W.17 Understanding Nationalism and the Unification of Nations

Introduction
Nationalism is a powerful idea that emphasizes the interests and culture of a particular nation or group of people. It encourages individuals to identify with their nation, often leading to a sense of pride and unity among its members. Nationalism can unite people who share common language, culture, history, and values, often inspiring movements for independence or unification.

Nationalism
Two significant examples of nationalism leading to unification are the unifications of Germany and Italy in the 19th century. Both of these nations were once fragmented into various states and territories, but through the rise of nationalism, they were able to come together as unified countries.

Cultural Geography
Cultural geography refers to the study of how culture varies across space. In the case of Germany and Italy, shared cultural characteristics, such as language, traditions, and historical experiences, played a vital role in unifying these nations. For instance, the German-speaking people of various states began to feel a stronger connection to one another, leading to a desire for a single German nation. Similarly, in Italy, the shared language and heritage among the Italian states fostered a sense of belonging that was crucial for unification.

Physical Geography
Physical geography involves the study of the natural features of the Earth, such as mountains, rivers, and climate. These geographical elements can influence how people interact and connect with each other. In both Germany and Italy, the physical landscape helped shape the identities of the people. For example, the Alps and the Apennines created natural barriers but also defined cultural regions. As people began to travel and communicate more easily, the sense of unity grew stronger, promoting the idea of a singular nation.

Check for Understanding
1. Define nationalism in your own words.

2. Explain how cultural geography contributed to the unification of Germany.

3. Describe the role of physical geography in the unification of Italy.

Practice Activity
Creative Writing: Write a Letter
- Imagine you are a citizen living in either a German or Italian state during the 1800s. Write a letter to a friend or family member expressing your thoughts on nationalism and unification. Discuss how you feel about the idea of joining with other states and what

benefits or challenges you foresee. Use at least three specific examples related to your culture or geography to support your points.

Check for Understanding: Letter Evaluation
1. How does your letter clearly express your feelings about nationalism and unification?

2. Where have you included specific examples related to your culture and geography?

3. What language is meant to be written in a persuasive and engaging manner?

Demonstrating Mastery: Individual Research Project
Instructions:
1. **Choose a Focus:** Select either the unification of Germany or Italy as your research focus.
2. **Research:** Investigate the key figures, events, and cultural aspects that played a role in the unification process. Take notes on how nationalism influenced these components.
3. **Describe**: Write 4-6 sentences explaining the results of your research. Provide specific details.