CULTURAL DIFFUSION

Overview: In this lesson students will research a cultural group that diffused to the United States and explain the reasons behind the diffusion and the impact it had on the culture of the United States, as well as the world culture.

Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies (3. Geography)

Sub-strand 3. Human Systems
All questions in the Cultural Geography Unit Test meet the Geography Standard, Human Systems (9.3.3.7.), and several questions also meet a specific Benchmark.

Standard 7.
The characteristics, distribution and complexity of the earth's cultures influence human systems (social, economic and political systems)

9.3.3.7.1 Explain the spread of culture using the concept of diffusion and diffusion models

9.3.3.7.2 Describe the spatial distribution of significant cultural and/or ethnic groups in the United States and the world and how these patterns are changing.

Grade Level: 9 – 12

Objective: This lesson is designed to help students understand how cultures have diffused around the world and how their diffusions have influenced other cultures as well as the world culture.

Time: 2 fifty-minute class periods.

Required Materials:
1. Computer/internet access to look up various websites on cultures around the world and their diffusion
2. Cultural Geography Activity Instructions
3. Cultural Geography Gallery Walk Worksheet
4. Rubric for Cultural Geography Activity
5. Blank World Map
6. Person Cut-out Worksheet

Suggested Procedure:
1. Prior to assigning this activity, be sure to discuss the following with the students to ensure they understand the meaning of each term:
a. Hearth – a place where an idea, group of people and/or religion originates from
b. Diffusion – the process of spread of a feature, religion, group of people or trend from one place to another over time
c. Cultural Traits – activities and behaviors that people repeatedly practice

2. Assign students to groups of 3 or 4. Assign each group one of the cultural groups to research from the following list
   a. Hmong
   b. Somali
   c. Italian
   d. Chinese
   e. Hispanic
   f. Mormons
   g. Baptists
   h. Native American
   i. Amish
   j. German
   k. Scandinavia

3. Have the students research their cultural group to determine the following:
   a. The hearth of the cultural group
   b. The diffusion path their cultural group took to come to the United States
   c. The area(s) where the cultural group is currently located in the United States
   d. Push and/or Pull factors that caused their cultural group to diffuse to the United States
   e. Pictures that provide evidence of how their group’s culture is seen in the cultural landscape
   f. Five (5) specific cultural traits of their cultural group which could include information from the following traits:
      i. Language
      ii. Religion
      iii. Foods
      iv. Clothing
      v. Holidays
      vi. Folk tales and/or literature
      vii. Music

4. Have each group create a poster that contains information the students gathered while researching their cultural group. This poster should include the following:
   a. A labeled world map that shows:
      i. the hearth of their cultural group
      ii. the diffusion path the cultural group took to the United States
      iii. area(s) where the cultural group is currently located in the United States.
   b. Identify three (3) Push or Pull factors that caused this diffusion, along with an explanation as to why each push or pull factor occurred.
   c. Five (5) pictures that provide evidence of how this group’s culture can be seen in the cultural landscape. For example, places of worship, monuments, road signs/language, demarcations (a line or boundary establishing limits),
architecture, burial places, restaurants, shops, and toponyms. Each picture should have a caption that explains its relevance.

d. On a **blank person outline**, students are to show a **minimum of five (5) cultural traits** of their cultural group. They are to **provide five (5) specific examples from five (5) of the cultural traits** listed below.
   
   i. Language
   ii. Religion
   iii. Foods
   iv. Clothing
   v. Holidays
   vi. Folk tales and/or literature
   vii. Music

OR

e. On a **map** of the country and/or area of origin of their culture group, students are to include **images of five (5) cultural traits**, which are listed below. They are to provide **five (5) pictures** that show specific examples from **five (5) of the cultural traits** listed below.
   
   i. Language
   ii. Religion
   iii. Foods
   iv. Clothing
   v. Holidays
   vi. Folk Tales and/or literature
   vii. Music

5. Have students hang their group’s completed posters around the classroom. Then have the students conduct a **Gallery Walk** of the posters and answer the **three (3)** questions found on their Gallery Walk worksheet, based on information presented on the groups’ posters. Listed below are the questions students are to answer while completing their gallery walk.
   
   a. Of the U.S. cultural groups shown, which region(s) of the world did most of the cultural groups diffuse from?
   b. Which group(s) diffused the farthest?
   c. Besides food, how are different cultural groups’ traits seen in the world today? Identify four (4) different cultural groups and provide one (1) example of a cultural trait from each group that is seen in today’s popular culture.

