



*How To Study Cultures*



Photos by Michael Speaks



*How Geography  
Defines a Culture*

*Teacher's Guide*

*Lesson 2*  
*How Geography*  
*Defines a Culture*

*from*  
*How to Study Cultures*  
*A Unit of Study*

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**Teacher's Guide**

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# Lesson 1

## HOW GEOGRAPHY DEFINES A CULTURE

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# **HOW TO STUDY CULTURES**

## **A Unit of Study**

### **Grades 8-12**

#### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SERIES**

*How to Study Cultures* is a live-action, four-part series which is designed to help students learn how to study any culture.

What is a culture? A culture is a total way of life of a people. Individuals growing up in a culture learn acceptable ways to behave and function within that culture. Members learn how to use the natural resources found in their environment and how to adapt to the climatic and topographic features of their region. They learn about the economic activities carried on by members of their culture. They acquire knowledge, skills, and techniques that will allow them to participate in these activities. They learn about the social groups that have been formed within their culture and how to participate in these groups. They also learn what culture members value and believe and that these values and beliefs influence how people behave.

As people become more interactive within and among cultures, and knowledge of the diversity of human conditions grows, it becomes increasingly more important that students know how to identify the crucial factors that define cultures. Knowledge of these factors will help them understand and appreciate cultures different from their own and hopefully facilitate their cross-cultural interactions.

#### **UNIT GOALS**

This Unit of Study is designed to help students learn how to study and analyze any culture by answering four key questions:

- How do culture members adapt to their environment?
- What economic activities do culture members carry on to help them survive in their environment?
- What social organizations exist within the culture, and what are their purposes?
- What do culture members value and believe, and how do these values and beliefs influence individual and group behavior?

Specific student objectives are contained in the teacher's guide supplied for each video lesson. These objectives will assist students in grasping the fundamentals of each topic. By achieving these objectives for each video lesson, the students will be able to accomplish the unit goals.

## MATERIALS IN THE UNIT

### Videocassettes

This unit contains four individual videocassettes - one for each video lesson. The titles and a brief description of the contents for each video are provided below. The programs may be viewed independently or as a Unit of Study and do not need to be presented in any particular sequence. The description of the program contained in this guide, Lesson 1, is printed in bold type.

#### **Lesson 1: HOW GEOGRAPHY DEFINES A CULTURE**

**Members of a culture adapt to their natural environment. They use the natural resources available, and they learn to cope with the climatic and topographic features found in the region in which they live. Natural resources, topography, and climate affect how and where people live, their economic activities, transportation, and recreation. They also determine how a culture interacts with other cultures in that natural resources are unevenly distributed among regions.**

**Viewing time: 18 minutes**

#### *Lesson 2: HOW ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES DEFINE A CULTURE*

Members of a culture carry on certain economic activities to meet their needs and wants. These activities are influenced by climatic and topographic features and by natural resources available in the natural environment in which the culture exists. Members of a culture develop technology to help them carry on their economic activities; technology increases economic efficiency. Members of a culture organize their economic activities around certain economic principles.

Viewing time: 20 minutes

#### *Lesson 3: HOW SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS DEFINE A CULTURE*

Culture members organize groups to educate, to govern, to nurture, to recreate, to work, and to worship. These groups include the nuclear and extended families, religious congregations, formal and informal educational groups, recreational organizations, work groups, ethnic groups, and governmental groups. Government is organized according to political concepts, such as democracy, monarchy, communism, and dictatorship, among others.

Viewing time: 22 minutes

#### Lesson 4: *HOW BELIEFS AND VALUES DEFINE A CULTURE*

Beliefs and values influence how members of a culture conduct their lives. Every culture has a history, and certain events in history teach valuable lessons about conduct. The resulting beliefs and values influence the key economic and political concepts used to organize the culture's economy and government. Beliefs and values influence what is cherished by the members of the culture, as well as what material objects, social relationships, procedures, skills, and techniques they value. Religious beliefs can greatly influence the beliefs and values of a culture.

