

Countries Around the World™

Norway

Program Summary

Meet Kristofer. Join him as he and his cousin Baldur spend their vacation with their grandmother in Bergen, a coastal city west of Oslo, Norway's capital. Kristofer and Baldur go to the market to do some shopping for their grandmother. While at the market, we learn how the Norwegian diet is connected to the climate as the boys peruse the greenhouse-grown vegetables and copious amounts of fish harvested from the waters surrounding the Scandinavian country. Discover Norway's historic reliance on oceanic trade when the boys pass through the neighborhood of Bryggen — a wharf district that has become a popular tourist destination and a UNESCO World Heritage site. After visiting the aquarium, Kristofer and Baldur ride a cable car to the top of Mount Floyen to get a good look at the Constitution Day ceremonies taking place in the city below. Experience the importance of forests to Norway when the boys stroll through a wooded park before watching wood being processed into lumber at a mill. Finally, Kristofer and Baldur bring the past to life when they visit a replica Viking village and experience what a day in the life of a Viking was like.

Country Information

- **location:** Northern Europe, bordering the North Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean; bordered by Sweden, Finland and Russia
- **capital:** Oslo
- **official language:** Norwegian
- **type of government:** constitutional monarchy
- **total area:** approximately 323,802 sq km
- **climate:** temperate along coast; colder interior with increased precipitation and colder summers; rainy year-round on the West Coast
- **terrain:** glaciated; mostly high plateaus and rugged mountains broken by fertile valleys; coastline deeply indented by fjords; arctic tundra in the North
- **natural resources:** includes petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, titanium, pyrites, nickel, fish, timber and hydropower
- **industries:** includes petroleum and gas, food processing, shipbuilding, pulp and paper products, metals, chemicals, timber, mining, textiles and fishing
- **agricultural products:** includes barley, wheat, potatoes, pork, beef, veal, milk and fish

Vocabulary

Scandinavia — A region of northern Europe that consists of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and sometimes Finland, Iceland and the Faeroe Islands.

Bryggen — The historic wharf district in the city of Bergen. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

laks — Norwegian for "salmon."

Norwegian krone — The currency of Norway.

peninsula — A portion of land that is surrounded by water on three sides.

fjords — Very steep-sided bays, where fingers of ocean water reach far inland. Fjords are usually carved out by glaciers.

Arctic Circle — An imaginary line that is south of the North Pole and parallel to the equator.

funicular — A transportation system of ascending and descending cars that are pulled up the side of a mountain by a moving cable.

constitutional monarchy — A government with a constitution, elected representative body and monarch with limited powers.

parliament — A system of government in which all of the powers of government are placed within a single body, such as a legislature.

Viking — Any one of a seafaring people who left Norway, Sweden or Denmark and sailed to other parts of Europe in order to raid, trade and explore.

Haakonshallen — Means "Haakon's Hall." Built by King Haakon Hakonsson in the mid-to-late 13th century, it continues to serve as a place for important functions.

Troldhaugen — The name of the house that belonged to composer Edvard Grieg, who lived from 1843 to 1907.

Leif Erikson — An 11th-century Norse explorer widely held to have been the first European to reach the shores of North America.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- Provide students with an outline map of the countries of Scandinavia. Have students find and label Norway, its capital and major cities along with the other countries of Scandinavia and their capitals. Have students answer questions, like: Which countries border Norway? What kind of landforms make up Scandinavia? Where are most of the cities located in Norway? Why do you think the cities are located where they are?
- Lead a discussion about what constitutes a "place of interest." What makes a particular place worth seeing? What are some places that you would consider fun to visit? As a class, have students compile a list of criteria for designating something a "place of interest." As students watch this program, invite them to consider how the tour of Norway meets the list of student-created criteria.
- Ask students to share what they already know about Norway. Then, as a class, have students generate a list of things that they would like to find out about Norway. For each of the topics on the list, encourage students to make predictions about what will be shown in the program. After viewing the program, discuss which predictions about Norway were accurate and which ones were not. How are assumptions and predictions part of the learning process? If a prediction or assumption turns out to be inaccurate, does that make it less valid than an accurate one?

