Malaysia's Geographic Challenge

"Malaysia straddles Southeast Asia's key geopolitical divide, between the mainland and the archipelago. Peninsular Malaysia, occupies the southern most tip a Southeast Asia's Malay peninsula. East Malaysia, however, is on the island of Borneo, over 600 kilometers away across the South China Sea."

"Peninsula Malaysia is defined by north-south mountain ranges, flanked by coastal lowlands. The nation's core is its west coast, from Penang to Johor Bahru, including the capital Kuala Lumpur. This fronts major east-west trade routes through the Malacca Strait who shores are divided between Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore."
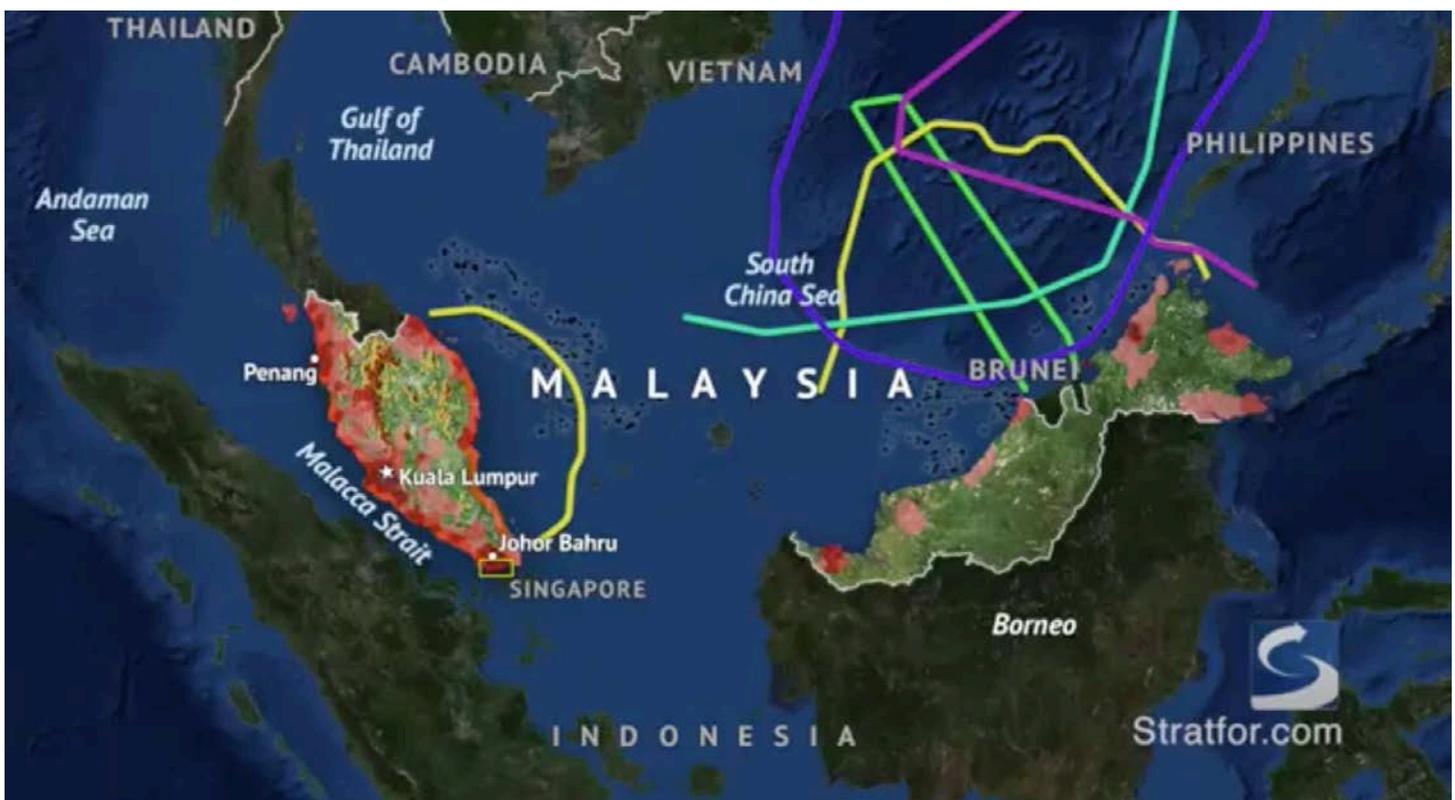
"Malaysia's primary geographic challenge is to secure this coastline in order to extract revenue from east-west trade."

"Today, Malaysia's substantial manufacturing center is concentrated in this core region. Johor Bahru also benefits from proximity to Singapore; which left Malaysia in 1965."

