

## Lesson Topic: International Studies

### Unit Description:

In this unit students will virtually travel to a range of different countries in order to learn the different cultural aspects (food, language, art, ethnic make-up, etc.) and physical geography (oceans, landforms, climate, continent, country capital) of each country they “visit”. The amount of countries that students visit will depend on the amount of time that individual teachers determine they will spend of this unit. For a year-long unit that spends about 5-6 weeks per country at approximately two hours a week, it is suggested to cover five to six different countries. For example, teachers will spend about 5-6 weeks exploring the countries of Brazil, Germany, Kenya, India, and Japan so that enough time is spent covering each country in-depth while also exposing students to a diverse range of cultures from varying continents.

The first step in successfully implementing this unit into the classroom is to establish partnerships with participating classrooms from around the world. The Cooperative Educational Services Agency (CESA 7) and The Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILA) in the technology tools sections list thousands of different schools in areas both inside and outside the United States that have access to videoconferencing and their contact information. The classrooms listed in these directories are interested in establishing educational partnerships and should be contacted before the beginning of the year to effectively plan for an upcoming unit. The planning needed for this type of unit is extensive the first time that it is completed, however, once initial partnerships are established they can be strengthened and continued for years to come. Use the sample letter in the resources section for an example of what could be sent as an initial contact to potential cooperating classrooms. An important note to consider when establishing these partnerships is a potential language barrier. Ideally, there would be a translator available to facilitate conversation between the two classrooms,

however, this project is based on the premise that even if language barriers between cooperating classrooms exist, simply interacting with people from another culture will promote multicultural understanding and thus be beneficial to the educational curriculum.

**Objectives** (adapted from Scholastic.com):

- Investigate people, places, and environments and use technological resources to gather information about the country and culture that they visit
- Study global connections and interdependence by reading online text in order to meet the people of the country they visit
- Use written and visual language to communicate their experiences, thoughts, feelings, collect pictures and write captions about the memorable moments of their travels
- Demonstrate an understanding of the countries and people they visited by completing the “Write About It” and “Global Postcard” sections of Global Trek.

Standards (California State Content Standards):

<b>CA- California K-12 Academic Content Standards</b>
<b>Subject :</b> History & Social Science
<b>Grade :</b> Kindergarten
<b>Area:</b> Learning and Working Now and Long Ago Students in kindergarten are introduced to basic spatial, temporal, and causal relationships, emphasizing the geographic and historical connections between the world today and the world long ago. The stories of ordinary and extraordinary people help describe the range and continuity of human experience and introduce the concepts of courage, self-control, justice, heroism, leadership, deliberation, and individual responsibility. Historical empathy for how people lived and worked long ago reinforces the concept of civic behavior: how we interact

respectfully with each other, following rules, and re-specting the rights of others.

**Sub-Strand K.4:** Students compare and contrast the locations of people, places, and environments and describe their characteristics.

**Standard 1:** Determine the relative locations of objects using the terms near/far, left/right, and behind/in front.

**Standard 2:** Distinguish between land and water on maps and globes and locate general areas referenced in historical legends and stories.

**Standard 3:** Identify traffic symbols and map symbols (e.g., those for land, water, roads, cities).

**Standard 4:** Construct maps and models of neighborhoods, incorporating such structures as police and fire stations, airports, banks, hospitals, supermarkets, harbors, schools, homes, places of worship, and transportation lines.

**Grade :** Grade One

**Area:** A Child's Place in Time and Space

Students in grade one continue a more detailed treatment of the broad concepts of rights and responsibilities in the contemporary world. The classroom serves as a microcosm of society in which decisions are made with respect for individual responsibility, for other people, and for the rules by which we all must live: fair play, good sportsman-ship, and respect for the rights and opinions of others. Students examine the geographic and economic aspects of life in their own neighborhoods and compare them to those of people long ago. Students explore the varied backgrounds of American citizens and learn about the symbols, icons, and songs that reflect our common heritage.

**Sub-Strand 1.2:** Students compare and contrast the absolute and relative locations of places and people and describe the physical and/or human characteristics of places.

**Standard 1:** Locate on maps and globes their local community, California, the United States, the seven continents, and the four oceans.

**Standard 2:** Compare the information that can be derived from a three-dimensional model to the information that can be derived from a picture of the same location.

