

Culture

If YOU lived there...

You live in New York City, and your young cousin from out of state has come to visit. As you take her on a tour of the city, you point out the different cultural neighborhoods, like Chinatown, Little Italy, Spanish Harlem, and Koreatown. Your cousin isn't quite sure what culture means or why these neighborhoods are so different.

How can you explain what culture is?

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Culture is the set of beliefs, goals, and practices that a group of people share.
2. The world includes many different culture groups.
3. New ideas and events lead to changes in culture.

The Big Idea

Culture, a group's shared practices and beliefs, differs from group to group and changes over time.

Key Terms

culture, p. 80

culture trait, p. 81

culture region, p. 82

ethnic group, p. 83

cultural diversity, p. 83

cultural diffusion, p. 85

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes on culture. Use a web diagram like the one below to organize your notes.



BUILDING BACKGROUND For hundreds of years, immigrants from around the world have moved to the United States to make a new home here. They have brought with them all the things that make up culture—language, religion, beliefs, traditions, and more. As a result, the United States has one of the most diverse cultures in the world.

What Is Culture?

If you traveled around the world, you would experience many different sights and sounds. You would probably hear unique music, eat a variety of foods, listen to different languages, see distinctive landscapes, and learn new customs. You would see and take part in the variety of cultures that exist in our world.

A Way of Life

What exactly is culture? **Culture is the set of beliefs, values, and practices that a group of people has in common.** Culture includes many aspects of life, such as language and religion, that we may share with people around us. Everything in your day-to-day life is part of your culture, from the clothes you wear to the music you hear to the foods you eat.

On your world travels, you might notice that all societies share certain cultural features. All people have some kind of government, educate their children in some way, and create some type of art or music. However, not all societies practice their culture in the same way. For example, in Japan the school year begins in the spring, and students wear school uniforms. In the United States, however, the school year begins in the late

Culture Traits



These students in Japan and Kenya have some culture traits in common, like eating lunch at school. Other culture traits are different.

ANALYZING VISUALS What culture traits do these students share? Which are different?

summer, and most schools do not require uniforms. Differences like these are what make each culture unique.

Culture Traits

Cultural features like starting the school year in the spring or wearing uniforms are types of culture traits. **A culture trait is an activity or behavior in which people often take part.** The language you speak and the sports you play are some of your culture traits. Sometimes a culture trait is shared by people around the world. For example, all around the globe people participate in the game of soccer. In places as different as Germany, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia, many people enjoy playing and watching soccer.

While some culture traits are shared around the world, others change from place to place. One example of this is how people around the world eat. In China most people use chopsticks to eat their food. In Europe, however, people use forks and spoons. In Ethiopia, many people use bread or their fingers to scoop their food.

Development of Culture

How do cultures develop? Culture traits are often learned or passed down from one generation to the next. Most culture traits develop within families as traditions, foods, or holiday customs are handed down over the years. Laws and moral codes are also passed down within societies. Many laws in the United States, for example, can be traced back to England in the 1600s, and were brought by colonists to America.

Cultures also develop as people learn new culture traits. Immigrants who move to a new country, for example, might learn to speak the language or eat the foods of their adopted country.

Other factors, such as history and the environment, also affect how cultures develop. For example, historical events changed the language and religion of much of Central and South America. In the 1500s when the Spanish conquered the region, they introduced their language and Roman Catholic faith. The environment in which we live can also shape culture.

FOCUS ON READING

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

For example, the desert environment of Africa's Sahara influences the way people who live there earn a living. Rather than grow crops, they herd animals that have adapted to the harsh environment. As you can see, history and the environment affect how cultures develop.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas What practices and customs make up culture?

Culture Groups

Earth is home to thousands of different cultures. People who share similar culture traits are members of the same culture group. Culture groups can be based on a variety of factors, such as age, language, or religion. American teenagers, for example, can be said to form a culture group based on location and age. They share similar tastes in music, clothing, and sports.

Culture Regions

When we refer to culture groups, we are speaking of people who share a common culture. At other times, however, we need to refer to the area, or region, where the culture group is found. A **culture region** is an area in which people have many shared culture traits.

In a specific culture region, people share certain culture traits, such as religious beliefs, language, or lifestyle. One well-known culture region is the Arab world. As you can see at right, an Arab culture region spreads across Southwest Asia and North Africa. In this region, most people write and speak Arabic and are Muslim. They also share other traits, such as foods, music, styles of clothing, and architecture.