"Malaysia's ethnic minority, Indian and Chinese communities, are also concentrated in the core; comprising 30 percent of the population. These groups wield outsized economic power and form the basis the political opposition. Their population growth is slower than the ethnic Malay majority, creating an increasingly volatile political environment."

"East Malaysia makes up 60% of the country's landmass, but has only 20% of the population. This sparse population is tipped toward ethnic Malays and is growing in electoral significance."

"East Malaysia is playing a growing role in energy production, key to sustaining the country's decades a steady economic growth. Borneo also fronts the South China Sea, where Malaysian maritime claims overlap with the claims of the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam and China. As Borneo's offshore fields become more important to Malaysia, the nation's South China Sea claims could bring an end to conflict."

Useful Geographic Terminology and Phrases:

STRATFOR GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE

Straddles
Geopolitical
Mainland
Archipelago
Peninsula
Occupies
Island
Flanked
Mountain ranges
Coastal
Lowlands
Core
Coastline
Fronts
Trade routes
Shores
Secure
Geographic
Challenge
Region
Concentrated
Proximity
Ethnic
Minority
Comprising
Wield
Outsized
Economic power
Population growth
Volatile
Environment
Landmass
Population
Sparse
Energy production
Growing
Key
Sustaining
Economic growth
Maritime
Claims
Offshore fields
Conflict

Category	Descriptive words (21)	Geography terminology (18)	Spatial concepts (3)+(5)
Word / Concept	Straddles	Geopolitical	Region
	Occupies	Mainland	Environment
	Flanked	Archipelago	Sustainability
	Core	Peninsula	
	Fronts	Island	**Concepts Mentioned:**
	Secure	Mountain ranges	Place
	Challenge	Coastal	Space
	Concentrated	Lowlands	Interconnection
	Proximity	Coastline	Change
	Ethnic	Trade routes	Scale
	Minority	Shores	
	Comprising	Geographic	
	Wield	Economic power	
	Outsized	Population growth	
	Volatile	Landmass	
	Sparse	Population	
	Growing	Economic growth	
	Key	Offshore fields	
	Maritime		
	Claims		
	Conflict		

Geographic Phrases:

Key geopolitical divide

Occupies the southern most tip

Defined by north-south mountain ranges

Flanked by coastal lowlands

Nation's core

Fronts major east-west trade routes

Primary geographic challenge

In order to extract revenue from east-west trade

Substantial manufacturing centre is concentrated in this core region

Benefits from proximity to

Ethnic minority

Concentrated in the core

Groups wield outsized economic power and form the basis the political opposition

Creating an increasingly volatile political environment

Sparse population

Tipped toward ethnic Malays and is growing in electoral significance

Growing role in energy production

Key to sustaining the country's decades a steady economic growth

Maritime claims overlap with

Bring an end to conflict

Population Pyramids

Population pyramids are an essential data source for geographers. This is especially so when it comes to examining the demographic situation of countries and in comparing statistics. Instead of asking students to draw a population pyramid, what about doing one of the following:

Fill in the Blanks

- Fill in the gaps (classic exercise) but take it further (don't just give one answer give different alternatives so students have to think argue and justify their answers. This encourages students to recall synonyms and then decide which is most applicable.

STANDARD Fill in the gaps activity

Missing words to complete the paragraph:

increase, birth, stage four, hygiene, stable, drops, standard of living, high, mortality, medicine, rise, zero, contraception, low, falling.

In the first stage, both the _____ rate and _____ rate are high, the population remains fairly _____.

During the second stage, improvements in _____ and _____ lead to a _____ mortality rate, although birth rate remains _____. This produces a rapid _____ in the overall population.

In Stage 3 the mortality rate stabilises at a _____ level and the birth rate _____ due to improved _____ and the use of _____.

However, the total population continues to _____ until the beginning of _____. If the birth rate continues to decline, _____ population growth may occur at Stage 5.

LANGUAGE Fill in the gaps activity

Missing words to complete the paragraph:

increase, surge, intensification, birth, stage four, later stage, hygiene, healthcare, stable, drops, constant decline, standard of living, high, mortality, death, medicine, rise, escalation, zero, inconclusive, contraception, low, falling, plateauing, .

In the first stage, both the _____ rate and _____ rate are high, the population remains fairly _____.

During the second stage, improvements in _____ and _____ lead to a _____ mortality rate, although birth rate remains _____. This produces a rapid _____ in the overall population.

In Stage 3 the mortality rate stabilises at a _____ level and the birth rate _____ due to improved _____ and the use of _____.

However, the total population continues to _____ until the beginning of _____. If the birth rate continues to decline, _____ population growth may occur at Stage 5.

