



CULTURE: A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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How to Select World Communities

The following is a list of factors to consider and questions to ask when determining specific world communities to study in the grade 3 classroom. This is not a definitive list, but a representative sample of factors contributed by Dr. Jervis, and teachers and supervisors from across the State.

INITIAL PLANNING

Look at the student population in your classroom, school, and district.

- What cultures are represented?

Look around your city, town, or village.

- What cultures are present?
- What groups influenced your community at different times?

Look at local restaurants: their types of foods and represented cultures.

- What cultures do they represent?

Look at the news.

- What cultures/nations are economically and politically important to the United States?

Look at the United States, New York State, and/or local community census data.

- What ethnic groups do people identify themselves with?

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Ensure that the representation of world communities is diverse.

1. Select a community from each continent.

- About three to six communities for the entire year provide enough balance to encompass diverse world regions.
- Two or fewer communities do not provide enough variety.
- Find a balance between depth and breadth.

2. Within each world community selected, look at urban, suburban, and rural areas for geographic diversity.
 - Pick from major and smaller metropolitan areas, residential towns and villages, and remote settlements.
3. Select communities from a variety of physical regions.
 - Examples are mountainous areas, deserts, forests, jungles.
4. Select communities from a variety of climate types.
 - Examples are tropical, Mediterranean, arctic.
5. Select communities with different types of government.
 - Examples are democracies, dictatorships, monarchies.
6. Consider selecting communities that are not represented in other courses in the New York State prekindergarten - grade 12 social studies program.
 - Australia, for example, is a country whose history, culture, and geography are not focused on in other courses in any depth.
 - Examine the core curricula for other social studies courses and list those areas that are not significantly taught; make a connection to them in grade 3.
7. Emphasize examples across time.
 - Read newspapers and watch news programs.
 - Identify those countries and regions that are focused on.
 - Avoid studying world communities from a historic perspective; place the emphasis on contemporary versus historic events.
8. Select communities on the basis of students' interests.
 - Build upon prior knowledge/draw from their experiences.

Research the resources available.

1. What previous knowledge do you and/or your colleagues have about the selected world communities?
 - Find textbooks, guides, travel brochures, and other materials based on courses you have taken, or filmed programs you or other people you know attended or watched.
 - Think about languages you have studied and places you have visited or would like to visit.
 - Inquire about the language and travel experiences of colleagues.
 - Borrow photographs, books, histories, and other materials your colleagues might have pertaining to your selected world communities.

2. What instructional materials are available to you?

- Read through a catalog of textbooks and resources available from publishers.
- Attend a local, state, or national social studies conference to get catalogs, material samples, and instructional strategies directly from publishers and exhibitors.
- Check your school or local library, teacher center, and regional BOCES.
- Find activities, programs, and organizations that exist in your school's city, town, or village that focus on a world community (e.g., cultural museums, educational programs, historic sites).
- Identify which multimedia, computer software, and video/audio programming exist in your school and which can be purchased or borrowed.

3. Are there sufficient professional development opportunities to help you develop content expertise in your selected world communities?

- Look for teacher center or local college credit-bearing courses, education programs, summer teacher institutes, study seminars, and programs abroad.
- See the *New York State Education Department Social Studies Leaders' Guide: Prekindergarten - Grade 12* for assistance in planning and professional development (coming soon to the social studies website).

Pace your curriculum.

1. How much time can be devoted to social studies each week?

2. How long will it take to study each world community selected?

- Will you study one community, continent, or region per month? Per marking period? Per quarter?

3. How can interdisciplinary connections be made to foster the study of world communities in other curricula?

- Develop strategies to incorporate other subject areas in the world community units.

4. What are strategies to avoid a narrow focus in the classroom study of world communities?

- World communities should be explored from multiple perspectives-not simply from the perspectives of holidays, food, and stereotypes.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM THE NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:

Social Studies Instructional Strategies & Resources: Prekindergarten Through Grade 6

- Online at www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/pub/pubss.html .
- Grade 3: pages 127-156.
- Sections: Focus Questions; Content Understandings; Classroom Activities; Teacher Notes; Interdisciplinary Connections; Suggested Documents and Other Resources Selected by New York State Teachers; Using the Internet.

Sample Constructed-Response Questions (CRQs) and Document-Based Questions (DBQs)

- Online at www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/elintsocst.html .
- Research previous versions of the *Grade 5 Elementary-Level Social Studies Test* to find CRQs and DBQs that address world communities.

Sample Grade 3 Lesson Plans

- "Call for Content: Grade 3 Communities Around the World" coming soon to the social studies Web site at www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/social.html .
- Sample lesson plans based on this publication and on *Social Studies Instructional Strategies & Resources: Prekindergarten Through Grade 6*.

The following [worksheet](#) can be duplicated. It summarizes the major factors to consider when selecting world communities for study in the grade 3 classroom and provides a space for you to plan how each factor relates to the needs of your school and class.



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