

4C – Cultural Diffusion (Spread)

MCCC SS060405b and SS060406

6th Grade Social Studies Network – 2015-6

Part C of Unit 4 – Cultural Geography

GLCEs: 6G133 connections; 6G421 moving people, products, ideas; 6G413 cultures, including religion

- 1. Review:** three key definitions: *culture* (e.g., of the pioneers); *culture shock*; *cultural adaptation*
US5 Culture of the Pioneers
- 2. Activity:** Religion has been a powerful influence on human behavior throughout history. One cannot understand what is going on in different parts of the world without some knowledge of the role of religion as an influence on the behavior of different groups of people in specific places. This, in turn, requires some understanding of the characteristics of different religions and the areas of the world in which they are important. This is not an easy topic to teach, because stereotypes and misconceptions abound.
6th 4C World Religion Map matching activity BI1 World clickable religion maps
6th 4C Spread of Islam set 6th 4C Spread of Islam presentation
- 3. Scaffolding Activity:** When a rumor, a fad, or a disease spreads, the process of spatial diffusion is basically a physical process that follows certain “rules.” One basic principle is that things can spread from a starting point in several distinctly different ways: by *contagion* (direct contact between an “infected” person and “uninfected” people), *relocation* (movement of an infected person to a new place), and *hierarchical communication* (a command or order issued by a governing authority of some kind). Another basic principle is that a map of conditions and connections in an area can reveal *avenues* that aid the spread and *barriers* that hinder the spread or channel it in particular ways. The MCCC map about the spread of chess (SS060405.Powerpoint Frame 17) is a good (although quite complex) example. Teachers may choose other examples that make the same point, or make it a topic of internet inquiry.
6th 4Cx The Flu and a Blue Flower US8 Rock Music Diffusion clickable map
- 4. Extension Activity:** Cultural spread into South Asia – (MCCC uses “diffusion,” that’s the technical term, but we can also use “spread”). Students look at the process and consequences of several cultural “invasions” into South Asia, including early human migration, the idea of irrigated agriculture, Aryans from Central Asia, Arab and Chinese traders, Islamic sultans, British colonists, and Independence. PS. It is worth emphasizing that India is the world’s largest democracy and will probably become the world’s largest country; South Asia as a whole is definitely the largest concentration of people on earth.
6th 4Cy Political Control in South Asia BI10 South Asia Big Idea presentation
6th 4Cy Rivers of Southeast Asia activity BI10 South Asia clickable miniAtlas
Invasions chronology on page 4 of BI10 Chapter on Culture in South Asia

Pages from MCCC

- **SuppMaterials.SS060406** has a strange graphic organizer, a good big-idea page, just one word card, and an extended example about jeans, which requires scaffolding to relate it to the concepts in the big idea page. We will add activities about South Asia that relate to the map and photos in the MCCC supplement and powerpoint and also help students refine their mental map of the world.
- **SS060406.Powerpoint** has a useful map of the spread of world religions and some photos showing evidence for the spread of modern cultural ideas (e.g., McDonalds) in South Asia.

Takehome: Religion is a powerful influence on human behavior. Today, this is especially obvious in South and Southwest Asia, but we should not forget the role of religion in Reformation-era Europe or colonial America (both North and South).

Note: Even though we suggest moving MCCC Unit 4 Lessons 8, 9, and 10 toward the end of the year, we propose to expand the amount of time in Unit 4, especially Part 4C – using some of the time “saved” by shrinking the general discussion of geographical tools in Unit 2 and the abstract discussions of academic disciplines, textbook criteria, and maps in Unit 1. In this context, note that MCCC Unit 4 currently includes many socio/anthropological concepts that are no longer prominent in the revised Michigan GLCEs for 6th grade. To meet the new GLCEs, we will add several region-specific map activities and materials that have a much narrower focus on economic and cultural characteristics as adaptations to environments in different world regions. These activities also help build a foundation for Grade 7 World History and Geography.