Viewing time: 24 minutes

#### **Teacher's Guides**

A guide, provided with each video lesson in this series, aids the teacher in utilizing the materials contained within this Unit of Study. The guides contain the following:

- Suggested Instructional Procedures for each lesson.
- Follow-up activities, and Internet activities for each lesson.
- Answer keys for the blackline master activities.
- The transcript of each video narration.

#### **Blackline Masters**

Blackline master activities for each video lesson are included in this Unit of Study. These activities, including Listening Guides and Discussion Questions, are designed to reinforce the information in the video and to provide extended learning activities for the students. Unit blackline master culminating activities are included with this series when purchased as a unit.

#### **Unit of Study Packet**

An envelope containing the Unit activities is included in each complete four-part program. It contains activities and a unit test. The activities are designed to reinforce the lessons and to assess student comprehension of the entire Unit of Study. A passage describing these activities follows.

### **UNIT BLACKLINE MASTERS and CULMINATING ACTIVITIES**

1. Before commencing the presentation of this unit to your students, distribute Blackline Master 1, **How to Study Cultures: A Unit Introduction**. This information will help prepare students for the lessons and provide them with an overview of the philosophy of this program.



2. After viewing the four videotapes and completing the activities for each of the four lessons, distribute Blackline Master 2, **How to Study Cultures: A Study Model**. Have each student identify a country whose culture she/he would like to study. Instruct students to prepare reports on these cultures using the study model.

3. After viewing the four videotapes and completing the activities for each of the four lessons, distribute Blackline Masters 4 and 5, **Ethnocentrism and One Hundred Percent American**. This exercise illustrates to students the concept of ethnocentrism—the resistance of others’ cultures in favor of one’s native culture. Have your students read and then discuss the questions regarding Ralph Linton’s essay, “One Hundred Percent American.”

4. The Unit test is supplied on Blackline Masters 6-9. You may choose to use any or all of the Unit Test to test the student's comprehension of the material presented in all four lessons. An answer key can be found beginning on page 8 of this guide.

## INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

It is suggested that you review each video lesson and read the Suggested Instructional Procedures in each Teacher’s Guide before involving students in the lesson activities. In this way, you will become familiar with the materials and be better prepared to adapt them to the needs of your students. You may find it necessary to make some changes, deletions, or additions to fit the specific needs of your class. We encourage you to do so, for only by tailoring this program to your students will they obtain the maximum instructional benefits afforded by the materials.

It is also suggested that the video presentation take place before the entire group, under your supervision. The lesson activities grow out of the content of the video; therefore, the presentation should be a common experience for all students.

Have your students start a *How to Study Cultures* folder. All blackline masters and other important materials pertaining to the study of cultures should be kept in this folder. These materials will help them prepare for their report at the end of this unit.

**Lesson 1**  
**HOW GEOGRAPHY DEFINES A CULTURE**  
**Grades 8-12**  
**Viewing Time: 18 minutes**

**SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES**

**Teacher Preparation**

- Read through the entire lesson plan for this lesson.
- Duplicate Blackline Masters 1-2.
- Preview the videotape “How Geography Defines a Culture.” A script of the video narration can be found beginning on page 13 in this guide.

The content for this lesson is contained in the videotape. The videotape content has been developed around four basic questions:

- How do members of a culture adapt to the climatic features of their environment?
- How do members of a culture deal with the topographic features of their environment?
- How do members of a culture utilize natural resources to meet their basic needs for food, water, clothing, and shelter?
- How has the natural environment influenced the culture’s population distribution?

Student objectives and activities have been developed around these key questions. The purpose of this lesson is to help students learn to study any culture by focusing their inquiry around key questions concerning geography.

**Student Preparation**

Students will need a pen or pencil to complete the blackline master activities.

## **Student Objectives**

After viewing the videotape and participating in the lesson activities, students will be able to:

- Explain how climate, topography, and natural resources influence how members of a culture adapt to their environment.
- Explain how climatic and topographic features and available natural resources influence population distribution patterns.
- Describe how geographic elements have influenced culture development in a specific region.
- Describe the natural resources and climatic and topographic features of a specific region of the earth's surface.

