

International Festival – Cultures of the World Research Projects

***by Andrew Bales
Belzer Middle School
MSD Lawrence Township***

Students will identify common elements of cultures from around the world, including Social Organizations, Customs and Traditions, Languages, Arts and Literature, Religion, Forms of Government, Economic Systems, Food and Clothing, and Music and Dance. They will describe each element of culture, giving specific examples of each. Students will apply their knowledge of cultural elements to create a group research project, which illustrates the elements of culture from a specific country of the Eastern World. In addition, they will compare these elements of culture to their own through written articles, illustrations, charts, graphs, artifacts, and visual arts.

Title: International Festival – Cultures of the World Research Projects

Keywords: Culture, Social Studies, Arts and Literature, Eastern World, Eastern Cultures, World Cultures, Social Organizations, Religions, Economic Systems, Government

Curriculum Area: Social Studies

Grade Level: Seventh Grade

Appropriate Group Size: Whole Class, Small Groups, and Individual

Time Expected to Complete Instructional Plan: 2 weeks (10 work days)

Instructional Objectives:

1. Students will identify common elements of cultures from around the world, including Social Organizations, Customs and Traditions, Languages, Arts and Literature, Religion, Forms of Government, Economic Systems, Food and Clothing, and Music and Dance.
2. They will describe each element of culture, giving specific examples of each
3. Students will apply their knowledge of cultural elements to create a group research project, which illustrates the elements of culture from a specific country of the Eastern World. In addition, they will compare these elements of culture to their own through written articles, illustrations, charts, graphs, artifacts, and visual arts.

Curriculum Area: Social Studies, 7th Grade (Eastern Cultures)

Indiana State Proficiencies:

1. World Cultures: Using the cultures of the Eastern World as a context, identify the common elements of different cultures.
 - a. Identify the characteristics of different cultures that are alike and different.
 - b. Identify the needs that influence the lives of all people.
2. Individuals and Society: Develop an understanding of the relationship between individual and group behavior.
 - a. Using societies of the Eastern World, identify social groups to which people belong.
 - b. Assess what are acceptable behaviors in social groups.

Materials and Resources Needed:

1. Various social studies textbooks, books and magazines such as National Geographic
2. School Media Center for researching country information
3. World Wide Web/Internet access for information on cultures (**See additional websites below**)
4. Computer lab w/ word processing software
5. Color printer for visual art images from various Internet Art Databases (**See additional websites below**)
6. Construction paper, markers, colored pencils, scissors, glue, tape, etc...
7. Science fair presentation boards
8. Butcher Block paper for brainstorming ideas

Preparation:

Classroom is decorated with artifacts from all elements of culture, representing different countries/cultures of the world. A heavy emphasis can be placed on the visual arts and how they relate to different elements of culture. Posters showing forms of government, economic systems, and religious icons are examples of classroom decorations. These can be purchased or borrowed from some museums. The Children's Museum of Indianapolis loans artifact kits to teachers in the area. Questions will arise about the classroom decorations, which will allow the teacher to begin a discussion over the different elements of culture.

NOTE: Students should have prior knowledge and basic understanding of economies and governments.

Student Instruction:

Day 1 (Whole Group Instruction) Ask students to look at all the decorations throughout the room. Ask them to determine what all the decorations have in common. Answer; Culture. Give definition of culture: Culture is all things that make up a people's entire way of life. From the artifacts and decorations, ask students to determine some of the elements of culture. Answers will vary and teacher should write down responses on board in the form of a brainstorming web. Lead responses from students to form the nine elements of culture, which are as follows:

1. Social Organizations (Families and social classes)
2. Customs and Traditions
3. Languages
4. Arts and Literature
5. Religion
6. Forms of Government
7. Economic Systems
8. Food, Clothing
9. Music and Dance

Explain to students that these elements are common throughout all cultures, including their own.

NOTE: Most social studies textbooks for 7th grade have a definition for culture and the elements within a culture.

