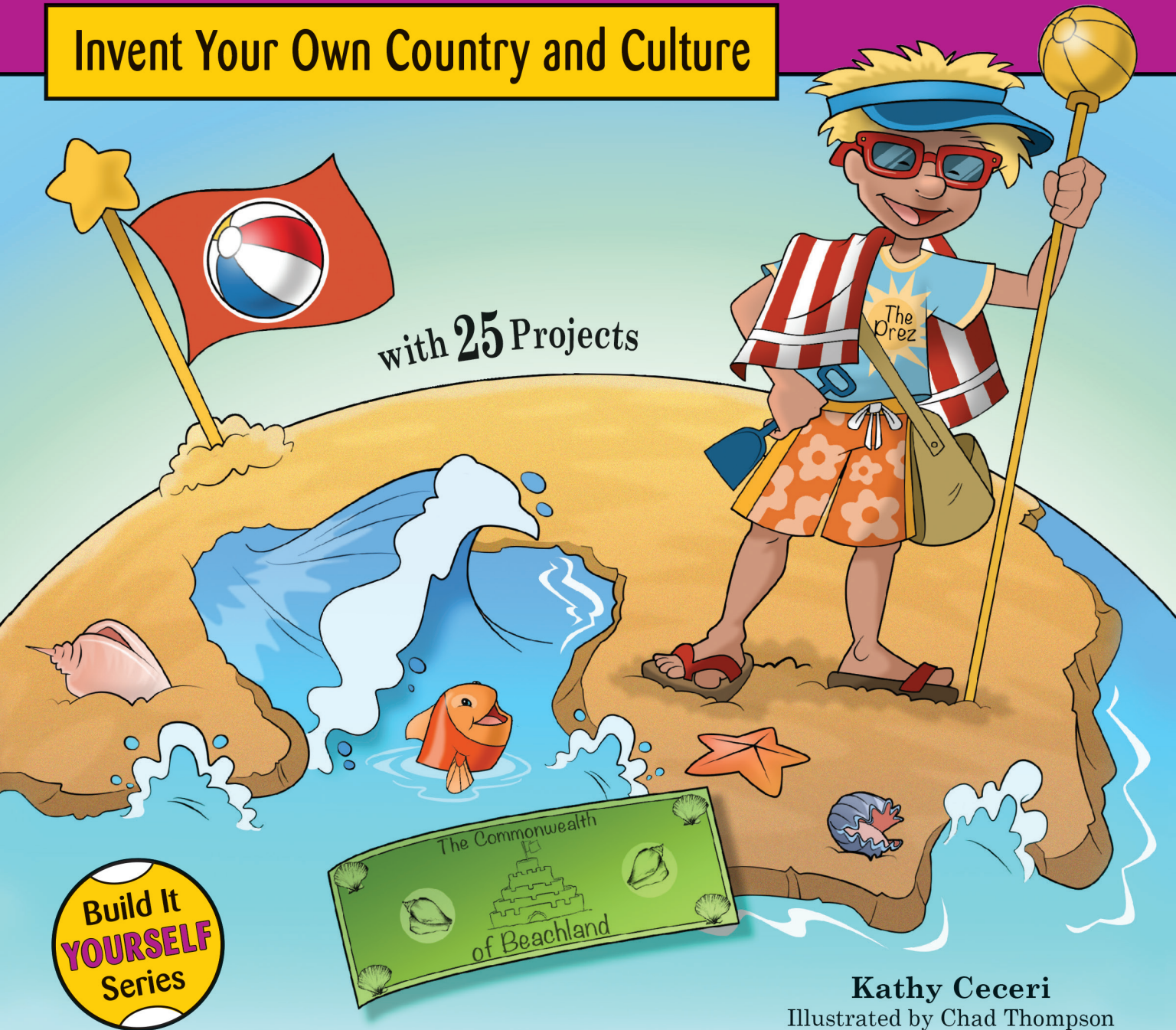


# MICRONATIONS

Invent Your Own Country and Culture

with 25 Projects



Kathy Ceceri

Illustrated by Chad Thompson

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Invent Your Own Country and Culture