Occasionally, a single culture region dominates an entire country. In Japan, for example, one primary culture dominates the country. Nearly everyone in Japan

speaks the same language and follows the same practices. Many Japanese bow to their elders as a sign of respect and remove their shoes when they enter a home.

A single country may also include more than one culture region within its borders. Mexico is one of many countries that is made up of different culture regions. People in northern Mexico and southern Mexico, for example, have different culture traits. The culture of northern Mexico tends to be more modern, while traditional culture remains strong in southern Mexico.

A culture region may also stretch across country borders. As you have already learned, an Arab culture region dominates much of Southwest Asia and North Africa. Another example is the Kurdish culture region, home to the Kurds, a people that live throughout Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.

Arab Culture Region

Culture regions are based on shared culture traits. Southwest Asia and North Africa make up an Arab culture region based on ethnic heritage, a common language, and religion. Most people in this region are Arab, speak and write Arabic, and practice Islam.



Cultural Diversity

As you just learned, countries may contain several culture regions within their borders. Often, these culture regions are based on ethnic groups. **An ethnic group is a group of people who share a common culture and ancestry.** Members of ethnic groups often share certain culture traits such as religion, language, and even special foods.

Some countries are home to a variety of ethnic groups. For example, more than 100 different ethnic groups live in the East African country of Tanzania. Countries with many ethnic groups are culturally diverse. **Cultural diversity is the state of having a variety of cultures in the same area.** While cultural diversity creates an interesting mix of ideas, behaviors, and practices, it can also lead to conflict.

In some countries, ethnic groups have been in conflict. In Canada, for example, some French Canadians want to separate from the rest of Canada to preserve their language and culture. In the 1990s ethnic conflict in the African country of Rwanda led to extreme violence and bloodshed.

Although ethnic groups have clashed in some culturally diverse countries, they have cooperated in others. In the United States, for example, many different ethnic groups live side by side. Cities and towns often celebrate their ethnic heritage with festivals and parades, like the Saint Patrick's Day Parade in Boston or Philadelphia's Puerto Rican Festival.

READING CHECK Making Inferences Why might cultural diversity cause conflict?



Many people share Arab culture traits. An Algerian boy, above, and Palestinian girls, at left, share the same language and religion.

ANALYZING VISUALS What culture traits do you see in the photos?

Cultural Diffusion of Baseball

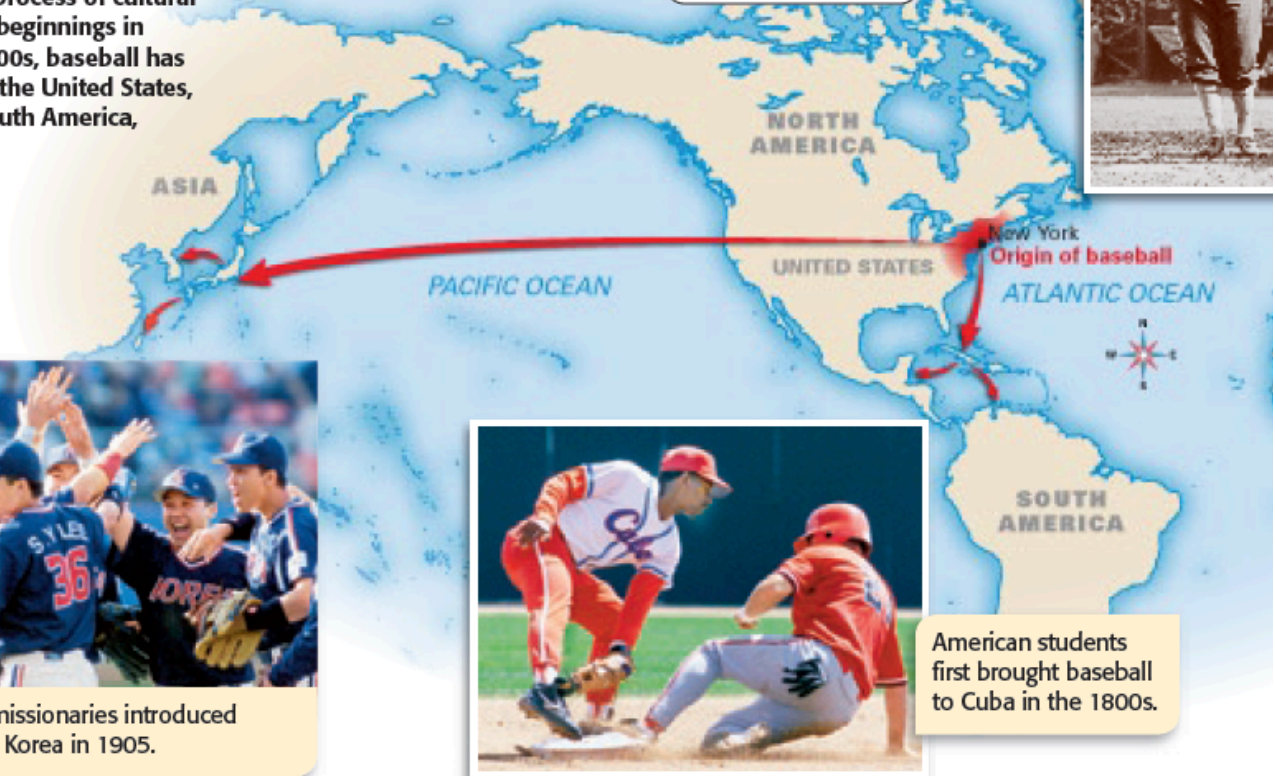
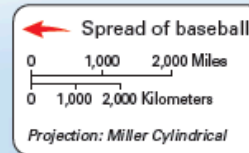
Like many other ideas and customs, baseball has spread around the world through the process of cultural diffusion. Since its beginnings in New York in the 1800s, baseball has spread throughout the United States, into Central and South America, and to Asia.



