

Course Content for General Knowledge on Nepal and Nepali Culture for Middle School Nepali Kids in America, prepared for Rocky Mountain Friends of Nepal (RMFN), January 2018

I. Quiz on Nepal's Location and Relation to the World

A. Location of Nepal

1. The earth is divided into two hemispheres: north and south. Nepal (officially as enshrined in the constitution of the country, the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal) belongs to the northern hemisphere and lies within $26^{\circ} 12' N$ and $30^{\circ} 27' N$ latitude and within $80^{\circ} 40' E$ and $88^{\circ} 12' E$ longitude.
2. There are seven continents in this earth; Nepal lies in Asian continent, more specifically in the South Asia region. The South Asia region also consists of 8 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
3. Bordering Neighbors (Suggestion: Find and look at the map of Asia.)
 - a) The bordering countries of Nepal are India and China.
 - b) In the north is the Autonomous Province of Tibet, China.
 - c) In the east, south and west is India.
 - d) Thereby, Nepal is a "land-locked" country, surrounded by land in all its four sides. For access to sea, the closest sea port is at Haldia, Kolkata of India. (Look at the map and observe the "land-lockedness" of Nepal.)
4. The Himalayan Range is the boundary between Nepal and China in the north.
5. The Mechi River is the boundary between Nepal and India in the east, whereas the Mahakali River is the boundary between these two countries in the west. There is no such one river system boundary between Nepal and India; the southern plain (also called "Tarai") of Nepal borders with northern Gangetic plain of India. There are border pillars erected in the south to demarcate Nepal from India.

B. Physical Size of Nepal

1. The physical area of Nepal is 57 thousand square miles.
2. India is about 22-23 times bigger (1.3 million square miles).
3. China is about 65 times bigger (3.7 million square miles).
4. USA is about 67 times bigger (3.8 million square miles).
5. Colorado, the state we live in, is about 1.83 times bigger (0.104 million square miles). Later in another section, you will know how Colorado compares to Nepal in population.
6. Iowa is the state closest in physical area to Nepal (almost as big as Nepal).

C. Is Nepal "Small" in Physical Size?

1. In largeness of physical area, Nepal ranks 93rd among the 196 countries of the world; In other words, 92 countries are bigger but 103 countries are smaller than Nepal.
2. Even among 51 countries of Asia, Nepal ranks 28th in physical size.
3. Among 8 SAARC countries, Nepal's rank is 5th. Bangladesh is only marginally bigger.
4. A few examples of countries that are developed but smaller than Nepal: the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Austria, South Korea, North Korea, UAE, Qatar, Israel and Kuwait.

D. How does Nepal look in the world map – its physical shape?

1. The geometric shape of Nepal in the world map resembles an irregular rectangle. Suggestion: Please find and look at the map of Nepal.
 - a) Approximate length of the rectangle is 500 miles (800 kilometers), measured from east to west.
 - b) Approximate width varies from 56 to 143 miles (90 to 230 kilometers), measured from north to south..

E. Nepal's Place in the Comity of Nations

1. Nepal is a founding member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
 - a) SAARC is an association of 8 South Asian member countries.
 - b) It was founded in 1985. Nepal is a founding member.
 - c) Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the member countries. Afghanistan joined SAARC later in 2005; the rest of 7 countries all are founding members.
 - d) The secretariat of SAARC is located in Kathmandu, Nepal.
2. Nepal is a member of the United Nations (UN).
 - a) UN is an international organization founded in 1945 for promoting world peace.
 - b) As of Year 2017, 193 countries are members of the UN.
 - c) Nepal became a member in 1955.
 - d) All 193 member countries are represented in the General Assembly of the UN.
 - e) Security Council is the principal executive body of the UN which consists of 5 permanent members with 'veto' power – China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States – and 10 other non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for a 2 year term. (Study more on your own if you want to find what veto power means.)
 - f) Nepal was elected twice in the Security Council, the most recent being for the January 1988 to December 1989 term.

