

Lesson Title: If I Wear Pearls, Does That Mean I Have Culture?

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Keywords:

culture, customs, acculturation, cultural traits, diffusion, differences

Outcomes:

78. Explain how the population size of regions and countries changes and the impacts of migrations on the ethnic, cultural, and religious compositions of populations (e.g., what has been the impact of Irish migration to the USA, of Jewish migration to Israel, of post-1945 Caribbean migrations to the UK, and of the movement of guest workers into Germany?).
81. Discuss how the movement of people, goods and ideas has increased in speed and frequency.
85. Discuss various concepts used in the study of spatial diffusion (e.g., waves of innovation, mean information field).
90. Identify conditions in both the cultural and physical environments that encourage migration, trade, and the spread of ideas.
91. Identify barriers in both the cultural and physical environments that discourage migration, trade, and the spread of ideas.
45. Identify global patterns in physical and cultural environments (e.g., precipitation patterns, arable land, population distributions, and energy consumption).
48. Describe how the local community is culturally similar to and different from other communities in the state and nation.
49. Identify the varieties of cultural features in the local community, the state, and the region of the United States. Demonstrate how these features are related to global cultural patterns.
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Objectives:

Time Needed: 1-2 class periods

Overview: This lesson is about culture and some of the differences between cultures throughout the world.

Objectives: The student will be able to:

1. List some traits that define cultures.
 2. Describe the cultural landscape of their area.
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Materials:

Materials:

Overhead transparency (see Preparation)
Lecture notes for teacher (see Preparation)

Preparation:

Preparation:

1. Prepare overhead transparency with the following key ideas or words so that students may take notes.

1. Differences
2. Nonmaterial culture
3. Material culture
4. Cultural landscapes
 - a. internal influences
 - b. external influences
5. Acculturation
6. Diffusion
7. Culture hearth

2. The following are recommended resources:

Human Geography: Landscapes of Human Activities, 3rd ed., by Fellmann, Getis, and Getis, 1992.

Prentice Hall, World Geography, 1993 Updated Edition by Baerwald and Fraser.

3. Lecture notes for teacher:

Differences in population patterns are, in part, reflections of differences in culture. As children grow up in a given culture, they learn skills, language, eating customs, and thousands of other cultural traits. Later, they pass these on to their own children. Over time, cultures change, but usually very slowly. A culture is reflected in both ideas and objects, that is, nonmaterial and material culture. Nonmaterial culture includes religion, language, spiritual beliefs, superstitions, and ways of viewing or behaving toward the world. Some cultures, for example, value cooperation and group activities; others value individual achievement more. Material culture refers to all the things that people make or build with natural or human-made resources--from teacups to television sets. It includes styles of food, clothing, and architecture, as well as arts, crafts, and technology.

Cultural landscapes occur when human beings use natural resources or alter the surface of the earth. From the point of view of geography, technology is a significant part of culture. Nearly all landscapes on the earth have been changed somewhat by human activities. Cultural landscapes are also a reflection of differences between cultures. Farming areas in Kansas and in China, for example, look quite different.

Cultures often are changed by both internal and external influences. Within a culture, discoveries and inventions can bring change. Change from outside---from another culture---comes through diffusion, or the spread of cultural traits from one person or society to another. Acculturation is the cultural modification or change that results when

one culture group or individual adopts traits of a dominant or host society; cultural development or change through "borrowing."

Diffusion is the process by which an idea or innovation is transmitted from one individual or group to another across space. Diffusion may assume a variety of forms, each of which is different in its impact on social groups. Basically, however, two processes are involved: (1) either people move, for any of a number of reasons, to a new area and take their culture with them (e.g., immigrants to the American colonies), or (2) information about an innovation (e.g., hybrid corn or compact discs) may spread throughout a society, perhaps aided by local or mass media advertising. (Human Geography, pg 50-51)

The term, culture hearth, is used to describe a place where important ideas begin and from which they spread to surrounding cultures. It is usually used for the areas where, in ancient times, major traits of human culture first developed. In the Middle East, for example, people first learned to tame and herd animals and to grow crops from wild grasses. Writing and mathematics also originated in this culture hearth.

The culture hearth for most of East Asia was ancient China. Its language, arts, technology, and government influenced neighboring lands and peoples. The cultures of Teotihuacan (tay uh tee wah KAHN) and the Maya formed the first culture hearth in the Americas.

Activities:

Activities:

1. Have the students list 5-10 things that are now part of American culture, but were borrowed from another cultural group. For example, a type of pizza originated in Italy (even though what we know as pizza isn't the same). Encourage students to include food, clothing, household objects, arts, ideas, and sports. Share the lists and discuss some similarities and differences. Point out that borrowing and adapting things from other cultures is one of the main ways that cultures change and grow.

2. Write "culture" on the board. Explain that culture (which is learned behavior) consists of all the skills, behaviors, values, and customs particular to a certain group of people. Tell students to view their school as a culture. Ask them to name traits that are part of the culture of their school, such as foods and eating customs, language, school traditions, accepted behaviors, and fashion.

3. Give the definition of cultural landscape (e.g., a landscape that has been altered by human beings and reflects their culture). Have the students work in pairs to make a list of descriptions of the cultural landscapes of their area. After everyone has a list, have a student come to the board and act as the recorder, who will write the main ideas from the descriptions. Have students discuss the similarities and differences between the ideas and how the ideas affect them.

4. Ask the sighted students in the class to close their eyes for several minutes and to try to imagine what it would be like to be blind. Or, have students take turns carefully walking around the room

blindfolded and then write down or discuss their experiences. Remind students that people without sight learn many skills that help them carry out their daily lives, education, and careers. Ask students to discuss or write down how the experiences, which can also be called culture, of a blind person may be similar to, and different from, their own.

5. Ask the students to imagine what it would be like to be a person from another school. How would such a new arrival's perceptions of this school be influenced by the culture and way of life of the other school? How do cliques and groups form because of these 'cultures'?

6. An extra activity for outside of class: Explain that jazz is a unique blend of music from several cultures into a new art form. For this reason, the origin of jazz is a great example of cultural change in action. Have students research the birth of jazz and its spread from New Orleans to the rest of the country. Then have them give a report showing how jazz combined several cultural traditions and then, in turn, influenced all of American music.

Evaluation:

Evaluation:

Quiz for Students:

1. Give an example of a cultural trait and how it has passed from one generation to another.
2. Give an example of cultural landscape and the effect it has on the area.
3. What is diffusion?
4. Give an example of acculturation.
5. Define culture hearth and give three examples.
6. Identify three things that contribute to today's global culture.
7. What is material culture?
8. How does culture change?

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