



Three Rivers School District

PLANNED COURSE STATEMENT

Course Title: Cultures around the world	Grade Level(s): 6, 7, 8
Length of Course: 8 weeks	Required/Elective: Elective
Adopted/Supplemental Materials:	

Offered at:	Applegate	Fleming	Lincoln Savage	<u>Lorna Byrne</u>
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this unit, *Cultures Around the World*, students will develop their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills by exploring literature, folktales, informational texts, and multimedia from a range of global cultures. Through close reading and discussion of diverse texts, students will identify common themes, cultural values, and unique traditions that reflect both the similarities and differences between their own culture and those of others.

COURSE GOALS:

Students will analyze characters, settings, and narratives to understand how cultural context influences storytelling. They will write reflective and analytical pieces that compare cultural elements, respond to cultural experiences, and express their own perspectives. Emphasis will be placed on building vocabulary, citing textual evidence, and developing clear, coherent arguments in writing and discussion.

This unit promotes cultural awareness and empathy while building essential literacy skills. By engaging with voices and stories from around the world, students will strengthen their ability to communicate thoughtfully, read critically, and appreciate the richness of global traditions through the lens of language and literature.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES:

Formative Assessments (Ongoing Checkpoints)

Entry/exit tickets: "What's one cultural tradition you found interesting today?"

Think-pair-share: Discuss a cultural norm and how it compares to their own.

KWL charts: What I *Know*, *Want to know*, and *Learned* for each region.

Quick sketch/draw-it: Visual representations of key cultural elements.

Sticky note reflections: "What surprised you about today's culture?"

Cultural Comparison Journals

Purpose: Encourage reflection and critical thinking.

Students maintain a weekly journal, comparing what they learned about a region's culture with their own or another culture they've studied.

Prompts:

- "How is family life similar or different?"
- "What cultural value stood out to you?"
- What questions do you still have about this region?"

Graphic Organizers & Venn Diagrams

Purpose: Visually compare cultural elements across regions.

Use Venn diagrams to compare:
Holidays across cultures
Family structures
Education or meals

Use T-charts or cultural element grids to sort and summarize facts.

Creative Projects

Examples:

- Cultural Poster or Slideshow: Highlight food, traditions, music, geography, and celebrations from a chosen region.
- Culture Box or Diorama: Include 5–7 symbols representing a culture.
- Travel Brochure: "Visit [Region]!" – students design brochures to teach others.
- Music or Art Review: Listen to or view cultural music/art and reflect on its meaning and style.

5. Discussion Circles & Debates

Purpose: Develop empathy and critical thinking through dialogue.

- Worldview discussions: "Why do people value different things in different cultures?"
- Mini debates: "Is tradition more important than change in cultural identity?"
- Use sentence starters and discussion norms for structure.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS:

Instructional Support

- Provide visuals (images, maps, charts) with all lessons
- Use closed captions or read-aloud tools for videos and texts
- Give sentence starters and word banks for writing tasks
- Provide guided notes or partially completed organizers
- Allow use of translation tools or bilingual dictionaries

Participation Support

- Offer flexible grouping (e.g., pair with a peer helper or buddy)
- Allow verbal responses instead of written (or vice versa)
- Encourage alternative participation in discussions (hand signals, sentence strips)

Time & Environment

- Allow extended time for assignments or projects

Break tasks into smaller steps
Provide frequent check-ins or chunked instructions

Modifications for “Cultures Around the World”

These adjust the curriculum to meet individual learning needs:

Reduced Complexity

Simplify reading material or use leveled texts (e.g., Newsela or adapted nonfiction)
Focus on fewer cultural elements (e.g., food and celebrations only)
Accept basic comparisons (1–2 sentences) rather than full essays

Alternative Projects

Create a drawing or collage instead of a written report
Use voice recordings or video clips in place of a presentation
Allow students to complete a modified checklist project with fewer components

Modified Assessments

Use multiple choice, matching, or fill-in-the-blank instead of open-ended questions
Grade with emphasis on effort, participation, and personal growth, not just accuracy
Accept creative expressions (e.g., art, music, acting) in place of traditional assessments

CAREER RELATED LEARNING STANDARDS:

Personal Management

Standard: Demonstrate appropriate work ethic and behaviors in school and community settings.

In your course:

Manage time and complete long-term cultural research projects
Demonstrate curiosity and self-direction while exploring new cultures
Show respect for cultural differences and classroom norms

Problem Solving

Standard: Apply decision-making and problem-solving techniques in school and community settings.

In your course:

Analyze how geography and history shape cultural practices
Think critically about issues like stereotypes or cultural assumptions
Choose how to best represent a region in creative projects

Communication

Standard: Demonstrate effective communication skills in academic and career settings.

In your course:

Practice speaking clearly when presenting cultural findings
Listen actively during peer presentations and group discussions
Express cultural comparisons through writing, speaking, or creative formats

Teamwork

Standard: Demonstrate effective teamwork in school, work, and community settings.

In your course:

Collaborate on group presentations or culture fairs
Respectfully share roles and ideas in project planning
Participate in cultural dialogue circles and group reflections

Employment Foundations

Standard: Demonstrate academic, technical, and organizational knowledge and skills required for future employment.

In your course:

Research skills: use sources to gather cultural information
Digital skills: create slideshows, posters, or online presentations
Organize notes, timelines, and comparison charts

Career Development

Standard: Demonstrate career awareness, exploration, and preparation.

In your course:

Learn how cultural knowledge is useful in careers (e.g., international relations, tourism, translation, diplomacy, teaching, journalism)
Reflect on personal identity and future goals in a global context
Identify how global awareness supports responsible citizenship and career readiness