Objectives

Students will be able to:
• Compare distances and travel times between different locations on Earth.
• Research cultural and demographic information about foreign countries.
• Create a travel narrative conveying new knowledge to others.

Warm-Up

Ask students if they can name people who have traveled around the world, and how they have done so—ship, airplane, balloon, or other means? W|A can help students identify the first person to travel around the globe, who traveled by ship.

Ask students how they would travel if they wished to circle the globe today. What form or forms of transportation would they use? Where might they stop along the way?
Lesson

• *Around the World in Eighty Days*: Ask students to read the third chapter of the Jules Verne novel, either from a school library or from an online text (the work is in the public domain). Discuss "the bet" aloud as a class. Does rounding the world in eighty days by steamship and railroad seem plausible? Point out that the story describes travel times, but says nothing about travel schedules; is it reasonable to assume that all ships and trains will be leaving as soon as possible after the traveler arrives?

• Try a similar estimation using W|A. Have students pick a collection of five cities forming a rough circle around the world, then compute travel times between them.

![WolframAlpha](image-url)
### What is the flight time from Casablanca, Morocco to Moscow, Russia?

**Input Interpretation:**
- **time from Casablanca, Morocco to Moscow, Russia**

**Results:**
- **flight (aircraft speed):** 4 hours 50 minutes
- **sound:** 3 hours 30 minutes
- **light in fiber:** 10.8 ms (milliseconds)
- **light in vacuum:** 14.1 ms (milliseconds)

**Distance:**
- 2633 miles

### What is the flight time from Moscow, Russia to Tokyo, Japan?

**Input Interpretation:**
- **time from Moscow, Russia to Tokyo, Japan**

**Results:**
- **aircraft (550 mph):** 8 hours 39 minutes
- **sound:** 6 hours 7 minutes
- **light in fiber:** 35.1 ms (milliseconds)
- **light in vacuum:** 25 ms (milliseconds)

**Distance:**
- 4662 miles
• Now ask students to research the different cities and countries that appeared on their flight plans. Ask W|A about languages, religions, ethnic groups, or other information.
• Ask each student to pick one location and conduct further research with W|A and library sources. How large is the city through which the student plans to travel? What is the weather like?
• Ask each student to construct a short narrative describing a modern-day journey around the world, writing one or two paragraphs describing their passage through a particular city. Have students include the types of languages they might hear, weather conditions they might experience, different religions or ethnicities they might encounter, etc.

Closing

• Ask students to compare flight plans and see whose hypothetical trip took the least time. Then divide the class into five groups and assign each group to research one of the cities on the shortest flight plan in greater detail. Ask each group of students to prepare a written report on their assigned city and to create a short skit acting out what a hypothetical world traveler might encounter there.

Demonstrations

Comparing Data on Countries

Captain Cook’s Voyages

Colorcoded Country Comparison