penpal program with students who live there! Correspondence can take many forms — handwritten letters, emails, postcards or video mail. Keep track of when messages are received and share them with the class. For a school with the technological means, see if an Internet-based teleconference can be arranged.
- Lievijne and her mother get a chance to make cheese; but while cheese-making is fun, cheese-tasting is even better! Students will have fun hunting for different types of cheeses and bringing samples of them to class for a cheese tasting. (Don't forget to get some Gouda!) Students can share information about the cheeses they brought. As an extension, poll the students about their favorite cheeses and turn the results into percentages to rate the popularity of the cheeses.
- Have students select items commonly associated with the Netherlands, like windmills, wooden clogs or tulips, and write a "shape poem" about it. For a brief introduction to shape poems, visit www.readwritethink.org/materials/shape/. Encourage students to share their poems with the class.
- Located in Amsterdam, the house where Anne Frank hid from the Nazis is now a museum, and her story continues to inspire people today. Read selections of Anne Frank's diary to the class. Engage students in a discussion by outlining the historical context of the diary and touching on topics such as freedom, courage, humanity, persecution, etc. Have students make a more personalized connection to the diary by encouraging them to respond to it in their own way. Whether it's their own diary entries, poems, artwork or songs, allow students to creatively express their thoughts and feelings about the diary of Anne Frank. Students can share their work with the class.
- Show students paintings by famous Dutch artists, like Van Gogh, Vermeer and Rembrandt. Have students pick their favorite paintings and draw pictures of them for display in the classroom. Instruct students to write informational captions for their artwork, including the names of the original artists and paintings and a brief description of why they liked the paintings they chose.

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- The Dutch have harnessed the power of the wind for centuries, and while windmills were once used only for milling grain, modern ones are capable of producing electricity. It's a great source of clean energy, but what about places without a lot of wind? Have students investigate different types of alternative energy used around the world and create an informational booklet about them. For an interactive booklet generator, visit www.readwritethink.org/materials/stapleless/index.html. Consider watching the program on Iceland in this series in which geothermal energy is introduced. As an extension, challenge students to come up with plans and build a model of an alternative energy plant that they think would be viable based on the resources available in their area.

Suggested Internet Resources

- www.minbuza.nl/en/welcome
Assembled by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this site contains detailed information on the history, geography and economy of the Netherlands. Includes a picture gallery.
- www.annefrank.org/content.asp?pid=1&lid=2
The Anne Frank Center USA site introduces people of all ages to Anne Frank and the history of the Holocaust through time lines, diary excerpts and a photo scrapbook.
- library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/netherlands.html
Learn about the culture and customs of the Netherlands from the perspective of a child who lives there! The students of Roosevelt School in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin present this award-winning site to teach people about different cultures.
- www.cia.gov
The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on the Netherlands and many other countries. Topics include geography, people, government, economy, transportation and communication. On the main page of the CIA site, click on the "World Factbook" link.

Suggested Print Resources

- Claybourne, Anna. *Vincent Van Gogh: The Troubled Artist*. Heinemann-Raintree, Chicago, IL; 2004.
- Davis, Kevin. *Look What Came from the Netherlands*. Scholastic, New York, NY; 2003.
- Hansen, Jennifer, ed. *People Who Made History: Anne Frank*. Greenhaven Press, Farmington Hills, MI; 2003.
- Seward, Pat and Sunandini Arora Lal. *Netherlands*. Benchmark Books, Tarrytown, NY; 2006.

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