

International Academic Competitions

History and Geography Study Guide 1: National Capitals

Note: This guide lists the capitals of the 193 UN member states. Please consult the Regional Capitals Study Guide for the capitals of subnational regions and other geopolitical entities.

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, National History Bowl, National Academic Bee, and National Academic Bowl. In International 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, and so on. Remember, that in the Geography Bowl and 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 for players in Asia, Level 6-8 countries occur very infrequently in questions outside of the playoff rounds of the National Geography Bee National Championships and the International Geography Championships. It is a good idea to study other elements of geography (e.g. bodies of water, mountains, other major cities, etc.) before trying to commit all of these to memory.

Note that all countries that have capitals that follow the form “Country X City” (like Mexico and Kuwait) are listed in an appendix at the end, as are countries whose capitals are essentially the same as their entire country (such as Singapore and Monaco). These countries and cities are certainly asked about in questions, but we typically do not ask students to know these as the national capitals of their countries, since to do so would often be tantamount to giving away the answer within the text of the question.

Level 1

Americas

Brazil – Brasilia
Canada – Ottawa
USA – Washington, DC

Asia

China – Beijing
India – New Delhi
Japan – Tokyo
South Korea – Seoul (pr. SOLE)
Philippines – Manila
Thailand – Bangkok

Europe

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

Europe

Italy – Rome
Russia – Moscow
Spain – Madrid

Level 2

Africa

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

Americas

Argentina – Buenos Aires
Colombia – Bogotá
Cuba – Havana
Peru – Lima

Oceania

Australia – Canberra
New Zealand – Wellington

Asia

Indonesia – Jakarta
Iran – Tehran
Israel – Jerusalem
Malaysia 1 – Kuala Lumpur
(This is the legislative capital)
Pakistan – Islamabad
Qatar – Doha
Saudi Arabia – Riyadh (pr. REE-yahd)
Turkey – Ankara
United Arab Emirates – Abu Dhabi
Vietnam – Hanoi

Europe

Austria – Vienna
Belgium – Brussels
Czech Republic – Prague (pr. PRAHG)
Denmark – Copenhagen
Finland – Helsinki
Hungary – Budapest
Ireland – Dublin
Netherlands – Amsterdam
Norway – Oslo
Poland – Warsaw
Portugal – Lisbon
Sweden – Stockholm
Switzerland – Bern
Ukraine – Kyiv

Level 3

Africa

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

Americas

Bolivia 1 – La Paz
(This is the administrative capital)
Chile – Santiago
Ecuador – Quito
Venezuela – Caracas

Asia

Afghanistan – Kabul
Bangladesh – Dhaka
Iraq – Baghdad
Kazakhstan – Astana
Sri Lanka 1 – Colombo
(This is the executive capital)
Syria – Damascus
Uzbekistan – Tashkent

Europe

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

Europe

Romania - Bucharest
Serbia – Belgrade
Slovakia - Bratislava

Level 4

Africa

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

Americas

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

Level 4 (Continued)

Asia

Cambodia – Phnom Penh
Lebanon – Beirut (pr. bay-ROOT)
Mongolia – Ulaanbaatar
Nepal – Kathmandu (pr. cat-man-DOO)

Europe

Belarus – Minsk
Bosnia & Herzegovina – Sarajevo (pr. sarah-YAY-voe)
Bulgaria – Sofia
Estonia – Tallinn
North Korea – Pyongyang
Latvia – Riga
Lithuania – Vilnius
Slovenia – Ljubljana (pr. Lyoob-LYAH-nah)

Level 5

Africa

Angola – Luanda
Cameroon – Yaoundé
(pr. yah-OON-day)
Ivory Coast – Yamoussoukro
(pr. yah-moo-SOO-kro)
Liberia – Monrovia
Madagascar – Antananarivo
Mozambique – Maputo
Rwanda – Kigali
Sudan – Khartoum (pr. car-TOOM)
Tanzania – Dodoma

Americas

Bahamas – Nassau
Bolivia 2 – Sucre (pr. SOO-cray)
(This is the constitutional capital)
Honduras – Tegucigalpa

Europe

Albania – Tirana
Georgia - Tbilisi
Malta – Valletta
Moldova - Chisinau
Montenegro – Podgorica
North Macedonia – Skopje (pr. SCOPE-yeh)

Asia

Armenia – Yerevan
Azerbaijan – Baku
Jordan – Amman
Kyrgyzstan (pr. KEER-ghiz-stan) Bishkek
Laos – Vientiane (pr. vee-en-tee-AHN)
Maldives – Male (pr. MAH-lay)
Myanmar - Naypyidaw
Oman – Muscat
Yemen – Sanaa (see note 5)

