

Chapter 7: Google Earth Exercise

Exercise 1 Geographies of language

Belgium is exemplary of a multi-lingual country whose administrative borders do not reflect the underlying linguistic landscape. Sixty per cent of Belgians speak Dutch, 40 per cent speak French, and less than one per cent speak German. Despite the small minority of German-speaking Belgians, German toponyms prevail in the Eastern province of Liege. Similarly, French-speaking Walloons in Belgium have maintained French place names in the southern and western reaches of the country, whereas the Flemish (Dutch-speaking) north maintains distinct linguistic traditions and place-names.

As described in your textbook, Belgium is an artificial state with borders that do not align with cultural or linguistic patterns.

The task: Using Google Earth, visit the administrative regions of Belgium and examine the cities, their predominant languages and how they align or differ from their surroundings.

Step 1: Ensure that only “International Borders” are selected from the *borders* menu in the *layers* sidebar. Additionally, ensure that “labels” are activated from the same menu. Load [Chapter 7.kmz](#) to show the administrative regions of Belgium as well as three place markers that define the main linguistic territories.

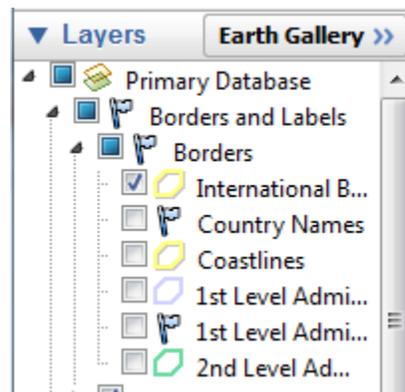


Figure 1: Only international borders are depicted

Note: Clicking on any of the regions will indicate their name. Clicking on any municipality will bring up information pertaining to it, clicking through to the accompanying Wikipedia article will provide hints as to the predominant language used there.

Step 2: Search for the city of Mouscron.

- **Question 1:** What language predominates in Mouscron? Where is it located (province)? Using the path or ruler tool measure the distances to the nearest large cities. What are the closest cities physically? In what jurisdiction are they located? What language is spoken there?

Step 3: Refer to pages 236–237 of the textbook for information on Belgium’s history as a multilingual country. Search for the city of Menen.

- **Question 2:** In what province is Menen located and what language predominates there? Examine the satellite imagery. What does it suggest about the development of Menen?

Step 4: Search for the towns of Bütgenbach and St. Vith.

- **Question 3:** Where are these towns located (province)? What is the capital of the province? What is the predominant language? What language is spoken in Bütgenbach and St. Vith? Examine the border to the east and contrast it with the western border of Belgium. Can you account for the settlement patterns of the German-speaking population?

Exercise 2

Reading landscapes around the globe

As noted in your textbook, landscapes are symbolic in the sense that they are imbued with cultural meaning and significance. While the symbolic meaning of some landscapes is overt and intentional, the symbolism contained in others is more subtle and concealed. All landscapes project cultural meaning and thus can be subject to analysis to reveal the messages they contain.

The task: Using Google Earth, read three landscapes through three different lenses. Focusing on a particular feature can reveal the interconnections between physical, cultural, economic, and social aspects of that particular landscape.

Step 1: Open the [Chapter 7.2.kmz](#) file. There are three different landscapes, identified through three different polygon layers. Begin by disabling all layers off in the *Layers* window of Google Earth except “3D buildings.” Once you have completed the exercises, you may enable other layers (such as borders and labels, places, etc.) to help complete your answers.

Step 2: Zoom in and out of each landscape study area to see it, both in detail, and in relation to its surroundings through different scales—from a large scale where the polygon boundaries define the frame, to a smaller scale where the landscape can be seen in the context of its surrounding environments.

- **Question:** Is the area under study an anomaly on the landscape or part of a much broader pattern of land use? How do you know? What is the relationship between this area and adjacent landscapes? What apparent relationship does it have to the natural environment? Look for evidence of networks, connections or barriers between places such as bridges, highways, fences, walls, or water bodies.

Answer the questions above as you search for (1) a landscape of consumption; (2) a landscape of production; (3) and a landscape of transportation.

Answers

Exercise 1

- **Question 1:** Mouscron is predominantly a French-speaking city and belongs to the French Community of Belgium, an administrative body representing French-speaking Belgians. It is located in Hainaut province, which is also French-speaking, and is located 6.6 kilometers from Roubaix in France (French-speaking) and 10 kilometers from Kortrijk in West Flanders, Belgium (Flemish, or Dutch-speaking).
- **Question 2:** Menen appears to have developed in tandem with Halluin, irrespective of the national border imposed between the two cities. Despite being located in West Flanders (a Dutch-speaking province) Menen is a French-speaking city that has more in common with Halluin across the border.
- **Question 3:** Bütgenbach and St. Vith are located in Liege, a French-speaking province of which the capital is also the French-speaking Liege. Both towns are German speaking and are in close proximity to the German border. Unlike Menen, for example, there is little development on the German side of the Belgian–German border exacerbating the isolation of the German-speaking towns.

Exercise 2

The **landscape of consumption** is Tokyo Disney Resort. Evidence on the landscape includes the whimsical land use pattern, (which contrasts to the grid-like industrial and residential land use patterns adjacent to it), the recreational features visible (such as amusement rides), and the incredible amount of space dedicated to parking. It appears to be quite separated from its surroundings with a few controlled access points due to the rail and road lines to the north and the coastline to the south.

The **landscape of production** is a mine—the Bingham Canyon Cooper Mine in Utah. Evidence on the landscape includes the extensive scarification on the mountainside. Humans are the most powerful geomorphic agents on Earth, moving more sediment annually than all other natural geomorphic agents combined! This image of the cooper mine well illustrates our capacity to transform the landscape: the mine is almost 1,400 metres deep and 4.5 kilometres wide, and has been eating away at the sides of the Wasatch mountains for over 100 years. The mine is not far from a large urban centre, Salt Lake City, and even closer to the village of “Copperton”; however, there appear to be very few access points into the mine itself.

The **landscape of transportation** is evident in the 12 arterial avenues that radiate from the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. This landscape is a result of one of the most ambitious urban renewal projects ever undertaken. In the nineteenth century, Georges-Eugène Haussmann completely redesigned and rebuilt the French capital. Haussmann aimed to “modernize” Paris, razing its medieval corridors and replacing them with grand boulevards, evicting thousands of mostly poor Parisians from the city centre. Zooming out, one can easily see the grand effect of Haussmann’s modernization in the distinctive connectivity of the street plan that characterizes the heart of the city.