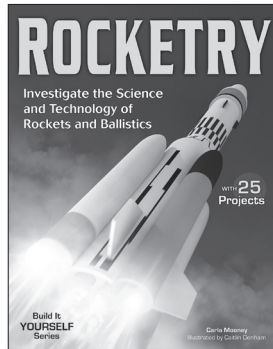
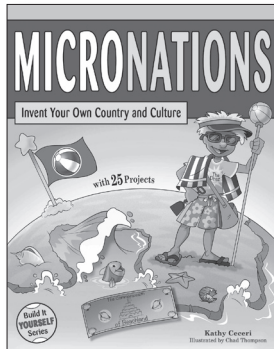
with 25 Projects



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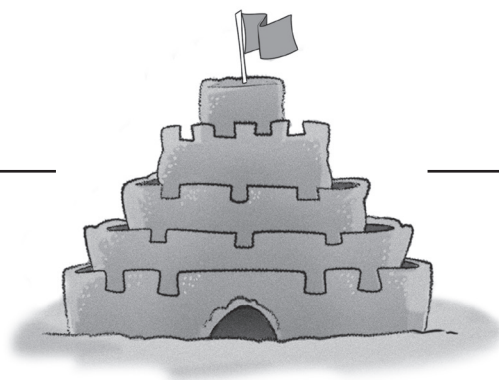
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# INTRODUCTION

## Create Your Own Micronation

**HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE** to invent your own **country**? That's what **micronations** are all about! A micronation is an imaginary country that has many things real countries have. Most micronations have a leader, a **government**, and laws. Some also have a flag, stamps, and money, as well as their own music, language, and holidays.

### WORDS TO KNOW!

**country:** a place with official boundaries, called borders, that mark it off from other places. A country can make agreements or fight wars with other countries.

**micronation:** an imaginary country that has many features of a real country, but is not considered real by other countries.

**government:** an organization or system that controls a city, state, or country.



## WORDS TO KNOW!

**citizen:** a person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and protection of that country.

**nation:** another word for country, also used to refer to a group of people who share a common culture even if they don't live in their own country.

**culture:** the beliefs and way of life of a group of people, which can include religion, language, art, clothing, food, holidays, and more.

**tradition:** a custom or belief that has been handed down in a community or culture over many years.

*The main difference between a micronation and a real country is whether other countries in the world agree that it is real.*

Micronations have been created by kids and by adults. They can be found in forests, in deserts, and on platforms in the middle of the ocean. Some are no bigger than a back yard or a bedroom. A few allow visitors, but most micronations are only open to their own **citizens**. And many exist only online, where they can be seen by anyone.

This book will take you through the steps of creating your own micronation. You'll be given great power—but with it comes great responsibility. Besides getting to call yourself “Lord Blake III, Ruler of Dragoria, Duke of Coventry” or “Queen Sofia of Quy Quorta,” you can bestow titles on your friends and give them the top jobs in your government.

As the founder of your **nation**, you can choose what kind of systems and laws will help your country achieve its goals. And you get to name holidays, establish a **culture** with **traditions**, and even invent a language that will bind your people together.



Activities and projects in this book will show you how to create **artifacts** that make your micronation seem real. **You will learn to:**

- Write your own **declaration of independence** explaining what your new country is about;



- Make a **map** of your territory, including famous **landmarks** and historical monuments;
- Design a flag that symbolizes your country's ideals;
- Put together an **atlas** of facts and figures about micronations; and
- Organize a Micronational World's Fair where you can share your country's culture and traditions with others.

## WORDS TO KNOW!

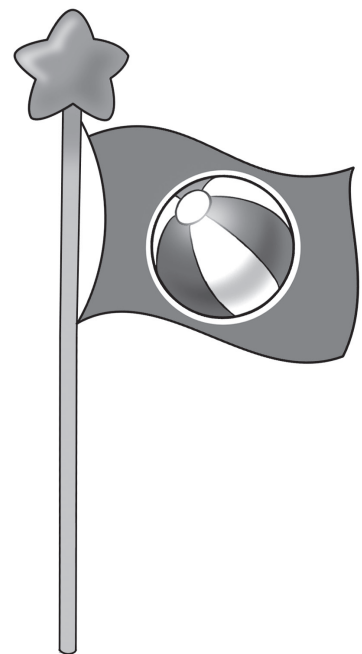
**artifact:** an object made by humans.

**declaration of independence:** an announcement to the world that a new country has formed. The U.S. Declaration of Independence was written in 1776 to explain why America was separating itself from Britain and becoming its own country.

