

# International Academic Competitions

## History and Geography Study Guide 1: National Capitals

Directions: The capitals of countries are some of the most frequently referenced clues in questions not only for the National Geography Bee and National Geography Bowl, but also in questions for the National History Bee, the National History Bowl, and the National Academic Bee. In National History Bee, National History Bowl, and National Academic Bee tournaments, questions are asked about the history and culture of all parts of the world. Often, when we ask about the history and culture of a country (for example, where the answer is “Sweden”), the question will mention the name of its capital, especially towards the end (for example, “Name this Scandinavian country where a museum dedicated to the pop band ABBA and a wooden ship named for this country’s royal House of Vasa can be visited in its capital city of Stockholm.”).

Study the Level 1 countries and their capitals first, as they are the most famous and most frequently referenced. Then move on to Level 2, and learn those before moving on to Level 3. Remember, that in the History Bowl, having different team members be responsible for learning the capitals of different parts of the world (especially at Levels 3-5) can be an efficient and effective strategy for making sure your team is well-prepared and has this material mastered. Pronunciation guides are included for certain cities (these are shown as pr. XXXX). It is important these are learned as well as pronunciation needs to be close enough for an answer to be deemed correct.

Note that all US state capitals are also essential knowledge (the equivalent of Level 1 or 2). These are not listed, but should also be learned. Canadian provincial & territorial capitals are listed in an appendix below.

### Level 1 – 13 countries

#### **Americas**

Brazil – Brasilia  
Mexico – Mexico City  
USA – Washington, DC

#### **Asia**

China – Beijing  
India – New Delhi  
Japan – Tokyo

#### **Europe**

France – Paris  
Germany – Berlin  
Greece – Athens  
United Kingdom – London

#### **Europe**

Italy – Rome  
Russia – Moscow  
Spain – Madrid

### Level 2 – 31 countries

#### **Africa**

Egypt - Cairo  
Kenya - Nairobi  
South Africa 1 – Cape Town  
(Cape Town is the legislative capital)

#### **Americas**

Argentina – Buenos Aires  
Canada – Ottawa  
Chile – Santiago  
Colombia – Bogotá  
Cuba – Havana  
Peru – Lima

#### **Asia**

Iran – Tehran  
Israel – Jerusalem  
Pakistan – Islamabad  
Philippines – Manila  
South Korea – Seoul (pr. SOLE)  
Thailand – Bangkok  
Turkey – Ankara

## Level 2 – 31 countries (continued)

### **Europe**

Austria – Vienna  
Belgium – Brussels  
Czech Republic – Prague (pr. PRAHG)  
Denmark – Copenhagen  
Finland – Helsinki  
Hungary – Budapest  
Ireland – Dublin

### **Europe**

Norway – Oslo  
Poland – Warsaw  
Portugal – Lisbon  
Sweden – Stockholm  
Switzerland – Bern  
Ukraine – Kiev

### **Oceania**

Australia – Canberra  
New Zealand – Wellington

## Level 3 – 26 countries

### **Africa**

Algeria – Algiers  
Ghana – Accra  
Morocco – Rabat  
Nigeria – Abuja  
South Africa 2 – Pretoria  
(Pretoria is the executive capital)

### **Americas**

Bolivia 1 – La Paz  
(La Paz is the executive capital)  
Ecuador – Quito  
Jamaica – Kingston  
Venezuela – Caracas

### **Asia**

Afghanistan – Kabul  
Indonesia – Jakarta  
Iraq – Baghdad  
Malaysia 1 – Kuala Lumpur  
(Kuala Lumpur is the legislative capital)  
Qatar – Doha  
Saudi Arabia – Riyadh (pr. REE-yahd)  
Sri Lanka 1 – Colombo  
(Colombo is the executive capital)  
Syria – Damascus  
Taiwan – Taipei  
United Arab Emirates – Abu Dhabi  
Vietnam – Hanoi

### **Europe**

Croatia – Zagreb  
Cyprus – Nicosia  
Iceland – Reykjavik (pr. RIKE-yah-vik)

### **Europe**

Romania - Bucharest  
Serbia – Belgrade  
Slovakia - Bratislava

## Level 4 – 28 countries

### **Africa**

Democratic Republic of Congo – Kinshasa  
Ethiopia – Addis Ababa  
Libya – Tripoli  
Mali – Bamako  
Senegal – Dakar  
Somalia – Mogadishu  
Tunisia – Tunis  
Zimbabwe – Harare (pr. hah-RAH-ray)

### **Americas**

Dominican Republic – Santo Domingo  
Costa Rica – San Jose  
Nicaragua – Managua  
Paraguay – Asuncion (pr. ah-sun-see-OAN)  
Trinidad and Tobago – Port of Spain  
Uruguay – Montevideo



**Additional Notes and Tips**

1. Consider using a map or globe while learning these capitals and countries. Knowing their location on a map is very helpful for gaining an understanding of world history and geography.
2. Certainly, other world capitals are referenced in clues and (more rarely) are answers to questions themselves. However, outside of Championship level geography competitions, these do not come up at a frequency where they should be a primary target for studying.
3. Remember that some countries do not have separately named cities as their capitals (e.g. Singapore, San Marino, Monaco), contain the name of their country in their capital (e.g. Kuwait City, Guatemala City) or are very similarly named (e.g. Andorra's capital is Andorra la Vella). These countries certainly may be referenced, but their capital names are not particularly useful clues so they are not listed above.
4. Many other countries' most famous or most populous cities are not referenced here. For example, Dar es Salaam is a larger and more famous city, and more frequently referenced than Dodoma for questions on Tanzania. So be sure not to neglect other cities in your preparation.
5. Note that certain countries have two separate capital cities and one country (South Africa) has three separate capitals. Some of these are listed above along with their function, but not all of them are important enough to warrant inclusion here.
6. Some countries are found on two continents (e.g. Russia and Turkey), but we have placed such countries in only one list here for sake of clarity.
7. Kosovo and Taiwan are not recognized as countries by many nations, but are de facto countries, and are often referred to as such in IAC questions.
8. Ivory Coast is often known by its official French name of Côte d'Ivoire (pr. coat div-WAH). Both names of the country, French and English, may be referenced in questions.
9. Sana'a is the official capital of Yemen, but it has been occupied by a rebel group since 2015 and since then, Aden has been the acting capital.