American missionaries introduced baseball to Korea in 1905.



American students first brought baseball to Cuba in the 1800s.



Changes in Culture

You've read books or seen movies set in the time of the Civil War or in the Wild West of the late 1800s. Think about how our culture has changed since then. Clothing, food, music—all have changed drastically. When we study cultural change, we try to find out what caused the changes and how those changes spread from place to place.

How Cultures Change

Cultures change constantly. Some changes happen rapidly, while others take many years. What causes cultures to change? **Innovation** and contact with other people are two key causes of cultural change.

New ideas often bring about cultural changes. For example, when Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, it

changed how people communicate with each other. Other innovations, such as motion pictures, changed how people spend their free time. More recently, the creation of the Internet dramatically altered the way people find information, communicate, and shop.

Cultures also change as societies come into contact with each other. For example, when the Spanish arrived in the Americas, they introduced firearms and horses to the region, changing the lifestyle of some Native American groups. At the same time, the Spaniards learned about new foods like potatoes and chocolate. These foods then became an important part of Europeans' diet. The Chinese had a similar influence on Korea and Japan, where they introduced Buddhism and written language.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

innovation
a new idea or way of doing something



Organized baseball began in New York around 1845 and quickly spread around the world.



ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

Where did baseball begin, and to what parts of the world did it eventually spread?

How Ideas Spread

You have probably noticed that a new slang word might spread from teenager to teenager and state to state. In the same way, clothing styles from New York or Paris might become popular all over the world. More serious cultural traits spread as well. Religious beliefs or ideas about government may spread from place to place. The spread of culture traits from one region to another is called **cultural diffusion**.

Cultural diffusion often occurs when people move from one place to another. For example, when Europeans settled in the Americas, they brought their culture along with them. As a result, English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese are all spoken in the Americas. American culture also spread as pioneers moved west, taking with them their form of government, religious beliefs, and customs.

Cultural diffusion also takes place as new ideas spread from place to place. As you can see on the map above, the game of baseball first began in New York, then spread throughout the United States. As

more and more people learned the game, it spread even faster and farther. Baseball eventually spread around the world. Wearing blue jeans became part of our culture in a similar way. Blue jeans originated in the American West in the mid-1800s. They gradually became popular all over the country and the world.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas How do cultures change over time?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW In this section you learned about the role that culture plays in our lives and how our cultures change. Next, you will learn about human populations and how we keep track of Earth's changing population.

Section 1 Assessment

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SK7 HP4

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

- a. Define** What is **culture**?

b. Analyze What influences the development of culture?

c. Elaborate How might the world be different if we all shared the same culture?
- a. Identify** What are the different types of **culture regions**?

b. Analyze How does **cultural diversity** affect societies?
- a. Describe** How does **cultural diffusion** take place?

b. Make Inferences How can the spread of new ideas lead to cultural change?

c. Evaluate Do you think that cultural diffusion has a positive or a negative effect? Explain your answer.

Critical Thinking

- Finding Main Ideas** Using your notes and a chart like the one here, explain the main idea of each aspect of culture in your own words.

Culture Traits	Culture Groups	Cultural Change

FOCUS ON WRITING

- Writing about Culture** What key words about culture can you include on your poster? What images might you include? Jot down your ideas in your notebook.