<b>Standard 3:</b> Construct a simple map, using cardinal directions and map symbols.
<b>Standard 4:</b> Describe how location, weather, and physical environment affect the way people live, including the effects on their food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and recreation.
<b>Grade :</b> Grade Two
<b>Area:</b> People Who Make a Difference Students in grade two explore the lives of actual people who make a difference in their everyday lives and learn the stories of extraordinary people from history whose achievements have touched them, directly or indirectly. The study of contemporary people who supply goods and services aids in understanding the complex interdependence in our free-market system.
<b>Sub-Strand 2.2:</b> Students demonstrate map skills by describing the absolute and relative locations of people, places, and environments.
<b>Standard 2:</b> Label from memory a simple map of the North American continent, including the countries, oceans, Great Lakes, major rivers, and mountain ranges. Identify the essential map elements: title, legend, directional indicator, scale, and date.
<b>Sub-Strand 2.3:</b> Students explain governmental institutions and practices in the United States and other countries.
<b>Standard 2:</b> Describe the ways in which groups and nations interact with one another to try to resolve problems in such areas as trade, cultural contacts, treaties, diplomacy, and military force.

### Sample Lesson: Exploring the Cultural and Physical Geography of Brazil

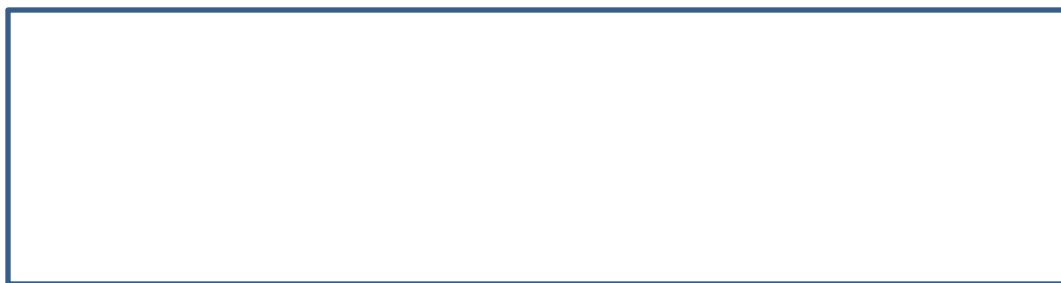
**Individual Instruction:** For the individual instruction time, students will explore the country Brazil on their own computers. They will review a variety of educational sources like images, videos, and written text (depending on reading ability of students, extra support may need to be given to students during independent work time). Students will take notes on new information as they proceed through the Global Trek itinerary for Brazil. Some of the information they will learn will be how to conserve the

rainforest, what life is like as a kid in Brazil, history of the nation, South American myths, and information about the people of Brazil including language, food/drink, religion, population, sports, and education. Students will complete a graphic organizer to consolidate the newly learned information, complete a basic map (including appropriate map symbols), and will complete a “postcard” about their visit to the country including some facts that they learned and an illustration.

**Whole Group Instruction:** Once the students have gained some valuable information about Brazil and have demonstrated their knowledge by completing the travel guides, set up the videoconferencing session between your classroom and the participating classroom that you have already established a partnership and appointment time with. The students from Brazil will have completed a similar graphic organizer to the ones that your students have created, but for the United States. They will also have completed a simple map of the United States as well as the postcard with some basic facts on cultural and physical geography with the illustration. Have the students compare what they have created and facilitate discussion that expands multicultural understanding.

**Assessing the Tool:**

1. Was the tool simple to use as a teacher? For the students?



2. Did the use of this tool increase student global awareness?



3. What could be done differently to maximize the effectiveness of the tool?

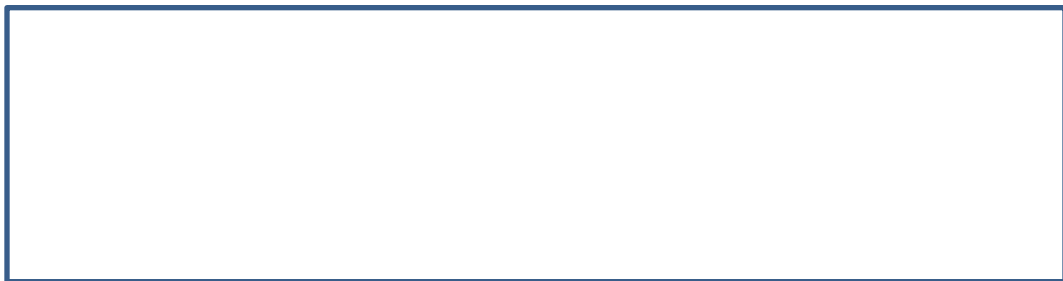
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**Assessing the Lesson:**

1. Did this lesson enhance student multicultural understanding?

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2. Did this lesson develop collaborative skills amongst the students?

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3. Did this lesson allow students to reach an understanding of the overlying concepts and objectives?

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