



Yale-New Haven
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2003 Volume I: Geography through Film and Literature

From Beijing to St. Petersburg: Riding the Rails through Asia via Film and Literature

Guide for Curriculum Unit 03.01.03
by Sean Griffin

"From Beijing to St. Petersburg; Riding the Rail Through Asia via Film and Literature" invites students to join me on a journey that has always been my dream to take. To travel from China through Mongolia and Russia to the edge of Europe would be a fascinating and eye-opening experience. Since it is unlikely that my students or I will ever make the journey, studying this unit is the next best thing. The Trans-Siberian railroad is our main vehicle as we go on a trip that invites the exploration of cultures and landscapes so unlike our own. Students will discover other worlds through the viewing of film and the study of literature. The students are also encouraged to creatively make their own discoveries about these other worlds through the making of their own maps and the keeping of their own travelogues. One of the strong points of the unit is its adaptability. Teachers have the chance to employ their own materials from film to literature to journeys, and then to focus on areas of interest. I enjoyed creating the unit and hope others will enjoy using it.

(Recommended for Language Arts, grade 8.)

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