F. Standard Time of Nepal

1. The Nepali Standard Time (NST) is 5 hours 45 minutes ahead of the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Greenland and Iceland are two countries that go on GMT for the entire year. Greenwich is a place in London and yet, Britain goes on GMT during the winter, but not in summer, due to daylight saving. Ask your parents and/or school teacher if you like to learn more on GMT and the practice of daylight saving.
2. The difference between Nepali Standard Time (NST) and the North American Standard Times:
 - a) USA has 4 time zones and each zone uses its own standard time. These 4 standard time zones are: the Eastern Standard Time (EST) in the eastern US, to the west of it the Central Standard Time (CST), to the further west the Mountain Standard Time (MST) and the Pacific Standard Time (PST) in the western US.
 - b) Adjacent time zones differ by one hour. Add one hour from one time zone to the next while moving from west towards the east. Thereby, when it is 1 PM in the PST, it shall be 2 PM in MST, 3 PM in CST and 4 PM in EST.
 - c) Colorado is in Mountain Standard Time zone and Colorado practices daylight saving too; this state resets its clocks in the fall one full hour behind and in the following spring, it resets the clocks back to one hour ahead. Accordingly, the difference between Nepal's standard time and MST changes from fall to spring.
 - d) During fall and winter, Nepal Standard Time is 12 hours 45 minutes ahead of MST, whereas during spring and summer, it is only 11 hours 45 minutes ahead.

G. Calling Nepal from USA

1. Country code of Nepal is 977, whereas that of USA is 1.
2. Code for making any international call is 011.
3. City that you want to call to also has an area code. For example, the area code of Kathmandu is 1.
4. Calling a landline in Nepal
 - a) Dial 011-country code-area code-landline phone number. For example, if you want to call Kathmandu from USA to a landline 5xxxxxx, you will dial 011-977-1-5xxxxxx.
5. Calling a mobile number in Nepal

- a) Dial 011-country code-the mobile number. You do not need to include the area code.

H. Official Calendar of Nepal

1. Most countries in the world use Gregorian calendar that has 12 months from January to December. However, Nepal uses a different calendar called Bikram Sambat (B.S.). Two other calendars – Nepal Sambat and Shake Sambat – are also in use, especially for festivities.
2. This year is 2018 AD, in Nepal starting mid-April the year shall be 2075 BS. Generally one has to add 57 to the Gregorian year to arrive at BS year. Nowadays, online calendar converters are available in the internet.
3. The first month of Gregorian calendar is January; similarly, the first month of the Bikram Sambat calendar is 'Baisakh.' A Gregorian year ends with the month of December, whereas the BS year ends with the month of 'Chaitra.'
4. Put all the 12 months of Bikram Sambat in order: Baisakh, Jestha, Asadh, Shrawan, Bhadra, Kartik, Mangsir, Push, Magh, Fagun, and Chaitra.
5. The New Year begins on the first of month of Baisakh. Therefore, Baisakh 1st is the New Year Day in Nepal, which falls around the middle of April.
6. Number of days in a month:
 - a) Gregorian months have either 30 or 31 days, except the month of February which is 29 days in the leap year but 28 days in other years.
 - b) Number of days in a month in Bikram Sambat varies from 29 to 32. Only when a new BS calendar is published, one knows the exact number of days for each month.
7. Who started the Bikram Sambat?
 - a) Bikram Sambat is a solar calendar based on ancient Hindu traditions.
 - b) This calendar was established by an Indian King by name "Bikramaditya" and was adopted as the official calendar of Nepal since the Lichhvi period.
8. Weekend – the official day of the rest and worship
 - a) In Christian majority countries, the official day of the weekend is Sunday. In Muslim majority countries, it is Friday. In Nepal the official day of the weekend is Saturday when all government offices and most private offices close their business for the day.
9. Opening times of Government Offices in Nepal
 - a) The business working hours in USA is generally 8 AM to 4:30 PM, with half-an-hour of lunch break.
 - b) The official time for government offices in Nepal is 10 AM to 5 PM, except 3 months in winter when they open from 10 AM to 4 PM. There is no official lunch break, as employees take early lunch before arriving to their offices.

World Map with Nepal Highlighted



Map of Asia



Map of Nepal