## **Introducing the Program**

Distribute Blackline Masters 1-2. Explain to your students that this videotape has been designed to show how geography influences cultural development. Have students answer the questions on Blackline Master 1, *How Geography Defines a Culture Listening Guide*, during or shortly after the videotape presentation. You may find it necessary to stop the video at certain points to give the students time to write responses to the questions on the Listening Guide. An answer key for the blackline master activities is provided on page 7 of this guide. Correct the Listening Guide orally with your students and discuss the important points as needed for clarification.

- **Present the video.** The viewing time is 18 minutes.

## **Follow-Up Activities**

1. Assign Blackline Master 2, **Discussion Questions**. Give students time to make some notes about each question, then ask them to add to their notes as you discuss the questions and answers with them.
2. Ask students to select a region of the earth's surface and prepare a short report describing the region's climatic and topographic features and its available natural resources. Based on this information, what predictions would they make about the adaptations of the cultures that exist in these regions?

## ANSWER KEY

### Blackline Master 1, **How Geography Defines a Culture Listening Guide**

Student answers will vary but should include similar content.

1. To examine ways in which the geography of a region helps to create the culture of the people who live there.
2. Topography, climate and natural resources.
3. Physical features of the land including variations in elevation, locations of bodies of water, and natural or human-made features.
4. Shorelines, mountains, deserts, prairies, and rivers.
5. Roads, dams, bridges.
6. Climate is the average condition of weather over a long period of time with emphasis on temperature and precipitation averages.
7. It influences economic activities, clothing worn, and types of housing.
8. Elements from the earth that can be developed and used by humans in their economic production.
9. Trees, oil, coal and other minerals, water, and animals found in the region.
10. Food, clothing, water and shelter.

### Blackline Master 2, **Discussion Questions**

1. Answers will vary but encourage students to think about ways people have dealt with shorelines, rivers, mountains, etc., found in their region. How has topography influenced where people live and what economic activities are carried on in their regions?
2. Answers will vary but encourage students to think about how climatic features influence clothing, shelter, transportation, economic activities, and recreation in their region.
3. Ask students to consider the natural resources found in their region and to describe how people in the region use these resources.
4. Answers will vary but natural resources are generally imported because they are in limited supply in the country.
5. Encourage students to think about how food, clothing, water, and shelter get to the consumer.
6. Population distribution patterns are influenced by topographic and climatic features, e.g. mountains, deserts, available water, temperature and by available natural resources.

**Blackline Masters 6-9 UNIT TEST** (Supplied in the Unit Blackline Masters and Culminating Activities envelope.)

**Blackline Master 6, TRUE OR FALSE (Answers appear in bold face.)**

T 1. Economic activities are part of any culture; economic activities are carried on to meet the needs and wants of culture members.

F 2. What people believe and value has little influence on individual behavior.

T 3. Members of a culture share a common language; however, other languages may exist within a culture.

T 4. A football team is an example of a recreational group.

F 5. Because of modern technology, members of a culture no longer have to adapt to their natural environment.

T 6. Mountains, dams, harbors, and swamps are all examples of topographic features.

F 7. Teachers, bus drivers, wheat farmers, and cooks are all service-related jobs.

F 8. Climatic and topographic features have little influence on population distribution patterns.

F 9. Schools are not social organizations, they are educational groups.

F 10. Most religions do not espouse guidelines for individual behavior.

F 11. Available natural resources have little impact on economic activities.

F 12. All natural resources are generally available to all cultures in unlimited supply.

T 13. Cultures develop technology to help them carry on economic activities.

F 14. Climate has little influence on what economic activities are carried on by members of a culture.

F 15. A free market economy is controlled by government economic planners. The planners eliminate competition in the market place.

T 16. Nuclear and extended families are basic economic units.

F 17. Work groups exist only for the production of goods; work groups do not provide services.

F 18. A monarchy is a form of government characterized by the rule of a military dictatorship.

