

# UNIT 4: CULTURE & CULTURAL DIVERSITY

PASSPORT TO THE WORLD

Instructor Guide

## OUTCOMES:

- Students will recognize the variety of cultural attractions that can be found around the world
- Students will be able to appreciate the importance of the cultures of other countries
- Students will recognize the value of their own culture and the importance of preserving distinctive cultural elements
- Students will recognize



that cultures differ in terms of what they see as important, and that the same thing can mean different things in different cultures

## Number of Sessions: 3- 4

Activity Worksheets [AW]  
Materials for Unit 4:

- ❖ Cultural Checklist [AW]
- ❖ Stereotypes [AW]
- ❖ National Symbols [AW]
- ❖ Positive/Negative Impacts of Tourism on Culture [AW]
- ❖ Museum Visit worksheets 1-8 [AW]
- ❖ How You Can Respect Other Cultures [AW]
- ❖ Remember When You Are In ...[AW]
- ❖ Architecture as a Tourist Attraction [AW]
- ❖ Gfk Survey of Travelers [AW]



GTP Photo Contest winner: Tiaan DeBeer—South Africa Rainbow Nation

By its very nature tourism provides opportunities for increased social contact. It can bring people together and foster intercultural understanding. However, mass tourism can have the opposite effect; it can encourage changes in cultural traditions and activities that cause much of their original significance to be lost.



Therefore, a GTTP class should also help its students understand how tourism can have this negative impact on culture as well as make its students more sensitive to the values and beliefs of people from different cultural backgrounds.

### Preparatory Work:

The preceding three units provide the requisite preparation for this topic.

### Materials Needed:

World maps, atlases, destination posters and tourism advertising brochures are useful as stimuli for this topic. Video and slide shows of cultural sites and activities would also benefit the teaching and learning processes.



## Session 1: Defining Culture

### Suggested Questions for the Instructor:

#### 1. WHAT IS CULTURE?

Ask the class to describe the elements that are important in defining their culture. List these on the board and then pass out the handout, **Culture Check List**, and ask the students to compare their list with it.

#### 2. WHAT ELEMENTS from other cultures have become embedded in your own culture? Are these elements positive or negative?

#### 3. AN AMERICAN WRITER, Walter Lippmann, used the term "stereotype" to mean the way society "stamps" people with a certain set of characteristics. (Originally, the term "stereotype" referred a type of printing

stamp.) He identified four characteristics of stereotypes:

- ❖ They are simple. A stereotype lets you keep things simple: "All people from country X like fried foods and are too fat."
- ❖ They are based on what others have said or written. A stereotype is usually based on someone else's accounts. In today's culture, stereotypes are reinforced by TV and movies.
- ❖ They are not true. By definition, all people cannot all be the same. Some stereotypes are closer to reality than others.
- ❖ They are very hard to change.

Ask the students to describe cultural stereotypes they are familiar with. Are there television shows that depict supposedly “typical” citizens of your country? What stereotypes are shown? How would potential visitors describe your country if they only had popular TV and movies to rely on for information?

One expert, Stella Ting-Toomey, suggests that a way to cope with stereotypes and to ensure they do not get in the way of understanding others from different cultures is to use a process she calls, ‘Describe, Interpret, Evaluate.’

Usually when we encounter different behaviors, we “evaluate” right away and make a quick decision about what to do or feel. We do not take the time to see if there could be a different interpretation for what happened. A different approach is to start by describing what happened without making a judgment. Then you can analyze what you observed and talk to other people who know the culture better than you do. And finally you can evaluate the situation and decide what to do about it.

Ask the students to think about situations where they met someone from a different culture and went right to the “evaluate” stage.



The handout “Stereotypes” gives some information on stereotypes about Japan and the USA. Ask students to describe their stereotypes of Japan, the USA. Do they agree with the assertions made in the handout?

Ask students to consider what role various media in your country have in starting and perpetuating stereotypes.

**4. ASK THE STUDENTS** to suggest symbols that they associate with the list of countries shown in the handout, **National Symbols**. After they have identified the symbols, ask them to suggest what they think would be the most appropriate symbol for their country.

Tourism officials have recognized that it is important to have some landmarks that visitors can see and visit.

When they do visit the particular national landmark, they usually feel that they really have been to the particular country. The Eiffel Tower in Paris is a classic symbol of France; the Tower of London is often used as a symbol for England; the Empire State Building represents New York City (as do the now-destroyed World Trade Center towers); India has the Taj Mahal palace; China has the Great Wall; Moscow’s Red Square and the Kremlin are powerful symbols of Russia.

Country symbols are not always a physical landmark. Ireland has a shamrock, which is not a location but a small plant. South Africa has the lion and other animals.

Visiting a museum is an excellent way to look at your own culture and that of other countries.