Day 2 (Student Groups) Organize students into groups of three. Have each group brainstorm examples of culture in their own lives. Group scribes will record their ideas on butcher-block paper. The butcher-block paper should be labeled for each element of culture and should throughout the classroom. Student groups will explain their reasons for choosing these examples. Discuss group

findings and differences between groups.

NOTE: These posters can be saved until after research project is complete. At that time, the teacher should lead a discussion and have students compare and contrast elements of their culture with elements of other cultures throughout the world.

Day 3 (Student Groups) Students will remain in groups for their research project. Explain to students that they will be starting a research project for the School International Festival. They are to work in groups to develop a visual display, illustrating the 9 elements of culture from their assigned country.

Hand out Project guidelines (Below) and explain the project requirements and how students will be graded.

NOTE: Teachers may allow students to choose countries or they may assign countries to student groups. Each student will be responsible for 3 of the 9 elements of culture. Teachers, again, can either let students choose which elements they are responsible for, or choose for them. Some elements will be easier to research than others, depending on the country chosen.

Countries of the Eastern Hemisphere

The countries listed here are suggestions. Availability of information on these countries is the key. Teachers should attempt to find some information concerning these countries before research begins.

The Soviet Union (till 1989)	Egypt
Japan	Korea
Vietnam	Regions of Oceania
Australia	New Zealand
India	Pakistan
China	Thailand
Afghanistan	Iran
Iraq	Saudi Arabia
Kenya	Tanzania
Botswana	Zaire
Namibia	Zimbabwe

Corbis Images: <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/impls/> Go to K-12 Web Page.

Elements of Culture - Research examples for Teacher reference

1. Social Organizations (Families and social classes)

Students could create a comparison chart for families within their own culture and in their research country. Students could print out an image of social classes in china and describe the differences between social classes.

One image for this is "Man Pushing Upper Class People in a Rickshaw"

Image ID: IH034383, Date Photographed: ca. 1880

Credit Line: CORBIS/Michael Maslan Historic Photographs

Website is: <http://corbisimages.com>

2. Customs and Traditions

Students could create a comparison poster, showing different customs and

traditions from their country. For example, bowing is an appropriate custom in some Asian countries, where a handshake is more appropriate in others. Additionally, it is a tradition for people of different cultures to celebrate events with parades. Students can download this picture of a SinterKlass parade in Amsterdam to help illustrate that fact.

<http://www.corbisimages.com>

"Clowns in Sinterklaas Parade", Image ID: OF004376

Photographer: Owen Franken, Date Photographed: November 1991

Location Information: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Credit line: CORBIS/Owen Franken

3. Languages

Students could create a graph, which shows percentages of the population of their country who speak certain languages. Students could then draw a poster showing how languages are sometimes barriers to understanding one another.

4. Arts and Literature

Students could print out a large image from one of the Art Databases on the Internet, then write a paragraph explaining what the art shows about the culture at that time in history. A good example of this would be the poster by Dmitry Moore 1920, entitled "Have you Volunteered?" This poster was printed during the Socialist movement in Russia (Soviet Union). This image can be found at http://www.funet.fi/pub/culture/russian/html_pages/posters1.html

5. Religion

Students could create a model of a shrine or temple in their research country and add a poster with religious beliefs and laws from their country. Students could also either create or use images of religious icons and write a paragraph explaining the significance of these icons and discuss basic elements of the religion. For example, students could print out an image of a statue of the Hindu god Vishnu.

"Statue of the Hindu God, Vishnu", Image ID: IH073785

Date Created: 7th century, Current Location: Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum (Phipitapan Laeng chart), Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand.

Photographer: Luca I. Tettoni.

Date Photographed:ca. 1980-1995, Credit Line: CORBIS/Luca I. Tettoni

<http://www.corbisimages.com>

6. Forms of Government

Republics, Democracies, Dictatorships, and Monarchies could be compared. Students could choose the system in their country and explain laws, government programs, or taxes. Students could create a hierarchy chart for the government in their country.

