

**LESSON PLAN — CHINA'S CUSTOMS**  
**LORI NICKEL**

**Time:** 2 days

**Materials:**

- Culturegrams 2004
- Books: Countries of the World: China by Goh Sui Noi
- Prop box for student use
- T Chart

**Purpose:** Students will be able to identify customs and traditions found in China and then compare those to customs and traditions in the United States.

**Grade Level Indicators from State Standards for Ohio:**

1. Compare the cultural practices and products of the societies studied.
2. Analyze information from primary and secondary sources in order to summarize, make generalizations and draw conclusions.
3. Organize information using outlines and graphic organizers.
4. Work effectively to achieve group goals
  - a. engage in active listening
  - b. provide feedback in a constructive manner
  - c. take various roles within the group
  - d. recognize contributions of others

**Procedure/Activities:**

1. Ask students what they think are important customs/traditions in their culture. Have them write down a list in their notebooks. Explain that we will come back to this list later.
2. Students will be put into small groups of 3 and asked to select a role card. On each role card is a custom/tradition important to the Chinese culture with key aspects of the custom/tradition.
3. Explain to students that they will be working with this group to create an ACT-IT-OUT where they devise a skit to represent the information on their card. The other students must try to identify what custom they are representing and what key information is important to know about the Chinese culture.

4. Allow students time to create skits, come up with costumes from prop box, and practice. Teacher will rotate around to the groups to make sure information is being portrayed correctly.

5. Students will present skits and the class will attempt to guess what custom is represented and what information is significant. Skit group will facilitate with teacher supervision. Students will write down customs on note sheet.

**Assessment:**

For homework, students will complete a T-Chart comparing the two countries and customs/traditions that exist in each using the note sheet to assist.

**Grade Level:** 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade

**Adaptations:**

•For younger grades, students could draw pictures instead of acting the information out.

## **CHINA CUSTOMS/TRADITION – FOOD & ETTIQUETTE**

CREATE A SKIT DISPLAYING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. YOU WILL HAVE 25 MINUTES TO CREATE A SKIT AND DETERMINE WHAT PROPS ARE TO BE USED IN THE SKIT. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED IN YOUR SKIT.

- EATING IS AN IMPORTANT WAY TO SOCIALIZE AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
- USE CHOPSTICKS
- FOOD IS PLACED ON CENTER OF TABLE AND IS SHARED COMMUNALLY
- TYPICALLY, MORE THAN ONE MAIN DISH IS SERVED AT A MEAL
- WHEN FINISHED WITH A MEAL, CHOPSTICKS ARE PUT ON THE TABLE
- SOUP IS OFTEN EATEN AT THE END OF A MEAL
- IN A RESTAURANT, TIPPING IS NOT ALWAYS THE CUSTOM. HOWEVER, IT DEPENDS ON THE REGION AND IS BECOMING MORE POPULAR.
- THERE ARE 5 MAIN REGIONAL CUISINES IN CHINA
- DISHES WITH RICE, POTATOES, CORNMEAL, TOFU, AND OTHER GRAINS ARE STAPLE PRODUCTS. . WHAT A PERSON EATS DEPENDS ON THE FOOD AVAILABLE IN THAT REGION.

## **CHINA CUSTOMS/TRADITION – DATING & MARRIAGE**

CREATE A SKIT DISPLAYING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. YOU WILL HAVE 25 MINUTES TO CREATE A SKIT AND DETERMINE WHAT PROPS ARE TO BE USED IN THE SKIT. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED IN YOUR SKIT.

- DATING IS SIMILAR TO THE UNITED STATES. COUPLES WILL GO TO PARKS, DANCES, OR PARTIES AT FRIENDS' HOUSES.
- MANY IN CHINA DO NOT GET MARRIED UNTIL AFTER COLLEGE.
- THE MINIMUM AGE FOR MARRIAGE IS 22 FOR MALES AND 20 FOR FEMALES. THOSE WHO MARRY BEFORE THIS AGE MAY NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS.
- ON THE WEDDING DAY, THE GROOM GOES TO THE BRIDE'S HOME TO PICK HER UP FOR THE CEREMONY. TYPICALLY THEY DRESS IN WESTERN STYLE CLOTHING.
- WOMEN DO NOT TAKE THE MANS LAST NAME, BUT KEEP THEIR OWN. HOWEVER, WHEN THEY HAVE CHILDREN, THE KIDS WILL TAKE THE LAST NAME OF THE FATHER.

## **CHINA CUSTOMS/TRADITION – FAMILY LIFE**

CREATE A SKIT DISPLAYING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. YOU WILL HAVE 25 MINUTES TO CREATE A SKIT AND DETERMINE WHAT PROPS ARE TO BE USED IN THE SKIT. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED IN YOUR SKIT.