F 19. Recreational groups exist just for fun.

T 20. In a command economy, the government owns all significant enterprises and closely regulates all economic activity.

Blackline Master 7, **FILL IN THE BLANKS**

1. A culture is **learned behavior** acquired by individuals as members of a social group.
2. A **nuclear** family includes mother, father, and their children.
3. A **bridge** is an example of a topographic feature.
4. **Climate** is the average condition of the weather over a long period of time.
5. Fish, natural gas, and sand are **natural resources**.
6. Cultures develop **economic systems** to facilitate the exchange of goods and services.
7. Food, water, shelter, and clothing are **subsistent needs** necessary for basic human survival.
8. **Social relationships** are valued in most cultures.
9. Through formal and informal **education**, values and beliefs are passed from one generation to the next.
10. History can teach valuable **lessons** about how to live within a culture.
11. **Technology** usually evolves from people's need to increase economic production.
12. **Beliefs and values** influence the development of a culture's political and economic systems.
13. One reason families exist in cultures is to **nurture** children.
14. **Religious** groups are formed to assist in worship and reinforce the practice of a belief in a divine entity.
15. **Communication** is the one vital element that allows social organizations to exist.

Blackline Master 8, **MULTIPLE CHOICE**

1. Examples of natural resources are
  - (a). a dam and wind
  - (b). **coal and trees**
  - (c). a highway and cars
  - (d). a bridge and fish
2. Topography is
  - (a). precipitation averages
  - (b). natural resources of a region
  - (c). **the physical features of the land**
  - (d). average temperature of a region
3. Elements that comprise the geography of a region include
  - (a). natural resources
  - (b). climate
  - (c). topography
  - (d). **(a), (b), and (c)**
  - (e). (b) and (c), but not (a)
4. Agricultural jobs include
  - (a). automobile assembly line workers
  - (b). **apple growers and cattle producers**
  - (c). lawyers and doctors
  - (d). barbers and painters
5. Climate is long-term weather conditions of a region, with an emphasis on
  - (a). **temperature and precipitation averages**
  - (b). rain and snow storms
  - (c). floods and earthquakes
  - (d). wind and sun
6. Technology consists of
  - (a). tools and machines
  - (b). materials
  - (c). plans and procedures
  - (d). (a) and (b), but not (c)
  - (e). **(a), (b), and (c)**
7. Extended families may include
  - (a). grandparents
  - (b). aunts and uncles
  - (c). cousins
  - (d). **all of the above**
8. Democracies, dictatorships, and monarchies are examples of
  - (a). types of economies
  - (b). types of religious groups
  - (c). **types of governments**
  - (d). types of cultures

9. The tendency of a person to judge other cultures according to his or her own cultural standards is referred to as
- (a). economics                      (c). **ethnocentrism**  
 (b). religious indifference      (d). cultural inferiority
10. When studying cultures, it is important to consider
- (a). How culture members have adapted to their environment  
 (b). What social organizations exist and why they exist  
 (c). What economic activities exist  
 (d). What culture members believe and value  
 (e). **(a), (b), (c), and (d)**

Blackline Master 9, **MATCHING**

**TERMS**

- N 1. topography  
I 2. dictatorship  
  
J 3. beliefs  
H 4. values  
  
F 5. culture  
  
M 6. nuclear family  
K 7. climate  
C 8. subsistent needs  
  
D 9. agricultural  
  
E 10. monarchy

**DEFINITIONS**

- A. Government for the people, by the people.  
 B. Parents, offspring, aunts, uncles, and cousins.  
 C. Food, water, clothing, and shelter.  
 D. Involved in farming of crops and/or animals.  
 E. Form of government ruled by a royal family.  
 F. A total way of life of a people.  
 G. Natural resources and land forms.  
 H. Things that are cherished by culture members.  
 I. Form of government ruled by one powerful leader, often against the will of the people.  
 J. A conviction that something is true and should influence how one behaves.  
 K. The average temperature and precipitation of a region.  
 L. Food, shelter, and luxury items.  
 M. Parents and their offspring.  
 N. The physical features of the land.



