

Cultural Characteristics

Grade: 8, 11
Subject: Social Studies
Time: 2 Hours

Critical Issues - Lesson Plan

“Cultural Characteristics Influence a Region’s Character”

<p>Unit: Social Studies 8 - Interactions and Interdependence of Nations; Social Studies 20, Unit 2 - Population</p>	<p>Specific Topic: Diversity; Maternal Health; Child Mortality</p>
<p>URL: http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/10/g912/region.html</p>	
<p>Lesson Description: This lesson provides some excellent country profiles that include maternal mortality rate, fertility rate, and other statistics related to the status of women in other cultures. The lesson provides the background and the activities that will engage students and challenge their way of thinking about health around the world and in particular women’s maternal health.</p>	
<p>Curriculum Outcomes:</p> <p>Grade 8 Outcome - IN8.1: Investigate the meaning of culture and the origins of Canadian cultural diversity. (b, c)</p> <p>Grade 11 - Know that the rate of natural increase in a population is the difference between the birth rate and the death rate - Know that population growth rates vary from region to region and that regions with different population compositions make different demands on social policy.</p> <p>Additional Cross-Curricular Connections: Health</p>	

Assessment:

- Have each group of students choose one of the countries from the list to study further. They can find information by researching for individual country information on the following sites:

- National Geographic
- BBC News: Country Profiles
- Google (or other related search engines)
- Population References Bureau
- United Nations

- Have students put together a presentation about the country, beginning with the statistics they studied earlier.

- Were there assumptions students made about the country born out of their research? For example, if the statistics showed low literacy rates and students interpreted that to mean that there were few skilled jobs available, were they correct?
- What evidence do they have to back it up? What have they learned about the country - in particular, its culture - that might explain some of the statistics they analyzed?

Materials:

- Country information sheet

Procedure:

Before

- Provide students with this country information sheet, which lists demographic statistics for several actual but unidentified countries. [Note: Eventually students will be looking these statistics up on the Internet and matching them to a list of countries you will provide, but for now, the countries should stay unidentified.]

- Ask students the following questions about the data:
 - How could we sensibly group this data?
 - Which countries would you classify together within the groups you suggest?
- Students should divide countries "A" through "N" into a few groups that share common characteristics.
- Divide the class into small groups and have group members share their conclusions with each other. Instruct them to reach consensus on the establishment of three groups of countries. Then have one student from each team write its three groups on the board for comparison.

During

- Ask students to label their three groups. There are a variety of ways to do this, for example, "developed," "underdeveloped," and "undeveloped." Have students identify correlations and speculate on relationships between some of the demographic variables on the country information sheet

Examples:

- Students may discern the positive correlation between total fertility rates and maternal mortality ratio. Have students suggest reasons for the variability in both of these figures and for the apparent relationship between them.
- Ask questions about the relationship between literacy rates and fertility rates. Why might countries with low rates of literacy have high fertility rates? Ask students what aspects of a country's common culture might have an impact on the variables. Point out that the level of technological development and various traditions can strongly influence these variables.
- Countries having low female literacy rates might also be countries in which women have difficulty participating in politics and getting good jobs. Ask students which factors can influence literacy rates and contraceptive usage. (Religion, cultural traditions and values, and the level of technological development are some.)
- Have students to explore additional relationships and make inferences. Ask students to formulate a hypothesis based on the demographic data contained on the country information sheet. For example, a student might respond: "Countries that have high total fertility rates and high maternal mortality rates will tend to have poor health care." Write the hypotheses on the board for class analysis.

- Next, have students explore the statistics at the Population Reference Bureau's DataFinder and the CIA World

Factbook 2002 to match the unidentified countries on their list with the following countries:

Finland	Philippines
Mexico	Brazil
Syria	South Africa
India	China
Tanzania	Nigeria
Russia	Australia
Japan	United States

- Check answers as a class.

After:

- Can students think of any ways that the statistics they analyzed might be deceptive? For example, is the maternal mortality rate different in South Africa or the United States, depending on race or poverty

Extension Resource: For further information on Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and additional resources, see [SCIC's Global Citizenship Education Modules](#).