

# Illustrating the Cultural Mosaic of a Region

## Lesson Overview

Students create a poster showing important and shared characteristics of people in a culture region. They also choose boundaries to delimit the assigned culture region and defend their choices. This lesson is most useful as a culminating activity after studying world regions.

## Grade Level

4-12

This lesson can be used from grades 4 - adult by adjusting the requirements.

## Duration

Three 40-45 minute class periods.

## Geography Themes

Place: Physical and Human Characteristics

- human characteristics include culture
- human characteristics include population characteristics (numbers, density, ages)

Regions: How they Form and Change

- regional boundaries are based on selected criteria
- a region has common characteristics

## Geography Standards

The geographically informed person knows and understands...

(#3) how to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

(#4) the physical and human characteristics of places.

(#5) that people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity.

(#9) the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

(#10) the characteristics, distribution, and complexity of the Earth's cultural mosaics.

## Materials Needed

For students:

- Resources with information about the countries and regions of Earth including data bases, trade books, encyclopedias, atlases, and magazines.
- Poster making materials including old geographic magazines that can be cut, glue, markers, outline maps, and construction or poster paper.

## Main Objectives of the Lesson

Students are expected to:

1. do research about a region to determine some of its common human characteristics and key landmarks;
2. determine and defend the boundaries of a selected region based on human characteristics;
3. create a poster that illustrates the cultural mosaic of a selected region.

## Suggested Teaching Procedure

### Opening the Lesson

1. In groups of 4, have students brainstorm and make a list of characteristics that might be shared by people in a culture region. ([Sample List](#)) Then have the groups share their ideas to generate a common list.
2. Divide the world into culture regions. The following list is from *Introduction to Geography* by Getis, Getis, and Fellmann: North American; Russian (USSR without Baltics and Central Asia); Latin American; Islamic (N. Africa and SW Asia); European; Austral-European (Australia and New Zealand); Black African; Indic (S. Asia without Pakistan); Sinic-Japanese (China and Japan); Southeast Asian; Insular-Oceanic (Pacific Islands). Assign a region to each group.

### Developing the Lesson

1. Students conduct research about their assigned region looking for some common human characteristics. The regions are not defined by a single characteristic, but by a combination. Have the students make a list of the common characteristics (similarities) and two lists of differences; one list of differences within the region and one list of differences between this region and other regions of the world.
2. Students should make a list of all countries in their assigned region and a separate list of bordering countries. Characteristics chosen as common must be common to all countries within the region and not common or found in a lesser degree in the neighboring countries. The students may change the boundaries of their region, adding or eliminating countries. They should be ready to defend the final chosen boundary. Note that this step may be too difficult for elementary students who may defend the region as already selected by the teacher.
3. Cooperative groups should make a complete list of all characteristics and well-known landmarks of the region and how each can be illustrated by a picture, map, drawing, or graph. Many characteristics can be illustrated in more than one way. For instance, Islam can be illustrated with a photo of a mosque, photo of people at workshop, photo of a woman in mandatory dress, or an Arabic saying from the Koran. Encourage students to use a wide variety of illustrations on their posters.

*Note:* It is important that students develop the list of illustrations they want before they begin cutting them from magazines so that they will not base their region on what pictures are available. If pictures are not found for a characteristic needed, the students can do a drawing or find another way to illustrate the characteristic.

4. Students create their poster mosaic with magazine photos cut from geographic or other magazines, maps, graphs and the like. All items should be numbered. On a separate sheet of paper each numbered item should be labeled with what it is and why it was included in the mosaic.

### Concluding the Lesson

1. Students should present their posters to the class, naming and defending the illustrations they have included. Upper grade level students should also be asked to defend the chosen boundaries for the region.

### Extending the Lesson

1. Create an additional poster to illustrate the connections the region assigned has to the rest of the world. This might reflect the diffusion of cultural characteristics that are non-material (e.g., religious beliefs, government structure) and material (e.g., clothing styles, language, music) from outside the region, diffusion of local characteristics to other regions in the world and trade information.
2. The cultural mosaic posters can be used by the students for a presentation to parents and other students. Additional objects and food from the region can be brought to enhance the presentation. Music and dances can be performed as well.

## Special Information

Geographic magazines for cutting can often be obtained in garage sales, or library sales of unwanted materials and from parents.

## Source Information

Getis, Arthur, Judith Getis and Jerome Fellmann, Introduction to Geography, Dubuque, Iowa, Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1988. p. 226.

Boehm, Richard G. and James F. Petersen, "An Elaboration of the Fundamental Themes in Geography," Social Education, April/May, 1994, pp. 211-218.

Bonsting, John Jay, Introduction to the Social Sciences, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1991, pp. 151-263.