Chapter 4

Cultures of the World
Chapter 4: Cultures of the World

Section 1: What is Culture?

Section 2: Social Groups, Language, and Religion

Section 3: Economic and Political Systems

Section 4: Cultural Change
What Is Culture?

- What is culture?
- How do cultures develop?
Key Terms

- **culture**: language, religious beliefs, values, customs, and other ways of life shared by a group of people
- **cultural trait**: a behavioral characteristic of a people, such as a language, skill, or custom, passed from one generation to another
- **technology**: tools and the skills that people need to use them; the practical use of scientific skills, especially in industry
- **cultural landscape**: a landscape that has been changed by human beings and that reflects their culture
- **agriculture**: farming; includes growing crops and raising livestock
Chapter 4, Section 1

Culture: A Total Way of Life

• Culture is the way of life of a group of people who share similar beliefs and customs.
• Cultural traits are a particular group’s individual skills, customs, and ways of doing things.
• Over time, cultural traits may change, but cultures change very slowly.

What are some elements of culture?
• the work people do, their behaviors, beliefs
• material things: houses, television sets, food, clothing
• sports, entertainment, literature
• spiritual beliefs, ideals, government
• ideas about right and wrong
• language
Geographers are interested in the interaction between humans and the environment. How do landforms, climate, vegetation, and resources affect culture?

Similarly, geographers want to know how a culture can affect the environment. They will look at:

- Technology: People use technology to take advantage of natural resources and change the environment.
- Cultural Landscape: A group’s cultural landscape includes any changes to its environment and the technology used to make the changes.
Early cultures went through four stages:

• The invention of tools: For most of human history, people were hunters and gatherers. Wood and stone tools and weapons helped them hunt, prepare food, and work.

• The discovery of fire: Later, they learned to make and use fire, so some people began living in colder climates.

• The growth of agriculture: Then, people discovered how to grow crops and tame wild animals. Over time, societies relied on farming for most of their food. This great change is called the Agricultural Revolution.

• The use of writing
By 3,000 years ago, the Agricultural Revolution had changed much of the world:

- It provided a steady food supply: birthrates rose; death rates fell; population increased.
- The Agricultural Revolution led to the creation of cities and complex societies: some produced food; others developed special skills; people developed laws and government.
- The need to record information led to the development of writing. When a culture creates a writing system it is called a civilization.
- As people learned to control and change the environment, they could grow more and better crops and spread out to other regions, changing the landscape as they moved along.
Culture can best be described as
   a) changes made to a group’s environment.
   b) the interaction between humans and their environment.
   c) a group’s individual skills, customs, and ways of doing things.
   d) the way of life of a group of people who share similar beliefs and customs.

The Agricultural Revolution led to
   a) the discovery of fire.
   b) the creation of cities and complex societies.
   c) the invention of tools.
   d) a hunting and gathering society.
Culture can best be described as

a) changes made to a group’s environment.
b) the interaction between humans and their environment.
c) a group’s individual skills, customs, and ways of doing things.
d) the way of life of a group of people who share similar beliefs and customs.

The Agricultural Revolution led to

a) the discovery of fire.
b) the creation of cities and complex societies.
c) the invention of tools.
d) a hunting and gathering society.
Why is social organization important to cultures?

What elements make cultures distinct from one another?
Key Terms

- **social structure**: the ways in which people within a culture are organized into smaller groups; each smaller group has its own particular tasks.

- **nuclear family**: a family unit that includes a mother, father, and their children.

- **extended family**: a family unit that may include parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other relatives, often living with or near each other.

- **ethics**: the standards or code of moral behavior that distinguishes between right and wrong for a particular person, religion, group, profession, and so on.
• Every culture has a social structure—a way of organizing people into smaller groups, each with its own tasks. Social structure helps people work together to meet the basic needs of individuals, families, and communities.

• Cultures have TWO major types of social organization:
  – Social classes, which rank people in a culture.
  – A person’s status or position may come from such things as wealth, land, ancestors, or education.

• In some cultures in the past, it was often hard—or impossible—to move from one social class to another. Today, people in many societies can improve their status.

• The most basic, important social unit of any culture is the family. Families teach the customs and traditions of a culture.
There are two major types of family structures:

- **The Nuclear Family**: a mother, father, and their children
  - Common in industrial nations
  - Adults usually work outside the home
  - They depend on the work of machines, such as automobiles

- **The Extended Family**: parents, children, and other relatives
  - Includes several generations
  - Older people are very respected and they pass on traditions
  - Less common than they used to be as rural people move to cities

Cultures also differ when deciding who is in charge of families:

