



2026 WorldQuest / Academic WorldQuest STUDY GUIDE

***The World Affairs Council of Charlotte does not endorse any of the links or information provided on any of the websites recommended below.

The study guide serves as “informational material” to help you begin your prep strategy. You are not required to use any of the sources/links provided below in order to prepare to play. Your WQ or AWQ team is encouraged to do additional research/studying/reading separate from this study guide.

Who Can Play?

WorldQuest: Each team consists of **UP TO 8 players**.

Each team is formed by businesses, government institutions, schools/colleges, non-profits, or other self-determined groups. Individuals without a group will be assigned to a team by the Council.

Academic WorldQuest: Each high school can send two (2) teams of four (4) students each to represent their school in the Academic WorldQuest competition.

How are WorldQuest and Academic WorldQuest Played?

- Each category will have ten questions. The majority of questions will be multiple-choice.
- Each question is typically allotted 20-30 seconds, though there may be 5-7 questions (total) that require extra time (45 seconds to 2 minutes).
- Each team collaborates to answer each question before submitting their answer sheet at the end of each round.

What Do You Win?

- AWQ and WQ teams will be judged separately.
- Medals and trophies are awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winning teams for both WQ and AWQ.

How Should My Team Prepare?

The best way to prepare is to review international news coverage and our category descriptions on our [website](#).

Joint WorldQuest & Academic WorldQuest 2026 Categories:

1. World Flags
2. Geography of Spain
3. History of the Panama Canal
4. The Arctic: Geopolitics of a Melting Region
5. International Film and Literature
6. Current Events
7. Anything and All Things Trivia

CATEGORY 1: Flags of the World

Questions in this category will include identifying an image of a flag or identifying a flag based on a description. Flags can be from any country, including islands and territories.

No multiple-choice options. Questions will be in fill-in-the-blank format.

Study Link

- [Flags of the World – Britannica](#)
- [Flags of the World - Quiz](#)

Sample Questions

1. Identify this flag: _____ (write the answer on your answer sheet)



ANSWER: Canada

2. This flag has two equal horizontal bands of azure (light blue) and golden yellow. These colors represent grain fields under a blue sky. Identify the country: _____
(write the answer on your answer sheet)

ANSWER: Ukraine

CATEGORY 2: Geography of Spain

This category covers Spain's physical and political geography, its regions and autonomous communities, mountain ranges and rivers, coastlines and islands, climate zones, and its strategic position linking Europe and Africa.

Most questions will be multiple-choice, but for variety, there could be fill-in-the-blank and/or matching questions.

Helpful Links

- [Spain – Britannica](#)
- [Spain – Wikipedia](#)
- [Spain – National Geographic Kids](#)
- [Italy-Spain fallout: United by geography, divided by politics](#)

Interactive Maps & Geography Resources

- [Instituto Geográfico Nacional \(Spain's national mapping agency\)](#)
- [Spain – Google Maps](#)

Sample Questions

What is the capital of Spain?

- A. Barcelona
- B. Madrid
- C. Seville
- D. Valencia

Answer: B. Madrid

Which mountain range forms the natural border between Spain and France?

- A. Sierra Nevada
- B. Pyrenees
- C. Cantabrian Mountains
- D. Sierra Morena

Answer: B. Pyrenees

Fill-in-the-Blank: Spain's second-largest city and the capital of the Catalonia region is

_____.

Answer: Barcelona

CATEGORY 3: History of the Panama Canal

This category explores the history of the Panama Canal, the failed French attempt in the 1880s through the U.S.-led construction (1904–1914), the treaties that shaped its governance, and the 1999 handover of full control to Panama.

Most questions will be in multiple-choice format, but there could be fill-in-the-blank and/or matching questions for variety.

Helpful Links

- [Panama Canal – Britannica](#)
- [Panama Canal: History, Impact & Canal Zone – HISTORY](#)
- [7 Fascinating Facts About the Panama Canal – HISTORY](#)
- [Timeline and Map of the Panama Canal – Britannica](#)
- [Panama Canal Authority \(official site\)](#)

Sample Questions

In what year was the Panama Canal officially opened?

- A. 1904
- B. 1914
- C. 1929
- D. 1999

Answer: B. 1914

Which country initially attempted and failed to build the canal in the 1880s?

- A. Great Britain
- B. France
- C. Spain
- D. Germany

Answer: B. France

Fill-in-the-Blank: The 1977 treaties that set the timeline for transferring control of the canal to Panama were signed by U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Panamanian leader _____.

Answer: Omar Torrijos

CATEGORY 4: The Arctic: Geopolitics of a Melting Region

As Arctic sea ice retreats, the region has become a focal point of strategic competition. This category examines the eight Arctic nations, the Arctic Council, emerging shipping routes and resource claims, and how climate change is reshaping security and diplomacy in the far north.