**map:** a picture or diagram of the earth's surface.

**landmark:** a natural or man-made object that is easy to see and recognize.

**atlas:** a book with maps and information about different places.



As you discover more about micronations, you will also learn about **geography**. First, you'll look at **physical geography**, which deals with the shape of the land, as well as the water, weather,

and living things there. You'll also explore **cultural geography**, which focuses on people and the way they interact with the physical geography around them. And you will practice **world-building** to invent a made-up place that seems real.

## WORDS TO KNOW!

**geography:** the study of the earth and its features, such as mountains and rivers, and the effect of human activity on the earth.

**physical geography:** the land, water, and weather in an area.

**cultural geography:** the way people interact with their surroundings. Also called human geography.

**world-building:** the process of inventing an imaginary world in a book, movie, or game.

**characteristic:** a feature of a person, place, or thing.

**theme:** a central, recurring idea or concept.

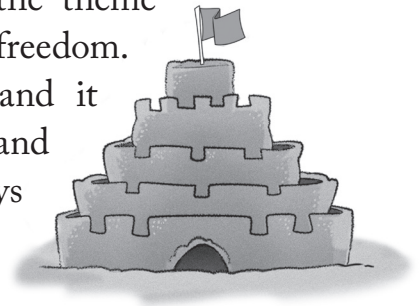
**liberty:** freedom, the ability to act or live freely as one chooses.

*So welcome to the world of micronations! It's your chance to be in charge—and find out what makes a country a country!*

## Find a Theme for Your Country

What is the most important **characteristic** of your country? What is the main idea behind it? Coming up with a **theme** is useful when designing a micronation.

For instance, the theme of the United States of America is **liberty**, or freedom. This is a very important idea to Americans, and it shows up in the country's songs, documents, and symbols. The Declaration of Independence says that everyone has the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."



The United States **Constitution** includes the **Bill of Rights**, which guarantees certain freedoms to the country's citizens. These include freedom of speech, **freedom of the press**, and **freedom of religion**.

## World-Building in Books and Games

Science fiction and fantasy writers use world-building to create a fictional setting where their characters live. Many of the countries in books and stories are as richly detailed as any micronation. When J.R.R. Tolkien created Middle Earth, the setting for *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, he drew maps of its landscape and invented a language written and spoken only by elves. In the *Harry Potter* series, author J.K. Rowling created a magical world for wizards and witches that exists in and around the places where ordinary Muggles live. Harry's world has its own schools, such as Hogwarts, its own sports, such as Quidditch, and even its own favorite snacks, such as chocolate frogs and butter beer.

Video games such as *Minecraft*, *The Sims*, and *Second Life* give players a chance to create their own settings and characters using materials they find in the game or make themselves. Players can invite friends to come "visit" the worlds they create without ever leaving home!

## WORDS TO KNOW!

**constitution:** a document that describes a country's rules and laws and how its government is set up.

**bill of rights:** a document that spells out some of the rights that belong to the citizens of a country.

**freedom of the press:** the right to publish news stories without interference from the government.

**freedom of religion:** a person's right to practice his or her religion without interference from the government.

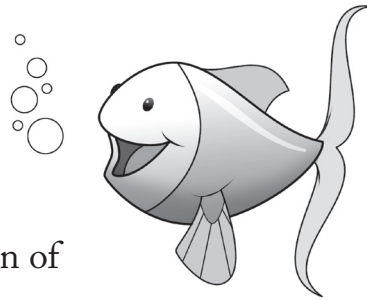


As you work on your own micronation, keep your country's theme in mind. Everything about your invented country can relate to your theme. An example is a micronation called Aqualand.

Created by a group of fifth-graders as a class project, the most important characteristic of Aqualand was that it was underwater. Its **motto** was "Bubbles, Bubbles, and More Bubbles," and its national animal was the fish. The micronation of Backyardistan, founded in 2012 near Hollywood, California, features a garden hose on its **coat of arms** and a lawn chair surrounded by barbecue grills on its flag.

Remember, you can make your micronation as simple or as fancy as you like. This country is just for you!

*The most important thing is to make your country the kind of place where you'd like to live.*



## WORDS TO KNOW!

**motto:** a saying that represents the main belief or purpose of a person, group, or country.

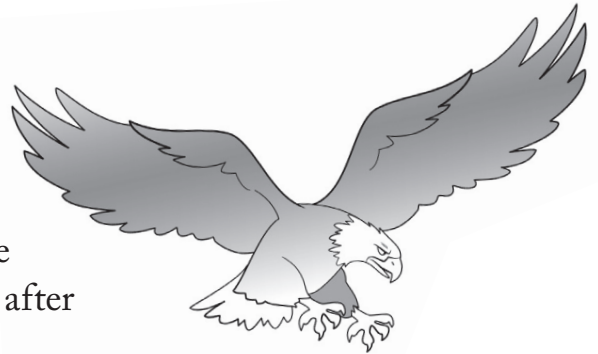
**coat of arms:** a design made of several symbols that represents a family or country.

