



How countries compete for resources and power

KS4 GEOGRAPHY

Ages 11-15 ⌚ 4 min read

Why do countries want more power and resources?

Every country needs things to survive and grow: **oil** for energy, **metals** for buildings and technology, **water** for drinking, and **fertile land** for farming. When these resources are scarce (hard to find), countries compete to get them. It's like when there's only one slice of pizza left at school lunch—everyone wants it!

Countries also want **power** and **influence** so they can make important decisions that affect the world, protect themselves, and help their citizens live well.

Think of it like a board game where players compete for the best properties. Countries do the same thing, but instead of a board, they're competing on a real map.

How do countries compete for resources?

Trade is one peaceful way countries compete. They buy and sell goods with each other, and countries with valuable resources (like **Saudi Arabia** with oil, or **Australia** with metals) become more powerful and wealthy. Sometimes countries form **alliances** (partnerships) to work together and control trade.

However, competition can turn unfriendly. Countries sometimes use **tariffs** (extra taxes on imported goods) to make other countries' products expensive, or they might refuse to buy from each other. This is called a **trade war**.

Think of it like two kids with toy collections. One kid refuses to trade with the other to make their collection seem better by comparison.

Military power and global influence

Countries also compete by building strong **militaries** and weapons. A powerful army helps a country protect its resources and influence others. **The United States**, **China**, and **Russia** are considered major powers because they have advanced militaries and large economies.

Countries form **alliances** like **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) to protect each other and show strength together. They also compete for control of important areas like the **Middle East** (rich in oil) or areas with strategic **shipping routes** that control world trade.

Technology and information power

Today, countries also compete for **technological leadership**. Countries that develop advanced technology (like **artificial intelligence**, **5G internet**, and **computer chips**) gain enormous power. **China** and the **USA** are racing to lead in these areas because technology controls the modern world.

Countries also compete through **soft power**—influencing others through culture, media, and ideas rather than force. A country with popular music, films, or ideas has more global influence.

Think of it like being the most popular person at school. You don't need to be the strongest; if everyone likes you and wants to be your friend, you have power and influence.

Is this competition fair?

This competition isn't always fair. **Rich countries** can afford better technology and armies. Countries with natural resources have an advantage. This can lead to **inequality** between nations and sometimes to conflict. Many people believe the world should share resources more fairly and cooperate rather than compete so fiercely.