

## **ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**

**WHAT** - The Organization of American States (OAS) refers to an association for nations of the Western Hemisphere.

**WHO** - There are thirty-five nations in the Western Hemisphere that are part of this organization. The twenty-one original OAS members include: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The fourteen subsequent members include: Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Grenada, Suriname, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Bahamas, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Canada, Belize, and Guyana.

**WHERE** - The OAS is administered by The Permanent Council. The Permanent Council is comprised of one representative for each member state. The Permanent Council meets regularly at the OAS headquarters in Washington, D.C.

**WHEN** - The General Assembly brings together the hemisphere's foreign ministers once a year to discuss concerns and issues affecting the OAS.

**WHY** - On April 30, 1948, the twenty-one original countries met in Bogota, Columbia. They adopted the Charter of the Organization of American States, which acknowledged their commitment to common goals and respect for each nation's sovereignty. The principles that govern the OAS grew out of a history of regional cooperation dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## WHAT IS TRADE?

Trade refers to the buying, selling, and exchanging of goods and services. Trade takes place between individuals, business firms, cities, provinces, and countries. When trade takes place between countries, it is referred to as “international trade”.



Trade usually occurs because countries tend to produce goods and services in which they have an advantage over other areas. This advantage usually occurs because an area has the resources. The Canadian Prairies are rich in farmland, which allows them to grow much-needed cereal and specialty crops. Forestry is a major industry in British Columbia as it is rich in forests.

*Factfile: For six straight years, the United Nations has ranked Canada as the best country in the world in which to live.*

## COMMONWEALTH

**WHAT** - The *Commonwealth of Nations* or the British Commonwealth of Nations, as it is sometimes referred to, is a group of nations whose goal is to promote human rights, democracy and economic development. The British monarch is heeded as the symbolic head of the Commonwealth.

**WHO** - There are fifty-two countries which form this association. They include: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

**WHERE** - A Commonwealth Secretariat in London organizes and coordinates the activities of the Commonwealth. The members of the Commonwealth elect a secretary-general to administer and carry out these activities.

**WHEN** - Meetings of Commonwealth heads of government are held every two years. They discuss any important issues and common problems.

**WHY** - The majority of the members of the Commonwealth are former colonies of the British Empire. These countries have chosen to maintain ties of friendship and cooperation.