Most questions will be in multiple-choice format, but there could be fill-in-the-blank and/or matching questions for variety.

Helpful Links

- [Arctic – Council on Foreign Relations](#)
- [Changing Geopolitics in the Arctic – CFR](#)
- [The Future of the Arctic Council – Belfer Center](#)
- [Melting Ice and Power Shifts: Europe and Canada Should Seize Their Arctic Moment – Chatham House](#)
- [Arctic Council \(official site\)](#)

Sample Questions

How many countries have territory within the Arctic Circle?

- A. 5
- B. 6
- C. 7
- D. 8

Answer: D. 8 (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States)

Which Arctic nation holds the largest share of the region's coastline and population?

- A. Canada
- B. United States
- C. Russia
- D. Norway

Answer: C. Russia

CATEGORY 5: International Film and Literature

This category celebrates storytelling across borders: major literary prizes and authors, landmark works of world literature, and international cinema, including foreign-language films, directors, and the festivals and awards that recognize them. **Most questions will be in multiple-choice format, but there could be fill-in-the-blank and/or matching questions for variety.**

Helpful Links

- [The Nobel Prize in Literature – official site](#)
- [The International Booker Prize – official site](#)
- [Academy Award for Best International Feature Film – Wikipedia](#)
- [Cannes Film Festival – official site](#)
- [BBC Culture](#)

Sample Questions

Which Hungarian author won the 2025 Nobel Prize in Literature?

- A. Péter Nádas
- B. László Krasznahorkai
- C. Imre Kertész
- D. Mircea Cărtărescu

Answer: B. László Krasznahorkai

“Sentimental Value,” winner of the 2026 Academy Award for Best International Feature Film, represents which country?

- A. Sweden
- B. Denmark
- C. Norway
- D. Finland

Answer: C. Norway

Fill-in-the-Blank: Which annual film festival, held on the French Riviera, awards the Palme d'Or as its top prize? _____

Answer: Cannes

CATEGORY 6: Current Events

Read the Headlines! This category covers significant global events from late 2025 to early October 2026, including world politics, elections, economic crises, natural disasters, major catastrophes, military action in Ukraine and Iran, national security, and related developments. Stay informed by tuning in to reputable news sources for the latest updates and insights on these impactful issues. **Most questions will be multiple-choice, but there may be fill-in-the-blank and/or matching questions for variety.**

This subject encompasses a wide range of ongoing global discussions. The most effective way to stay informed is to regularly read news from reputable media sources and consult foreign policy think tanks such as the Brookings Institution and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Helpful Links

- Current Events – Wikipedia (*scroll down – events by month at the bottom) [LINK](#)
- The Economist - The World This Week [LINK](#)
- NPR Weekly News Quiz: [LINK](#)
- New York Times - Quiz: [LINK](#)
- Foreign Policy Association – Quiz: [LINK](#)
- PEW Research - International Affairs: [LINK](#)
- CNN World: [LINK](#)
- Brookings Institution - International: [LINK](#)

Sample Questions

Which country officially became the 12th member of a trans-Pacific trade pact in 2026, joining nations such as Japan, Australia, and Canada, as part of its effort to strengthen global trade ties after leaving the European Union?

- A. United States
- B. United Kingdom
- C. New Zealand
- D. South Korea

Answer: B. United Kingdom

In September 2026, which country signed a formal mutual defense pact with Saudi Arabia, agreeing that any aggression against one country would be considered an aggression against both, thereby strengthening their decades-long security partnership?

- A. Iran
- B. Pakistan
- C. Egypt
- D. United Arab Emirates

Answer: B. Pakistan

CATEGORY 7: Anything and All Things Trivia

Get ready for a whirlwind of questions! From science and history to pop culture, sports, geography, and random fun facts, you'll need to be well-rounded to conquer this round. Expect the unexpected, whether it's questions about outer space, quirky inventions, famous landmarks, or everyday trivia. It's a little bit of everything, so bring your broadest knowledge to the table. **Most questions will be multiple-choice, but for variety, there could be fill-in-the-blank and/or matching questions.**

Helpful Links

- [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- [National Geographic](#)
- [Smithsonian Magazine](#)
- [Guinness World Records](#)
- [BBC Future](#)

Sample Questions

What is the official language of Brazil?

- A. Spanish
- B. Portuguese
- C. French
- D. English

Answer: B. Portuguese

Which country has a landmark called “The Little Mermaid,” inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale?

- A. Sweden
- B. Norway
- C. Denmark
- D. Finland

Answer: C. Denmark

Which planet in our solar system has the most moons?

- A. Jupiter
- B. Saturn
- C. Uranus
- D. Neptune

Answer: B. Saturn

Fill-in-the-Blank: The world's largest coral reef system, located off the coast of Australia, is the _____.

Answer: Great Barrier Reef