## INTERNET ACTIVITES

1. Visit the **What is Culture?** website at

**<http://www.wsu.edu:8001/vcwsu/common/topics/culture/culture-index.html>**

This site contains information on the definitions and components of culture as well as links to other culture-related websites, a glossary, and quotations on culture. Several scholarly articles are published herein; you may want to duplicate and distribute these pieces to spur discussion.

2. The search engine Yahoo! has a **Society and Culture** site at

**[http://www.yahoo.com/Society\\_and\\_culture/Cultures](http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_culture/Cultures)**

This site includes links to information on more than 100 specific world cultures as well as a search mechanism. The information herein would be extremely helpful to students in compiling reports and profiles, including the Culminating Activities for the "How to Study Cultures" Unit of Study.

3. **Cultural Studies Central** at

**<http://home.earthlink.net/%7Ermarkowitz>**

contains some great links to cultural information, including pop culture, that offer an effective way to tie the study of cultures to the modern cultural climate. It incorporates World Wide Web projects involving culture, as well as links to sites of interest and profiles of pop culture icons.

## **Script of Video Narration**

Icy windshields, blowing snow, subzero temperatures. It's been said that how one lives is partially determined by where one lives. Location, climate and the natural resources of an area are key influences in how people live and will help us understand how to study a culture.

What is a culture? Most anthropologists agree that a human culture is learned behavior acquired by individuals as members of a social group.

There are several universal elements which need to be examined in order to understand and define a culture. They include geography and natural resources, social organizations, beliefs and values, and economic activities.

Members of a culture share certain beliefs, morals, customs, traditional practices and a common language.

The sum of the elements that unite a group of people is collectively referred to as a culture. A culture is a total way of life.

This lesson will examine the ways in which the geography of a region helps to create the culture of the people who live there. Geography is defined as the scientific study of the earth's surface.

Our study will include these key elements that comprise geography: topography, climate, and natural resources. These elements influence how people adapt to their surroundings.

The first element in defining the geography of a region is its topography. Topography is the physical features of the land including variations in elevation, the locations of bodies of water, and natural or human-made features in a specific region.

Natural topographical features are those elements of the landscape created as part of nature including shorelines, mountain , deserts, prairies, and rivers. People have learned to deal with each of these land elements in different ways.

The topography of a region frequently forces people to adapt. For example, cultures that exist in mountainous regions still need to produce food. People adapt to the rolling landscape by terracing the hillside for farming.

Human-made topographical features include roads, dams, and bridges—elements constructed by people forced to adapt to their environments. A bridge or dam can dramatically change how a culture uses an available waterway. For example, a bridge doesn't just provide easier access across a body of water; it also impacts on the economics of a culture by facilitating trade. By providing greater opportunities for interaction and communication among people, it may also facilitate the formation of different types of social organizations.

The topography of a region can also be altered to meet people's economic needs and wants. For example, the coastline of Lake Michigan is reinforced with rocks and earth near several cities so roads could be created near the shoreline. The roads provide access to businesses, boat harbors, resorts, and beaches.

In many drier, inland regions devoted to agricultural production, irrigation is often used to deliver water for crops.

In some parts of the world, people have altered the topography by draining wetlands to create more room for housing or additional farmland. It's important to note, however, that some topographical alterations damage the environment. For example, draining a wetland can drive off wildlife that may have needed the marshland as part of its seasonal migration. The wildlife may also have been a source of food for people of that region.

The study of a region's climate is also important in understanding how to study a culture.

Climate is the average condition of the weather over a long period of time with emphasis on temperature and precipitation averages.

An area's climate affects many things in a culture including the types of economic activities performed, the type of clothing people wear, and the type of shelter people need to protect themselves from climatic conditions, such as heat, rain, wind or snow.

In the cold, snowy climate of Sweden's northern Lapland region, the Sami people hunt reindeer. They use the meat for food and use the hide of the animal to create warm clothing. The animal hide is also used occasionally for shelter.