Video Deconstruction

Video Breakdown:

When showing a multimedia clip or except give students something to focus on. A key skill to develop is the ability to sift through the irrelevant to find the relevant.

- Multiple choose questions with a "when to pay attention hint"
- Avoid short answer unless they are to be done in hindsight. This is because students will have a conflict of interests. Should they focus on answering the question or what is happening in the video. This is even more the case as videos and media are sometimes left for "extras" where teachers from other subject areas might not be able to stop and discuss concepts.
- Break class into "focus groups". EG: Terminology – identifying complex words or 'good geographic language', Location and information, Number crunches, question masters

1 x **phase** (set of words) 1 x **geographic term** 1 x **question** 1 x **fact**

4 x **phrases** 3 x **geographic terms** 2 x **facts** 1 x **question**

Unfamiliar **words** Unfamiliar **phrases** Unfamiliar **locations** Unfamiliar **people**

Location Lou /Larry **Number** Natalie / Nathan **Question** Queen / Quinn **Terminology** Tia / Tim **Phrase** Phoebe / Pete

Geography Taboo

This activity can be run in two forms:

Charades – students have to act out the word or phrase they are given

Taboo – students have to guess the word on the card that is being described. The person holding the card cannot say the word on the card.

The letters "H" "D" "C" and "S" are used so a card deck can be used to randomise the taboo word for more advanced students.

#4 is a more complex version of the game where students have words they cannot use.

#1: Geography Taboo H: Food Security D: Interconnection C: Fieldwork S: Spatial Concepts	**#2: Geography Taboo** H: Sparse D: Bordering C: Conflict S: Ethnicity
#3: Geography Taboo H: Tropical city D: Desert hut C: Polar igloo S: Mountain man	**#4: Geography Taboo** Word: **Longshore Drift** *Banned words:* Beach Shore Coast Up Down Across

Target and Word Origins

A new way to introduce a topic

An adaptation of 'The Age Newspaper' Melbourne's game

Students need to find the word(s) that use all letters.

Once found a discussion can be had about the term and its origin can be established.

R	U	E
R	**H**	N
I	C	A

K	I	R
F	**O**	L
D	E	W

G	E	A
R	**T**	Z
R	E	T

E	G	A
R	**P**	H
O	G	Y

R	F	I
N	**T**	O
T	P	O

O	I	N
T	**T**	N
N	E	C

L	I	C
O	**T**	P
L	I	A

G	L	E
S	**H**	N
O	O	R

L	A	A
S	**C**	N
E	P	D

L	N	U	I
R	**A**	M	I
T	T	O	N

D	T	R	F
C	**O**	S	E
Y	U	I	O

I	U	T	N
S	■	**S**	S
E	E	C	B

ANSWERS:

Hurricane, Fieldwork, Gazetteer, Geography, Footprint, Continent, Political, Longshore, Landscape, Malnutrition, Food Security, Subsistence

Qualifying Words

This activity can be completed in a few different ways.

Method #1: Students identify qualifying words

This method involves students reading a paragraph and identifying qualifying words.

Economic situation in Africa

African nations typically fall toward the bottom of most lists measuring economic activity. In 2011, approximately 78% of nations on the UN list of least developed countries were in Africa. In many nations, GDP per capita is less than USD$200 per year, with the vast majority of the population living on much less. In addition, Africa's share of income has been consistently dropping over the past century. In 1820, the average European worker earned about three times what the average African did. Now, the average European earns about twenty times what the average African does.

Method #2: Student build-in or replace their own qualifying words

This method is more challenging and asks students to adjust a paragraph to include qualifying words. It can also be used to challenge students who provide absolute answers.

Food Security in Melbourne

Melbourne is a city that has no food issues. The city has a high population growth rate but sustains crops to feed all residents. There are organisations such as FareShare that provide food for those who do not have enough. Food is available in Melbourne at most retail outlets and there are many restaurants where people can eat. An attitude in Melbourne is "no food, no problem".

Method #3: Overuse of vague and ambiguous words

This is a short extract that can be used for students that overuse non-descriptive words.

The Dangers of Undifferentiated Superlatives

Words such as: good, excellent, amazing, the best, superb, fabulous, fantastic, terrific, awesome, remarkable, wonderful, incredible…

These are all positive words but they tell you nothing specific about a person, situation, action or idea. We use these words sometimes because we are too lazy to find a more specific word. When we are speaking, few people object; but when we are writing, the choice of more precise words distinguishes a skilful and thoughtful writer from a mediocre one.

Books and Resources

Stratfor Geographic Challenges: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD985DC24042D71ED