Follow-up Activities

- Norway has a long and storied tradition of folktales that feature monsters and supernatural beings, like goblins and trolls. Read Tim Myers' *Good Babies: A Tale of Trolls, Humans, a Witch, and a Switch* (Candlewick Press, 2005) to the class. Then, have students recreate this tale in the classroom by acting it out. This can be done as a puppet show, a mime skit, a student play, etc. Divide the students into small groups and have them prepare their own production by choosing a format and thinking about the story's elements of character, setting and plot. After each group performs, conduct a question and answer session where the students talk about why they chose to retell *Good Babies* the way they did. As an extension, invite students to write their own folktales featuring magic, trolls, witches and other supernatural beings.

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- Most of the days of the week are based on the gods of Norse mythology, so why not the months of the year? Divide the class into groups of twelve and assign each group a month and a Norse god or goddess. Students should produce an illustration for their Norse deity and an informational caption in addition to a calendar page for that month. Compile all of the pages into a classroom calendar. For information on the Norse gods, visit www.pantheon.org/areas/mythology/europe/norse/articles.html.
- Norway is considered to be a part of Scandinavia. Have students investigate the similarities and differences among the Scandinavian countries. Students can present their findings in the form of a Venn diagram. Consider watching the programs on Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland in this series.
- Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Students can pretend that they are publishers at one of Norway's many newspapers by designing and printing a newspaper page about Norway. For an interactive page maker, visit interactives.mped.org/ppress110.aspx. Divide students into groups and have them brainstorm on topics to cover in their papers. As students complete rough drafts of their papers, have them exchange with another group for a peer editing session. Once they've finished making their papers, students can print copies to pass out to the class.
- In the program, Kristofer and Baldur watch the festivities that surround Constitution Day, a holiday that celebrates the adoption of Norway's constitution in 1814. Invite students to create their own holidays based on an event in American history. Students can name their holidays, tell when and why they are celebrated, describe the types of foods and activities associated with their holidays and design a poster announcing the new celebrations.
- Most people know the Vikings as a band of marauding invaders, but what was Viking life really like? Students can help answer this question by finding facts about how the Vikings lived. Visit www.bbc.co.uk/schools/vikings/ for information about the Vikings, including clothing, housing, food and even family life! Then, students can build dioramas featuring aspects of Viking life and compose fact sheets describing the dioramas. Display the dioramas in the classroom and have students take turns presenting them.
- Write an acrostic poem featuring words associated with Norway, like "salmon," "fjord" or "Viking." For help on how to write an acrostic poem, visit www.poetryteachers.com/poetclass/lessons/acrostic.html. Encourage students to share their poems with the class. As an extension, students can work collectively to create a Norway-themed collage that features pictures of the different things they wrote about in their poems.

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- The Vikings were one of the first peoples known to explore far away places, and it is widely believed that their expeditions preceded the more famous European voyages during the Age of Exploration. Divide the class in half, and have one half investigate Viking voyages while the other half finds information about the European ones. The groups can produce time lines for each explorer in addition to drawing maps that show the places explored. Then, have the class post their time lines and maps to compare the Viking and European explorations. Lead a discussion by asking questions like: Who was the first explorer? How many of these explorations led to permanent colonies? Why do you think that you may have never heard of some of the Viking explorers before?

Suggested Internet Resources

- www.norway.org/
The official site of Norway! Features up-to-date information on the history, art, people, economy and culture of Norway.
- www.culturalprofiles.net/Norway/Directories/Norway_Cultural_Profile/-1.html
Discover Norway and what it is like to live there! This web site provides information about the culture, geography, history, government and language of Norway.
- www.cia.gov
The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on Norway 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

- Berger, Gilda. *The Real Vikings: Craftsmen, Traders and Fearsome Raiders*. National Geographic Children's Books, Washington, D.C.; 2003.
- Boyd, Sunni. *Modern Nations of the World: Norway*. Lerner Publications, Minneapolis, MN; 2002.
- Kagda, Sakina. *Norway*. Marshall Cavendish, Tarrytown, NY; 2006.
- Osborne, Mary Pope. *Favorite Norse Myths*. Scholastic, New York, NY; 2001.

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