- Most cultures have patriarchal families; men make most decisions.
- Very few have matriarchal families; women have more authority.
- Today, this is changing—men and women are sharing family power.
All cultures have language—every culture is based on language. Language lets people communicate everything they need to share in a culture. Without it, people could not pass on what they know or believe. Language reflects the things that are important to a culture’s people. For example, the Inuits of North America have more than 13 words for snow. Why? Because snow covers their ground for most of the year—it is an important part of their environment. In some countries, people speak different languages. People who speak different languages are culturally different in some ways from other people in their country.
Chapter 4, Section 2

The World: Major Language Groups
Ways of Believing

Just as language is basic to cultures, so are values and religion. Religion is important because it
• helps people understand the world.
• can provide comfort and hope for people facing difficult times.
• helps answer questions about the meaning and purpose of life.
• helps define the values that people believe are important.
• guides people in ethics, or standards of accepted behavior.
• Religious beliefs vary. Some such as Islam, Judaism, and Christianity believe in one god. Others worship more than one god. But all religions have prayers and rituals and every religion celebrates important places and times.
Chapter 4, Section 2

The World: Major Religions
Which of the following is true about social groups today?
   a) It is easier for more people to improve their social status or class.
   b) Fewer families are either patriarchal or matriarchal.
   c) The extended family is becoming less common.
   d) All of the above

Religion and language
   a) define a nation’s culture.
   b) help define the culture of a particular group.
   c) are basically the same around the world.
   d) All of the above

Want to connect to the PHSchool.com Web activities for this section? Click here.
Which of the following is true about social groups today?

a) It is easier for more people to improve their social status or class.
b) Fewer families are either patriarchal or matriarchal.
c) The extended family is becoming less common.
d) All of the above

Religion and language

a) define a nation’s culture.
b) help define the culture of a particular group.
c) are basically the same around the world.
d) All of the above

Want to connect to the PHSchool.com Web activities for this section? Click here.
• What is an economic system?

• How do governments differ in their structure?
Key Terms

- **economy** - a system for producing, distributing, consuming, and owning goods, services, and wealth
- **producer** - a person who makes products that are used by other people
- **goods** - products that are made to be sold; cars, baskets, computers, and paper are all examples of goods
- **services** - work done or duties performed for other people, such as the work of a doctor or of a car repair person
- **consumer** - a person who buys goods and services
- **capitalism** - an economic system in which people and privately owned companies own both basic and non-basic businesses and industries
- **socialism** - an economic system in which the government owns most basic industries, such as transportation, communications, and banking; non-basic industries are privately owned
Key Terms (continued)

- **communism**- a theory of government in which property such as farms and factories is owned by the government for the benefit of all citizens; a political system in which the central government controls all aspects of citizens’ lives
- **government**- the system that establishes and enforces the laws and institutions of a society; some governments are controlled by a few people, and others are controlled by many
- **direct democracy**- a system of government in which the people participate directly in decision making
- **monarchy**- a system of authoritarian government headed by a monarch—usually a king or queen—who inherits the throne by birth
- **constitution**- a set of laws that defines and limits a government’s power
- **representative democracy**- a system of government in which the people elect representatives to run the affairs of the country
- **dictator**- a ruler who has complete power over a country
In an economy:
- Owners and workers are producers.
- They produce goods and services.
- Consumers buy and use the goods and services.

There are two categories of businesses:
- **Basic Businesses**: They are essential for a nation to function and include things like transportation and electricity.
- **Non-basic Businesses**: “Nice but not necessary.” They produce things such as compact discs or sports equipment.

There are THREE basic economic systems:
- capitalism, socialism, and communism.

Hardly any nation has a “pure” economic system.
### Types of Economic Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capitalism</th>
<th>Socialism</th>
<th>Communism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Most basic and non-basic businesses are privately owned.</td>
<td>• The government owns most basic industries.</td>
<td>• The central government owns all property for the benefit of its citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workers produce the goods and services.</td>
<td>• It runs them for the good of society, not for profit.</td>
<td>• It controls all aspects of citizens’ lives, including prices of goods and services, how much is produced, and what workers are paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A company earns profits on its products and decides what to charge and how much to pay workers.</td>
<td>• The government decides what to pay workers and what to charge for goods.</td>
<td>• Nations include: Cuba, China, and North Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The consumer is important.</td>
<td>• Non-basic industries follow the capitalist model.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• free-market economy</td>
<td>• Nations: Spain, Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Government is the system that sets up and enforces a society’s laws and institutions. Some are controlled by a few people; others are controlled by many.

Here are four types of political systems:

**Direct Democracy**

- The earliest governments were simple.
- People lived in small groups.
- Everyone participated in the running of the day-to-day affairs of the group.
- Chiefs or elders decided what was right to do.
- Decisions were based upon the culture’s customs and beliefs.
Monarchy

- A king or queen rules the government, and inherits the throne by birth.
- Until about 100 years ago, it was a very common form of government. Today, monarchies still exist, but the rulers do not have much power.
- Monarchies today are constitutional monarchies, meaning they have a set of laws that defines and limits the government’s power. The king or queen is often only a symbol of the country.
- Examples of monarchies today are: Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Swaziland.
Representative Democracy

- A constitutional monarchy usually is a representative democracy.
- Citizens elect representatives to run the country’s affairs—people indirectly hold power to govern and rule.
- The system ensures that power is shared.
- Democracies today include the United States, Canada, and Israel.

