

Daily *warm-ups*



# WORLD CULTURES

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*The Daily Warm-Ups series* is a wonderful way to turn extra classroom minutes into valuable learning time. The 180 quick activities—one for each day of the school year—present and review information about different cultures of the world. These daily activities may be used at the very beginning of class to get students into learning mode, near the end of class to make good educational use of that transitional time, in the middle of class to shift gears between lessons—or whenever else you have minutes that now go unused. In addition to providing students with fascinating information, they are a natural path to other classroom activities involving critical thinking.

*Daily Warm-Ups* are easy-to-use reproducibles—simply photocopy the day’s activity and distribute it. Or make a transparency of the activity and project it on the board. You may want to use the activities for extra-credit points or as a check on the knowledge and critical-thinking skills that are acquired over time.

These activities have been chosen to address more of the “human” aspects of world cultures, focusing less on politics, war, and conflict. Some of the topics in the activities may be less familiar to students. In such cases, you may want to encourage students to use their textbooks or other resources to complete the activity.

The first section of this book looks at the features that contribute to cultures. You may want to use these activities to make students aware of these aspects of culture. The rest of the book is organized by region. Within each region, activities address certain key topics. To help you choose activities by topic, each activity title includes an icon. Here is a key to the topics:



transmission of culture—proverbs, myths, customs, etc.



keeping time—calendars, festivals, days of remembrance



contributions to world culture—religion, food, cultural heritage sites, etc.



language and literature



important historical events



people of note



the arts

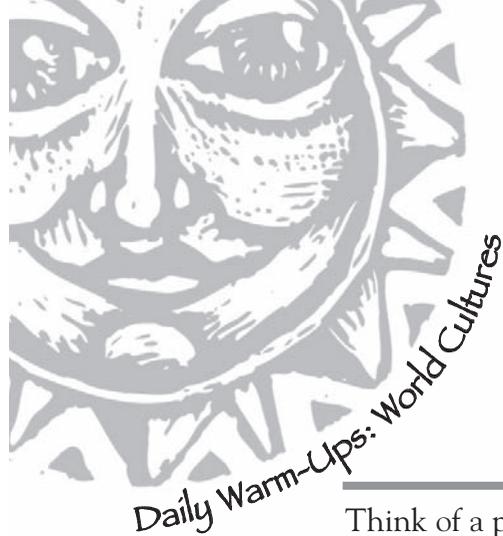


how physical geography affects culture



cultures in contact, in conflict, and in the process of change

However you choose to use them, *Daily Warm-Ups* are a convenient and useful supplement to your regular lesson plans. Make every minute of your class time count!



*Daily Warm-Ups: World Cultures*

## Proverbs and Daily Life

Proverbs are short sayings people use all the time. Some proverbs give practical advice, such as “Look before you leap.” Some encourage people dealing with problems: “It’s darkest just before dawn.” And some pass judgment on a person’s actions: “More haste, less speed.”

The same thing holds true for cultures all around the world. All kinds of different peoples use proverbs. They are a way of passing on information within a culture. Through proverbs, people learn what is considered moral behavior.

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Think of a proverb you are familiar with. (If you can’t think of any, use one of the ones above.) What is the purpose of the proverb—to give advice or encouragement, to pass judgment, or something else? Does it reflect a certain type of culture? Write one or two sentences for your answer.



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# A Variety of Calendars

What year is it? How do you know?

We take time for granted, but accurate clocks and calendars are fairly recent developments. And the Gregorian calendar—the calendar used in the United States—isn't the only one used in the world. In fact, about forty different calendars are in use today! However, most of them are used primarily to determine religious dates. Most countries use the Gregorian calendar for official activities.

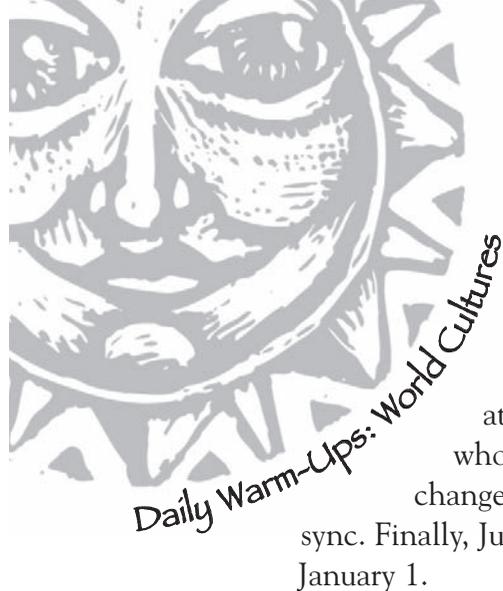
The Gregorian calendar is based on a solar year, which is 365.242 days. That is how long it takes the earth to travel around the sun.