**Assessment:**

1. Rubric for Cultural Diffusion Activity
Cultural Diffusion Activity Instructions

Directions:

1. In groups of 3 or 4, you are to research one of the following cultural groups.
   a. Hmong
   b. Somali
   c. Italian
   d. Chinese
   e. Hispanic
   f. Mormons
   g. Baptists
   h. Native American
   i. Amish
   j. German
   k. Scandinavian

2. After being assigned a culture group, your group will need to conduct research to determine the following:
   a. The hearth of the cultural group
   b. The diffusion path your cultural group took to come to the United States
   c. The area(s) where your cultural group is currently located in the United States
   d. Push and Pull factors that caused your cultural group to diffuse to the United States
   e. Pictures that provide evidence of how your group’s culture is seen in the cultural landscape
   f. Five (5) specific cultural traits of your cultural group which could include information from the following traits:
      i. Language
      ii. Religion
      iii. Foods
      iv. Clothing
      v. Holidays
      vi. Folk tales and/or literature
      vii. Music

3. After conducting your research, your group will need to create a poster that contains the following information about your cultural group:
   a. A labeled world map that shows:
      i. the hearth of your cultural group
      ii. the diffusion path your cultural group took to the United States
      iii. area(s) where your cultural group is currently located in the United States.
b. **Three (3) Push or Pull** factors that caused your group’s diffusion, along with an explanation as to why each push or pull factor occurred.

c. **Five (5) pictures** that provide evidence of how your group’s culture can be seen in the cultural landscape. For example, places of worship, monuments, road signs/language, demarcations (a line or boundary establishing limits), architecture, burial places, restaurants, shops, and toponyms. Each picture should have a caption that explains its relevance.

d. On a **blank person outline**, your group needs to show a minimum of **five (5) cultural traits** of your cultural group. Your group needs to provide **five (5) specific examples** from **five (5) of the cultural traits** listed below.
   i. Language
   ii. Religion
   iii. Foods
   iv. Clothing
   v. Holidays
   vi. Folk tales and/or literature
   vii. Music

**OR**

6. **A map** of the country and/or area of origin of your culture group with **images of five (5) cultural traits** shown on the map.
   viii. Language
   ix. Religion
   x. Foods
   xi. Clothing
   xii. Holidays
   xiii. Folk Tales and/or literature
   xiv. Music

4. After completing your poster, your group will need to hang your poster up in the room. You and your classmates will conduct a **Gallery Walk** of the posters and answer the **three (3) questions** found on your Gallery Walk worksheet, based on information found on the posters. Listed below are the questions you will need to answer while completing the gallery walk.
   a. Of the U.S. cultural groups shown, which region(s) of the world did most of the cultural groups diffuse from?
   b. Which group(s) diffused the farthest?
   c. Besides food, how are different cultural groups’ traits seen in the world today? Identify four (4) different cultural groups and provide one (1) example of a cultural trait from each group that is seen in today’s popular culture.
Culture Geography Activity
1. Of the US cultural groups displayed, which region(s) of the world did most of the cultural groups diffuse from?

2. Which US cultural group appears to have diffused the farthest?

3. Besides food, how are different cultural groups’ traits seen in the world today? Identify four (4) different cultural groups and provide one (1) example of a cultural trait from each group that is seen in today’s popular culture.
   Group One __________: 
   Group Two __________: 
   Group Three __________: 
   Group Four __________: 