- FAMILY IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THE CHINESE. IN FACT, IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE INDIVIDUAL.
- OFTEN TIMES EXTENDED FAMILIES LIVE TOGETHER: CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND GRANDPARENTS.
- THE ELDERLY ARE HIGHLY RESPECTED IN CHINESE CULTURE. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE CHILDREN TAKE CARE OF THEIR ELDERS.
- CHILDREN ARE EXPECTED TO OBEY AND RESPECT THEIR PARENTS AND ELDERS.

## **CHINA CUSTOMS/TRADITION – EDUCATION**

CREATE A SKIT DISPLAYING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION. YOU WILL HAVE 25 MINUTES TO CREATE A SKIT AND DETERMINE WHAT PROPS ARE TO BE USED IN THE SKIT. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED IN YOUR SKIT.

- EDUCATION IS PROVIDED TO ALL CITIZENS OF CHINA
- STUDENTS START SCHOOL AT THE AGE OF 6
- IN THE CITY, STUDENTS GO TO SCHOOL 6 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8-5, WITH A 2 HOUR BREAK FOR LUNCH.
- CLASSES ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE IN THE UNITED STATES, ALTHOUGH THEY DO TAKE A MORAL EDUCATION CLASS. IN RURAL AREAS, CLASSES SUCH AS COOKING, WEAVING, OR CROP PLANING MAY BE TAUGHT AS A LIFE SKILL.
- AFTER ELEMENTARY, STUDENTS GO ON TO HIGH SCHOOL.
- UPON COMPLETION OF HIGH SCHOOL, STUDENTS WHO WANT TO GO ON TO AN UNIVERSITY MUST COMPLETE A NATIONAL EXAM. LESS THAN 10% OF STUDENTS GO ON TO COLLEGE. IT IS VERY EXPENSIVE.
- CHINA HAS ALSO CREATED A UNIVERSITY THAT OFFERS LESSONS OVER THE RADIO AND TV IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE LITERACY OF ADULTS.

## **CHINA CUSTOMS/TRADITION – GREETINGS & GESTURES**

CREATE A SKIT DISPLAYING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

YOU WILL HAVE 25 MINUTES TO CREATE A SKIT AND DETERMINE WHAT PROPS ARE TO BE USED IN THE SKIT. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED IN YOUR SKIT.

- WHEN GREETING SOMEONE, TYPICALLY CHINESE NOD OR BOW SLIGHTLY. HOWEVER, IN A FORMAL SITUATION A HANDSHAKE IS ACCEPTABLE.
- WHEN TALKING TO SOMEONE, ONE WOULD ADDRESS THEM EITHER BY THEIR FAMILY NAME AND TITLE **OR** BY THEIR FULL NAME.
- CHINESE DO NOT USE A LOT OF GESTURES IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS. (THEY DON'T TALK WITH THEIR HANDS AS MUCH)
- THE CHINESE ARE VERY GRACIOUS AND APPRECIATIVE OF OTHERS.
- WHEN POINTING AT SOMETHING, ONE WOULD USE YOUR WHOLE HAND IN AN OPEN POSITION INSTEAD OF THE POINTER FINGER.

## **CHINA CUSTOMS/TRADITION – RECREATION**

CREATE A SKIT DISPLAYING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.

YOU WILL HAVE 25 MINUTES TO CREATE A SKIT AND DETERMINE WHAT PROPS ARE TO BE USED IN THE SKIT. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED IN YOUR SKIT.

- AS TIMES CHANGE IN CHINA AND THE INCREASE IN INCOME, CHINESE ARE BEGINNING TO TRAVEL MORE THROUGHOUT CHINA.
- TIME IS AN ISSUE FOR RECREATION AS THE CHINESE TYPICALLY DO NOT HAVE A LOT OF TIME AVAILABLE TO DO THESE THINGS.
- FAVORITE SPORTS IN CHINA INCLUDE: TABLE TENNIS (PING-PONG), SOCCER, SWIMMING, AND BADMINTON.
- THE CHINESE LOVE TO GO TO MOVIES, KARAOKE, AND EAT OUT.
- BOWLING IS POPULAR AS WELL IN CHINA.
- MANY CHINESE LOVE TO GO TO PARKS TO CHAT, PLAY CARDS, PRACTICE TAIJIQUAN (SHADOWBOXING), OR PLAY CHESS.

# China

# United States

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

# Customs & Traditions in China

After each ACT-IT-OUT, write down key  
information about China's customs.

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## Food & Etiquette

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## Dating & Marriage

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## Family Life

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## Education

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## Greetings & Gestures

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## Recreation