In Australia's outback region, finding food and available fresh water are daily concerns for native Aborigines. Here, shelter and clothing are designed to protect them from the harsh sun and torrential rains.

In contrast to Australia, the tiny kingdom of Bhutan is a landlocked country that presents very different geographical obstacles to its people.

The topography is extremely mountainous, with the Greater Himalayan mountain chain dominating more than a third of the nation. Because of the extreme elevation changes, the climate varies greatly throughout the kingdom.

But the Bhutanese have adapted to the unique topography and climate of their region. Their traditional dress includes warm, ankle length clothing and they've learned to use the available land and ample water supply to grow crops such as wheat and rice.

Even the spiritual beliefs of Bhutanese culture have been influenced by certain geographical elements. Many religious structures, such as the revered Tiger's Nest monastery, have been built on mountain tops and cliff sides, in accordance with religious legends.

Climate and topography also play a role in determining the production of goods and services. For example, the land may be well suited for development of forest products, for agricultural use, or hunting, or as a source of oil or minerals. These elements are known as natural resources.

Natural resources are elements from the earth that can be developed and used by humans in their economic production. Minerals, trees, water, wind and animals are all examples of natural resources.

Members of a culture utilize natural resources to meet the subsistent needs of the population. Subsistent needs include a person's basic requirement of food, water, shelter, and clothing. Subsistent needs are necessary for survival.

People engage in der shawls worn by seventeenth-century Croat . He gives himself a final appraisal in the mirror, an old Mediteranean invention, and goes downstairs to breakfast. Here a whle new series of foreign th

confronts him. His food and drink are placed before him in ptery vessels, the popular name of which - china

sufficient evidence of their origin. His fork is a medieval Italian invention and his spoon a copy of a Roman original. He will usually begin the meal with coffee, an Abyssinian Raw lumber or manufactured goods are often exported to other cultures in exchange for other goods or money.

Bodies of water are part of a region's topography, but they are also natural resources. Water can support industries, such as electrical power or fishing, and can help facilitate the transport of goods through shipping.

No single culture has all the natural resources it needs. For that reason, many cultures trade natural resources for money or other necessary items. Cultures also adapt to their environments by specializing in the production of goods that use the natural resources available locally.

One example of a culture adapting to its geography is found in the way Bhutanese people build their homes. In addition to wood, the Bhutanese use mud to construct the foundation of the house. Dried, pounded mud acts like cement to hold the structure together.

House building in Bhutan is a communal effort. Because of the topography, most communities in Bhutan are very small. Family, friends and neighbors form an extended family that's learned to work together as a type of social organization.

While people may perceive natural resources as abundant, they're actually in limited supply. When resources, such as forests are not over-harvested, they can replenish themselves over time. New trees can be planted for future use. These are known as renewable resources. In some countries, such as the United States, logging companies are required by law to replant trees to replace the ones they've harvested.

Other natural resources, such as coal, oil and natural gas are known as non-renewable resources. These can only be harvested once and are depleted upon use. Once non-renewable resources are depleted, people are forced to find alternative ways to meet their needs.

The supply of available resources often dictates how the population is spread out over the land.

When the geography of a region will support it, people often cluster together in cities or villages.

It's sometimes easier and more convenient to live in cities. Employment and housing may be more available and cities are frequently centers of social activity.

Cities are often located near bodies of water or where trade routes have been established with other cultures.

Other members of the population spread out in rural areas to farm the land. In agricultural areas, people live further apart because it requires more land to support agriculture and livestock.

Farmers also supply city-dwellers with much of the food and other resources they require.

There are many different geographical factors to consider when learning how to study a culture. To recap, geography is the scientific study of the earth's surface.

The geographic factors that influence culture include topography, climate, and natural resources.

People in a culture usually adapt to the geography of the area in which they live. Where people live is largely determined by the topography and climate and the available natural resources. People meet their subsistent needs through economic activities which are strongly influenced by the region's geography.

Understanding how the geography of a region impacts the way people live and the influence on the economy will help greatly in learning how to study the various cultures of the world.



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