## Session 2: Impact of Travel & Tourism on Culture

### Suggested Questions for the Instructor:



The handout, **Positive/Negative Impacts of Tourism on Culture**, summarizes these impacts.

Another way to understand a culture is to look at the architecture to see what is distinctive, what is borrowed or derived from other cultures, what is preserved and what is newly built. The activity, **Architecture as a Tourist Attraction**, helps students see what their own town's or region's architecture is like and can be the basis for their developing a walking tour of interesting architecture. Many tourists like to see the architecture of the places they

1. **WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE** impacts of travel & tourism on a culture?
2. **WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE** impacts?
3. **HAVE YOU VISITED A FOREIGN DESTINATION**, or do you know about one, that has been changed by tourism? How was it changed? Do you think it was a positive or negative change?
4. **WHAT ARE SOME WAYS** by which a country can preserve its culture and still have growth in tourism?

### OUTSIDE RESEARCH:

Survey your neighborhood and see if there are elements in your culture that have been changed by a foreign culture. Are there cultural elements that you think need to be preserved? These can be customs, foods, architecture, music, traditions, beliefs, etc.

visit, and a walking tour can become a tourist attraction in its own right while concurrently developing students' appreciation of their own culture.





## Session 3: Communication & Culture

When people think of communication and travel, they tend to think about language and whether or not the traveler can speak the language of the country he or she is visiting. But even if a visitor speaks the language, he or she may not know the culture.

The American Express Company website published some communication tips developed by A.J. Schuler, Psy.D., of Schuler Solutions <http://www.schulersolutions.com/index.html> to help business people communicate more effectively when in foreign countries.

Dr. Schuler noted that different cultures have very different views on what is appropriate during a conversation, including:

- **Who is entitled to speak first and the correct way to start and end conversations.**
- **When to speak or listen.**
- **When to interrupt or not.**
- **When to use humor or not.**
- **How much to say and how long it takes to say it.**

- **Appropriate and inappropriate topics of conversation.**
- **The tone of voice and style of speaking.**



Depending on the culture, the age, gender and social status of the participants can determine what is appropriate. Even if you unknowingly violate local practices, you can offend people just as much as if you were deliberately rude. The important thing to remember is that cultures are different, and a traveler should not expect people in other cultures to think or act the same way he or she does. You can visit Dr. Schuler's website and

download his article on cross-cultural communication for further insights on this topic.

Another critical form of communication is non-verbal – the way people stand, sit or move and the way their bodies communicate can have vastly different meanings across cultures. In some cultures it is polite to stand or sit close to another person; in others, it is polite to leave a space of about a meter between you and the person you are talking to and getting very close is seen to be aggressive.

If possible, invite a foreign business person to visit your class to discuss how communication is handled in his or her home country, and any differences between what is done there versus here in your country.

To begin a discussion on cultural differences, pass out the handout **Remember When You Are In...** and ask students to read it. Divide the class into small groups and ask them to fill in the sentences at the bottom of the handout for your country. Write their answers on the board.

Ask the students to consider which cultural preferences are similar to their own culture and which are very different. For example, in Brazil, it is understood that it is polite NOT to be on time for informal events. In other cultures, like Germany, it is rude to be late.

Flowers are another example of the way in which cultures differ. There are more examples in the **Fast Facts** in the **Resources Guide**.

Students who have access to the Internet can try to find out the reasons behind some of the cultural norms in the handout. Some of the reasons are included in the **Fast Facts**. For example, the Thais are averse to being touched on the head, and even a child should not be touched on the head. This is because they believe that the soul resides on the head and is, therefore, very sacred.



GTPP Photo Contest winner: Chan Tsz Him—1881 Heritage Building Restoration



## Session 4: Respecting Other Cultures

### Discussion:

Museums are cultural repositories. A field trip to a museum is an excellent way to reinforce some of the previous concepts, and also to use it as an opportunity to see how your own and other cultures are presented.

### Suggested Questions for the Instructor:

#### 1. NAME FIVE THINGS

that are the most representative of our culture.

#### 2. WHAT ARE SOME

of the intellectual and artistic achievements of our culture?

3. **WHAT ARE SOME** of the intellectual and artistic achievements of three other countries?

#### 4. **HAND OUT How You Can Respect Other Cultures.**

Form groups of students and ask them to pick out the five most important ways from the list. Then ask one spokesperson from each group to work together to form a common list of no more than five from the different groups' lists.

#### 5. **ASK THE STUDENTS**

to suggest ways they can find out about another country's culture before they might actually visit that country. Some of the ways include:

- ❖ Looking at country web sites on the Internet.
- ❖ Reading newspapers from other countries.
- ❖ Listening to music from other countries.
- ❖ Going to foreign movies.
- ❖ Learning a foreign language.

Review the Gfr survey responses to learn cultural differences among travelers from different countries.