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In the Gregorian calendar, a year has  $365 \frac{1}{4}$  days. But a day is a 24-hour period. How can a calendar adjust for a quarter of a day? Write one or two sentences for your answer.





## Ring in the New Year

In the United States, we celebrate the start of a new year on January 1. The word *January* comes from the Roman god Janus. In Roman religion, Janus was the god of beginnings. Janus had two faces, one looking forward and one looking backward. In January we look back at the old year and look ahead at the new one.

However, the ancient Romans didn't always celebrate the new year in January. For a long time, their new-year celebration was in late March, at the start of spring. This is the time when new crops are planted and the whole earth seems to make a fresh start. Over time, different emperors made changes to the Roman calendar. The calendar and the seasons ended up out of sync. Finally, Julius Caesar set up a new calendar. He declared that the year began on January 1.

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Because of that Roman calendar, many countries now celebrate the new year on January 1. But many other cultures celebrate the new year at different times. What do you know about different ways people celebrate the new year? Write down as many as you can think of. Include your own new-year's traditions and symbols.





# Influential Development

Some developments are minor conveniences. Some change the world. We can learn how important a development is by asking a few questions. What is its effect on society? Does it improve people's quality of life? How many people benefit from it?

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Here are some developments made in the past 150 years. Use the questions given above to assess them. Which of these developments would you consider the most important? Write one or two sentences to explain your answer.

## **Internal combustion engine**

- makes it easier to travel long distances and to transport goods
- most available in United States, Europe; least available in India, China

## **Water purification and sanitation (toilets)**

- reduces death from dysentery, cholera, etc.
- most available in industrialized nations

## **Generation and transmission of electricity**

- led to practical inventions, including lighting, refrigeration, radio, television, computers, the Internet
- most available in industrialized nations





Daily Warm-Ups: World Cultures

## World Heritage Sites

UNESCO is part of the United Nations. The name stands for “United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.” One of its programs is the World Heritage Convention. More than 150 nations have joined. Members can suggest sites for the World Heritage List. This is a list of places around the world that are important to everyone, not just to one country. To be included, a site must have either cultural or natural importance. Sites can be natural or made by humans. The important thing is that a site must have outstanding universal value.

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More than 730 places have been listed as World Heritage Sites, in more than 125 countries. Some of them are not very well known. Some are famous.

Think about the criteria for being listed. The site must have universal value and either cultural or natural importance. What places, in the United States and around the world, can you think of that should be World Heritage Sites? List as many places as you can that meet the criteria.





## Languages and Loanwords

Whenever two languages are in contact with each other for a long time, they influence each other. The most obvious influence is in vocabulary. When one culture has no word for something that comes from a different place, it often adopts the other place's word. Such words are called loanwords. For example, basketball was invented in the United States. When other countries adopted the game, they needed a word for it, too. The easiest thing was to adopt the word *basketball* along with the game. But, of course, the word needed to be adapted to fit into different languages. In French it became *le basket*. In Japanese, it's *basuke*. Turks play *basketbol*.



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Some languages easily adopt loanwords from other languages. But some cultures resist adding foreign words. They try to develop their own terms for new ideas.

Which approach to loanwords do you think is best for a language, easy adoption or the resistance of foreign words? Write one or two sentences to explain your answer.



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## History: Cause and Effect

In many ways, history is a long, long chain of cause and effect. Because a storm sank the Mongol fleet in 1274, the Mongols did not conquer Japan. Because an Italian sailor was stubborn, Europe and the Americas came into contact in 1492. Because of a German mapmaker, America was named for a later explorer, not Christopher Columbus.

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Think of at least four events that changed history. Name each one, and write one or two sentences explaining why it is important.