Dictatorship

- A government leader who has almost total power over an entire country is called a dictator. A sole person rules the nation.
- Dictators make laws and decisions for the entire country.
In which economic system does the government control almost all non-basic industries?
   a) Capitalism
   b) Socialism
   c) Communism
   d) Socialism and communism

In which political system today do the people indirectly hold power?
   a) Constitutional monarchy
   b) Representative democracy
   c) Direct democracy
   d) Constitutional monarchy and representative democracy

Want to connect to the PHSchool.com Web activities for this section? Click here.
In which economic system does the government control almost all non-basic industries?

a) Capitalism  
b) Socialism  
c) Communism  
d) Socialism and communism

In which political system today do the people indirectly hold power?

a) Constitutional monarchy  
b) Representative democracy  
c) Direct democracy  
d) Constitutional monarchy and representative democracy

Want to connect to the PHSchool.com Web activities for this section? Click here.
• What causes cultures to change?

• Why has the rate of cultural change been increasing?
Key Terms

• **cultural diffusion** - the movement of customs and ideas from one culture to another

• **Acculturation** - the process of accepting, borrowing, and exchanging ideas and traits among cultures
Cultures change all the time. A change in one part of a culture changes other parts. Changes in the natural environment, technology, and new ideas affect culture.

A change in the environment:
- If the weather changes long enough, the climate will change. That affects the kinds of food people eat, the clothes they wear, and the way they make a living.

A new idea:
- People used to take nature for granted. Since the 1950s, people all over the world have become concerned about the environment. People now recycle, work to protect endangered species, preserve forests, and conserve natural resources.
New technological discoveries and inventions may have had the most effect on cultures.

What are some examples of this?

- The discovery of fire helped people survive colder climates.
- The invention of early tools allowed hunters to kill larger animals, changing the food people ate and ways of life.

What about in modern times?

- The introduction of radio and television in the United States allowed people to receive instant information and entertainment and also led to such things as the TV dinner.
- Computers change how and where people work, can help people live longer, and have led to new words, like hacker.
People are on the move all over the world. In the process, they all bring new things such as clothing and tools with them. They also bring ideas about such things as how to prepare food, teach children, or worship and govern. Sometimes a culture adopts these new ideas.

The movement of customs and ideas is called cultural diffusion.
- Examples: Baseball and blue jeans began in the United States, but today are popular all over the world.

The process of accepting, borrowing, and exchanging ideas is called acculturation.
- Examples: Japan changed baseball to better fit their culture. Blue jeans originated in the United States, but other places made changes to them. People in the United States adopted these changes.
Recently, technology has increased the speed of change. There is now a rapid exchange of ideas. Faxes and computers transport information almost instantly. Magazines, television, and the Internet bring ideas and information from all over the world into many homes.

A Global Village

• Today, many people call the Earth a global village because modern transportation and communications tell everyone about far-away people, businesses, and governments almost instantly (resembling the small-community feel of a village).

Information Overload?

• Change can help, but it can also hurt. If things change too fast, people can become confused and culture is threatened. Valuable traditions can disappear and sources of knowledge can be lost.
### International Travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S. Travelers to Foreign Countries</th>
<th>Foreign Visitors to the United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>22 million</td>
<td>22 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>35 million</td>
<td>25 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>45 million</td>
<td>40 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>51 million</td>
<td>43 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>56 million</td>
<td>46 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which of the following is the best example of technology affecting cultural change?

a) In the 1950s, people became more concerned about nature.
b) Baseball has become a very popular sport in Japan.
c) The discovery of fire helped people survive colder climates.
d) A region’s changing climate led the people there to wear new clothes.

Why do many people call the Earth a global village?

a) People are friendlier these days.
b) Because of the Internet, countries are getting along better.
c) Technology is causing valuable traditions to disappear.
d) Modern technology connects far-away people almost instantly.

Want to connect to the PHSchool.com Web activities for this section? Click here.
Which of the following is the best example of technology affecting cultural change?
   a) In the 1950s, people became more concerned about nature.
   b) Baseball has become a very popular sport in Japan.
   c) The discovery of fire helped people survive colder climates.
   d) A region’s changing climate led the people there to wear new clothes.

Why do many people call the Earth a global village?
   a) People are friendlier these days.
   b) Because of the Internet, countries are getting along better.
   c) Technology is causing valuable traditions to disappear.
   d) Modern technology connects far-away people almost instantly.

Want to connect to the PHSchool.com Web activities for this section? Click here.