Africa

Botswana – Gaborone
Burkina Faso – Ouagadougou
(pr. wah-ga-DOO-goo)
Central African Republic – Bangui
Chad – N'Djamena (pr. en-ja-MEE-na)
Equatorial Guinea – Malabo
Eritrea – Asmara
Gabon – Libreville
Gambia – Banjul
Guinea – Conakry
Namibia – Windhoek (pr. VIND-huk)
Niger – Niamey
Republic of the Congo – Brazzaville
Zambia – Lusaka
Zimbabwe – Harare (pr. ha-RAH-ray)

Level 6

Americas

Belize – Belmopan
El Salvador – San Salvador
Guyana - Georgetown
Haiti – Port-au-Prince
Suriname – Paramaribo

Asia

Bahrain – Manama
Bhutan - Thimphu
Brunei – Bandar Seri Begawan
Sri Lanka 2 – Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
(This is the official capital)
Tajikistan – Dushanbe
Turkmenistan - Ashgabat

Level 7

Africa

Benin – Porto Novo (see note 6)
Burundi – Gitega (see note 7)
Cape Verde – Praia
Comoros – Moroni
Eswatini – Mbabane (pr. mm-BAH-ba-nay)
Lesotho (pr. les-OO-too) - Maseru
Malawi – Lilongwe
Mauritania – Nouakchott
Mauritius – Port Louis
Seychelles – Victoria
Sierra Leone – Freetown
South Africa 3 – Bloemfontein (pr. blo-em-fon-TAIN)
(This is the judicial capital)
South Sudan – Juba

Americas

Barbados – Bridgetown

Oceania

East Timor - Dili
Fiji - Suva
Papua New Guinea – Port Moresby

Level 8

Americas

Antigua and Barbuda – St. John's
Dominica – Roseau
Grenada – St. George's
St. Kitts and Nevis – Basseterre
St. Lucia – Castries
St. Vincent and the Grenadines – Kingstown

Asia

Malaysia 2 – Putrajaya
(This is the administrative capital)

Kiribati (pr. KEE-reh-bahs) - South Tarawa

Oceania

Marshall Islands – Majuro
Micronesia – Palikir
Palau – Ngerulmud
Samoa – Apia
Solomon Islands – Honiara
Tonga – Nuku'alofa
Tuvalu – Funafuti
Vanuatu – Port Vila

Europe

Liechtenstein – Vaduz

Level 9 (proto-capitals)

Equatorial Guinea – Ciudad de la Paz (This is a new capital city for Equatorial Guinea which is currently under construction on the African mainland. It is meant to replace Malabo, which is on the offshore island of Bioko)

Indonesia – Nusantara (This is a new capital city for Indonesia which is currently under construction on the island of Borneo. It is not yet certain when it will take over the full capital function from Jakarta.)

Bougainville – Buka (Bougainville is likely to become the world's next independent country at some point before the end of the 2020's, following a successful but non-binding 2019 independence referendum from Papua New Guinea. At present, the capital is Buka, but it may move back to Arawa upon actual independence. Continue to monitor the situation for up-to-date status.)

Appendix – Countries whose names are the same as their capitals

Africa: Djibouti **Asia:** Singapore **Europe:** Luxembourg, Monaco, San Marino, Vatican City
(note that Vatican City is not one of the 193 UN member states)

Appendix – Countries whose capitals are very similar to their country names

(Capitals in parentheses)

Africa

Guinea-Bissau (Bissau)
São Tomé and Príncipe (São Tomé)

Americas

Guatemala (Guatemala City)
Mexico (Mexico City)
Panama (Panama City)

Asia

Kuwait City (Kuwait)

Europe

Andorra (Andorra La Vella)

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. 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.
3. Some countries are found on two continents (e.g. Russia and Turkey), but we have placed such countries in only one list here for simplicity's sake.
4. 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.
5. Sanaa 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.
6. Cotonou is the seat of government in Benin, though Porto Novo is considered to be the official capital.
7. Bujumbura was the former capital of Burundi (until 2018), and as of 2025, it is still the site of most government functions.
8. Several countries declare a city to be its official capital though the center of government is in fact elsewhere. These include Malaysia (capital is Kuala Lumpur, though the seat of government is in Putrajaya) and The Netherlands (capital is Amsterdam, though the seat of government is in The Hague).
9. Nauru (in Oceania) does not have an official capital. Yaren is the main district of this microstate.