7. Economic Systems

Students could explain how the economy in their country compares with that of the United States. Traditional, Free Market, and Command Economies are three to use in a comparison.

8. Food & Clothing

Students could research information on typical foods from a particular culture. For example, in China, stir-fry was created out of necessity. Due to a lack of trees in the area, local people had to chop their food into small pieces that would cook quickly. Students could also compare types of clothing worn by different classes of people. The Gentry, or upper class in China wore clothes similar to this image listed below.

"Man Pushing Upper Class People in a Rickshaw"

Image ID: IH034383, Date Photographed: ca. 1880

Credit Line: CORBIS/Michael Maslan Historic Photographs.

Website is: <http://corbisimages.com>

9. Music & Dance

Students could create a computer presentation with music samples from the past and present in their country, then describe their thoughts on this music and why it is appealing to the culture of their country. They could create a model of traditional instruments or people dancing and write a brief report describing the model.

Day 4-9 (Student Groups) **Students** should begin their research in the classroom after you have discussed the following guidelines with them (See Below). Student groups may then decide how to split up jobs within the group and can begin looking in textbooks and magazines. After a day of work, the teacher should check with each group to ensure that they have properly divided the workload and have developed a plan for acquiring their information. Once student groups have developed a plan, divided their workload, and used in class resources, the teacher should begin to allow students to use other resources (i.e. Media Center, Computer labs, etc...) Groups should now be monitored daily for progress and understanding.

Day 10 (Groups and Individuals) Student groups finish their projects in class. Individual students should check to make sure that they have their name on all of their work. Groups will assemble their display at a designated place in the school.

Student Project Guidelines

Students will receive the following guidelines for their project. These guidelines list "suggestions" for students to use on their projects. It also explains to students how they will be graded.

Dear student,

During the next two weeks, you will be part of a team, researching the many elements of culture from a country in the Eastern Hemisphere. You will be responsible for deciding how to split up the work within the group. There are 9 elements, so you are responsible for three. You must put your name on all work that you complete.

Below are examples and ideas to guide you in your research. You are not limited to these examples. BE CREATIVE! Don't just write about it. Create models, paintings, artifacts, posters, comparison charts, graphs,

etc... Remember that your group will set up a display of all your research. You will have samples of food from your country, and you'll be wearing clothing, which resembles the clothing typical of your country. **YOU WILL PLAY THE PART!**

Elements of Culture

1. Social Organizations (Families, Social Classes, Social Groups)

- a. Create a poster with illustrations or pictures, which describe family life in your country. Include details concerning how people live, where most people live, what they do for a living, what are their views on children, are there specific roles or jobs within the family?
- b. Create a poster with illustrations or pictures, which describe social classes or groups in your country. Include details concerning past social classes as compared to present day, are they the same? What are social classes based upon, money, jobs, family name, education? Is it possible to move up and down the social class system? What types of social groups are there in your country? For example, in the U.S. we have youth groups such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Brownies, Campfire Girls. Are there groups such as this in your country?

2. Customs and Traditions

Write a one-page description of the customs and traditions within your country. Make a poster to compare the customs and traditions of your assigned country to those of your own family. Create a short video, which shows people acting out customs and traditions in your assigned county.

3. Languages

Create a graph, which shows the percentages of the people in your assigned country who speak certain languages. Draw a poster showing how languages are sometimes barriers to understanding one another. Write a letter to the government of your country with suggestions for dealing with language barriers between people in that country.

4. Arts and Literature

Print out a large image from one of the Art Databases on the Internet, and then write a paragraph explaining what the art shows about the culture at that time in history. Research an artist from your assigned country, and write a short report about his/her artistic work. Include images of that artist's work. Write a book review of a story from your assigned country. Create a story based on a historic event in your assigned country.

5. Religion

Create a model of a shrine or temple from your assigned country and add a poster, which illustrates religious beliefs. Create replicas or use images of religious icons and write a paragraph explaining the significance of these icons and discuss basic elements of the religion and how it has spread throughout history.