**mythology:** a collection of traditional stories, either truthful or overly elaborated, that are often focused on historical events. Myths express the beliefs and values of a group of people.

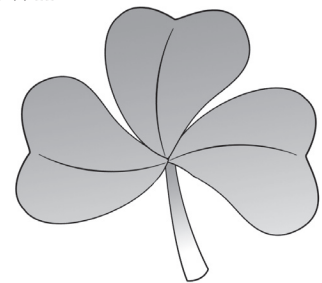
## National Symbols

A country's symbols usually relate to its theme. They can be based on a nation's history, **mythology**, religion, or even its environment or physical surroundings. What are some national symbols from real countries?

**Animal:** The bald eagle symbolizes strength and determination for the United States. The mythical dragon represents good luck in China. People from New Zealand are called “Kiwis” after a small bird there.



**Flower, Tree, or Plant:** Canada’s symbol is the maple leaf, because of the maple trees that grow there. The lotus flower, which stands for purity, is the national symbol of India. The shamrock, or three-leaf clover, is a well-known symbol for Ireland. The flag of Guam, an island in the Pacific, has a palm tree. The cedar tree has been the symbol of Lebanon in the Middle East for thousands of years.



**Color:** The colors red, white, and blue are closely tied to the United States, although they are used by many other countries as well. Green can represent the earth

and is associated with Ireland, which is why many people wear green on St. Patrick’s Day. In many countries, red symbolizes courage and the blood spilled in war, but it is popular in China as a sign of luck. Many African flags contain the colors red, green, yellow, and sometimes black. Yellow symbolizes the sun, or **wealth**. The color of the **United Nations (UN)** flag and the helmets worn by UN **military** forces is sky blue. Blue often represents freedom and peace.

## WORDS TO KNOW!

**wealth:** money and valuable belongings.

**United Nations (UN):** an organization of countries started in 1945 to encourage peace and improve living conditions around the world. It is based in New York City. Today the UN has 193 member countries.

**military:** the army, navy, air force, and other armed services that protect a country and fight in wars.

**Motto:** The first motto of the United States was *E Pluribus Unum*, which is Latin for “one from many parts.” It referred to the country’s original 13 **colonies**. France’s motto, “Liberty, Equality, **Fraternity**,” goes back to the French **Revolution**, when the citizens threw out the king and established their own government.

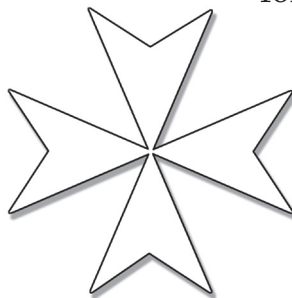
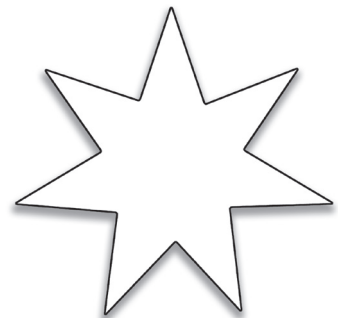
**WORDS TO KNOW!**

**colony:** an area that is controlled by or belongs to another country.

**fraternity:** brotherhood or connection to fellow human beings.

**revolution:** when the people overthrow the government.

**Shape:** The five-pointed star is a symbol used by the U.S. military, as well as on the American flag. In Israel, the flag has a six-pointed star, which stands for Judaism. The Australian flag uses a seven-pointed star. A crescent moon



is used as a symbol by many Islamic countries, such as Turkey and Pakistan. The Maltese Cross, which has double points on each end, is a medieval symbol still used to represent the country of Malta. The flag of Japan is a large red circle on a white background, symbolizing the sun.

## What’s in a Name?

Countries get their names in different ways. They can be named after physical features, the people who live there, or a ruler. Consider the explanations behind the names of the following countries—you may get some ideas for naming your micronation.

Iceland is a small icy island nation near the North Pole. But its neighbor Greenland is also icy. Greenland was named by Erik the Red. He moved there after being banned from Iceland for murder, and hoped the name would attract more Icelanders to join him.