

Module 6: On y va?
Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Introduction

Switzerland



Click the circles on the right to learn about different aspects of Switzerland.

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Module 6: On y va?

Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Location

Location



Europe

East of France, north of Italy

Borders Austria, Liechtenstein, Germany

Switzerland is located on the continent of Europe. Specifically, it is to the east of France, and the north of Italy. This land-locked country shares its borders with Austria, Liechtenstein, and Germany.

Module 6: On y va?

Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Climate

Climate



Temperate

Winters and summers vary based on altitude

Jura Mountains in the east, Alps in the south

Rolling plains and lakes in the center

The climate in Switzerland is temperate, but can vary based on altitude. Winters are cold, cloudy, rainy, and snowy, and summers are humid and cool to warm depending on altitude. Much of Switzerland is mountainous. The Jura Mountains are in the east, and the Alps, which are shown in this photograph, are in the south. The center of Switzerland has rolling plains and lakes.

Module 6: On y va?

Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Languages

Languages



German
Romansch
Italian
French

The people of Switzerland, *les Suisses*, speak one of four national languages. These include German, Romansch, Italian, and French. Each language is spoken in either the northern, southern, eastern, or western border.

Module 6: On y va?

Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Cities

Cities



Image: Bern

Capital is Bern

Most populated city is Zurich

Geneva is by Lake Geneva

While the capital of Switzerland is Bern, the most populated city is Zurich. Another popular city is Geneva, which sits in the southwest corner of the country, by Lake Geneva, or Lac Léman, as you would say in French. Lake Geneva is the largest body of water in Switzerland, and has three different sections: the Upper Lake, The Large Lake, and the Small Lake. It is crescent-shaped, and is the location of many sporting events, including high speed catamarans.

Module 6: On y va?

Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Currency

Currency



Swiss franc (CHF)

Many neighboring countries use the euro

Liechtenstein uses the Swiss franc

The Swiss franc (CHF) is the currency used in Switzerland. Since many neighboring countries use the euro for their currency, it is common to see prices of products listed in the Swiss franc and the euro, to offer a comparison. The country of Liechtenstein also uses the Swiss franc.

Module 6: On y va?
Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Flag

Flag



Red background

White cross



The flag of Switzerland is easy to remember. The background is a red square, and the center has a white, equilateral cross.

Module 6: On y va?

Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Government

Government



Image: First Federal Palace in Bern (1857)

Federal Republic known as a confederation

President rules 26 cantons

Not a member of the European Union

Known for neutrality

Switzerland is a Federal Republic, and is formally known as a confederation. It is divided into twenty-six cantons, and is ruled by the President of the Confederation. Unlike all of its neighbors, Switzerland is not a member of the European Union. In regards to foreign affairs, Switzerland is known for its neutrality.

Module 6: On y va?

Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Landmarks



Image: Chateau du Chillon by Gustave Courbet (1875)

Matterhorn is one of the highest mountains in Switzerland; has pyramid-like peak

Castle Chillon is on Lac Léman; defense castle

One famous landmark in Switzerland is the Matterhorn, one of the highest mountains in the Alps, and in Europe. It straddles the border of southern Switzerland and northern Germany, and is well known for its symmetrical pyramid-like peak. Another landmark is the castle, Chillon, which sits on Lac Léman. Chillon sits on an island in the lake, which provides natural protection to the country. In fact, it has acted as a defense castle in Europe since the 12th century.

Module 6: On y va?

Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Famous People

Famous People



Image: Carl Jung

Jean Piaget

Carl Jung

Roger Federer

If you have ever studied psychology, you likely have heard of two famous psychologists from Switzerland, Jean Piaget and Carl Jung. Piaget was best known for his pioneering work in child development, and Jung explored the unconscious. Looking forward to more modern times, you may recognize Roger Federer, a professional tennis player from Switzerland.

Module 6: On y va?
Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

Education

Education



Image: ETH Zurich – one of the top ranked universities in the world

Governed on a national level

Everyone must attend school

Schools in Switzerland are governed on a national level, and everyone is required by law to attend.

Module 6: On y va?
Topic 4 Content: Switzerland

National Symbols

National Symbols



National holiday is on August 1

National flower is the edelweiss

Switzerland celebrates its national holiday on August 1 every year. In addition, the country's national flower is the edelweiss, a white flower that grows in the mountains.