6. Forms of Government

Write a report describing the type of government in your assigned country. Create a poster showing the different branches of government and offices held. Compare the government

today to that of 200 years ago. Are they the same? How are they different?

7. Economic Systems

Explain how the economy in your assigned country compares with that of the United States. Traditional, Free Market, and Command Economies are three to use in a comparison. What are the major imports and exports of your country? Find an image of a market place in your country and write a short paragraph about what is happening in the image (Based on Economic facts within your assigned country)

8. Food and Clothing

Research information about typical foods from your assigned country. For example, in China, stir-fry was created out of necessity. Due to a lack of trees in the area, local people needed to chop their food into small pieces that would cook quickly and use less "fuel". Compare types of clothing worn by different classes of people. The Gentry, or upper class in China wore clothes that were very different from people in lower classes. Describe differences between upper classes and lower classes, or between people of different occupations.

9. Music and Dance

Create a computer presentation with music samples from the past and present in your assigned country then, describe your thoughts on this music and why it is appealing to the people. Create a model of traditional instruments or people dancing and write a brief report describing the model. Draw a picture of people engaged in dancing. Describe what is going on. Are they dancing for a wedding, religious ceremony, funeral?

Additional resources and websites for student research:

Ahmad, Brodsky, Crofts, & Ellis. World Cultures "A Global Mosaic". Prentice Hall, Inc. New Jersey. 1996

Boehm, Armstrong, and Hunkins. Geography, The World and its People. National Geographic Society. Glencoe/McGraw Hill Publishing Co. 1996

http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion_and_Spirituality/Faiths_and_Practices/

<http://dir.yahoo.com/Government/Countries/> (Yahoo Search Engine)

<http://encarta.msn.com/> (Microsoft Encarta Online)

<http://www.ajkids.com/> (Ask Jeeves for Kids)

www.ipl.org/youth/cquest (The Internet Public Library's Culture Quest)

www.yahooligans.com/School_Bell/Social_Studies/ (Yahooligans Search Engine)

www.dreamtime.net.au/main.htm (Stories of the Dreaming; Native Australians)

<http://eureka.rlg.org/cgi-bin/zgate2> (The Amico Art Image Database)

<http://www.groveart.com> (The Grove Dictionary of Art)

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html> (The Library of Congress Country Studies)

www.ulib.iupui.edu/subjectareas/cultst.shtml (IUPUI Cultural Studies Directory)

www.theodora.com/wfb/ (The CIA World Fact book)

www.corbisimages.com (Corbis Image Database)

Grades will be based on the following:

A (Excellent, Superior)

- Project completed on time or early
- Provided quality information in student's own words
- Went beyond the essential requirements
- All 9 elements or more of culture were included
- Free of spelling and grammatical errors
- Project shows neatness and creativity
- Variety of methods for displaying research
- Obvious mastery of understanding elements of culture

B (Above Average)

- Good use of teamwork and cooperation to complete project on time
- Followed directions and included good information with little copying
- Showed some neatness and attention to details
- Few spelling and grammatical errors
- Finished research on all 9 elements of culture
- Some creativity is displayed
- Good evidence of understanding elements of culture

C (Average)

- Project completed on time, but not personal best
- Followed most of the directions
- Some information or elements missing or less than adequate
- Neatness shown, but little attention to detail
- Frequent errors in spelling and grammar
- Evidence of understanding most elements of culture

D (Below Average)

- Project not completed on time, but turned in the following day
- Followed some of the directions
- Numerous spelling and grammar errors
- Minimal evidence of understanding elements of culture
- Missing several elements or lacking more than a few sentences for each
- Sloppy work, little evidence of attention to detail, erasures, and disorganized

F (Failing)

- Project not turned in on time
- Did not follow directions
- No evidence of understanding elements of culture
- Little or no attention to details or neatness

NOTE: This grade scale will be used both for group grades and individual grades. Individuals should complete 3 of the 9 elements of culture.