



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

A Story, A Story - Embracing Geography, Culture, and Diversity through Film

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Introduction

The September 11 World Trade Center tragedy sparked many different views across America. More than anything else, it reminded us that many of our ancestors hailed from cultures found throughout the world, that perhaps we have not taken time to truly learn about and respect diverse cultures within our midst. Perhaps we have been too disconnected.

If we were to canvass America's population, we would find that at some point our ancestries are rooted in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, and beyond. Imagine taking a fun-filled journey through storytelling and research to explore those countries of origin, experiencing the terrain, the people and the way they adapt to their geographic surroundings. Perhaps despite recognizing the obvious diversity between cultures, we would make a fascinating discovery: we're not so different after all. We are in fact connected. This is the primary objective of my curriculum unit, *A Story, A Story: Embracing Geography, Culture, and Diversity Through Film and More*.

Targeted at students in Grade 3, this unit introduces young learners to a sampling of locales found in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The unit is divided into five sections: the first three provide a regional overview of diverse terrain and an up-close look at select countries within each of the three regions: Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Southern France, China, Poland and geographic areas surrounding the Czech Republic city of Prague. The fourth and fifth sections provide engaging culminating activities. *A Story, A Story* puts the accent on geography and language arts through related storymapping and fact-finding activities. Students are given audio-visual-tactile experiences to compare and contrast geographic aspects of each country while zeroing in on common thread experiences and lifestyles across cultures.

The introduction and study of each locale will be followed by a folkloric children's film presentation: *Not One Less* (China), *Le Ballon Rouge/The Red Balloon* (Southern France), *The Beggar of Soutile* (Cote d'Ivoire), *One Drop of Milk* (Burkina Faso and Southern France), and *Zlateh The Goat* (the Prague/Poland). Each of these cinematic tools is rich in literary content. Each film gives the student a feel for the terrain while providing a glimpse at lifestyles that could possibly be found in each specified locale.

Although developed for third graders, *A Story, A Story* is modifiable to accommodate students in Grade Levels 2, 4 through 6. The unit can be implemented at any time during the course of the school year. However, *Zlateh The Goat*, a moving Hanukkah folktale written by Pulitzer prize-winning folklorist Isaac Bashevis Singer, can be presented during December. The *Beggar of Soutile*, a stunning film on human accountability to one's fellow man, is highly recommended for use during December through February (which traditionally marks the beginning of Kwanzaa and African American-Heritage month).

A Story, A Story is an interdisciplinary unit: Geography (identifying land features re: targeted countries, reading maps, becoming familiar with geographic terminology), Language Arts (with emphasis on critiquing, comparing, evaluating and comprehending text; oral presentation; and research, reports, and expository writing), and Art (creating a map and landmarks using assorted media) serve as a primary focus of this unit and are well integrated therein. Written in compliance with New Haven Public School System Social Studies and Language Arts standards, each unit embraces the standards as noted below:

Content Standard 1.0 Diversity

Students will

- read, view, and listen to multiple sources that reflect diversity of culture
- compare the similarities and differences within different communities
- compare traits found in communities from another time or place with that of the students community
- describe similarities and differences among community services

Content Standard 3.0 Geography

Students will

- read, view and listen to multiple sources concerning geography
- locate places on a map relative to another site on the map
- identify physical features of a specific geographic locales
- compare the impact of weather on life in that environment

Content Standard 5.0 Language Arts/Viewing & Interpreting

Students will

- establish a purpose for viewing
- view a variety of visual materials that reflect different cultures
- view a variety of media, technological format, non-print materials and charts reflective of the grade level curriculum
- create materials to be viewed by others
- discuss what they already know about the topic
- take notes and record information regarding viewed selections

Before You Begin

Recognize that for some students, the mere mention of geography results in scowled faces and *"Man, that's boring stuff--we're just gonna be learnin' about land and water!"* attitudes. Set the tone by introducing the unit in an enticing way: *"Explorers! During the upcoming weeks, we will take several fascinating excursions. Don't worry! We won't be flying on a 747, but we will be visiting far away places in several interesting, interactive ways!"*

You have just dangled the carrot before the horse! At this point highlight the meaning of geography, and why it is essential to know? Convey that geography is more than a simplistic study of the earth's surface: it is an up-close, wide-lens view of landmasses--continents and countries, climate, flora and fauna, natural resources, inhabitants, and ways that living things interact with their environ. Geography is a vehicle through which people can learn about each other.

Additionally, recognize that when introducing countries through cinematic presentations, instructors must be mindful of the year in which the film is created coupled with the year that the film portrays. Time and modernization has impacted many of these countries. As a result, portrayed scenes may distort student perception of countries or region, as they exist today. Internet research, independent reading using photo essays and age appropriate non-fiction works, coupled with objective insight and instruction on your behalf are the tools needed to help students embrace non-distorted views.

Also be mindful of who created the film, its overall intent, and the types of images being projected: some foreign filmmakers use this genre to make political and social statements regarding events during specific time periods in the country's history. Some films created by those outside of the viewed culture are stereotypical in content. Terms and images derogatory in nature such as *tribes, huts, primitive people, jungle, wild animals, weird, mystical, exotic, enchanting environ*, and more may be projected. Such depictions are inaccurate and often prove offensive to people of diverse cultures. They too perpetuate a misunderstanding and continuance of such negative perceptions among young learners.

Make every effort to introduce students to bias-free terminology such as "original" or "indigenous people" or "aboriginal inhabitants", "townships", "mud-slabbed dwellings", "rural community", "communal areas", "dense equatorial or tropical forests." When identifying people by their place of origin, encourage students to be specific. e.g., a young *Ivoirian* boy versus an *African* boy, a *Szechwan* youngster, versus an *Asian* youngster.

In teaching about diverse cultures, our background knowledge is crucial if we want to objectively project accurate images of our world, dispel stereotypes, and eliminate misconceptions too frequently projected.

Section 1: Africa

Africa is a vast continent brimming with geographic and cultural diversity from its northernmost region to its southernmost shores. The second largest continent in the world in both landmass and population, it is an immense plateau laden with mountainous regions, coastal areas, desert, dense equatorial forest, savannahs, sahels, and oases. The Nile, the continent's longest river and the longest river in the world, flows from the north to southeastern Africa. Today, this massive continent is comprised of 53 independent countries and several other political units.

From region to region, its people and lifestyles are as diverse as the continent they occupy. Language, homes, lifestyles differ from country to country, township to township. A large number of Africa's indigenous inhabitants live in rural areas. For many, agriculture, raising livestock, trading and/or selling goods serves as a daily way of life. Today, African cities, townships, and countries are a blend of modernization and adherence to traditional lifestyles.

Rich in natural resources, Africa has coveted, invaluable mineral wealth, including generous deposits of gold, copper, diamonds, and petroleum. Its forests brim with trees that produce the most desired products, such as mahoganies. The land is conducive to the production of the most of the world's cocoa beans, cassava, and yams. Have your young learners research the wonders of each region of this diverse continent.

Cote d'Ivoire: An Up-Close Look

Words to Highlight

Ivoirians	Dioula	canal	cliffs	lagoon	seaport
gulf	savanna	Coastal strip	cocoa	cassava	palm
deforestation	tropical forest	compound	villages	yams	seaport

The Republique of Cote d'Ivoire, known in English as the Ivory Coast, is primarily an agrarian nation. Its terrain is flat and undulating. Its indigenous inhabitant, referred to as Ivoirians, speak over 60 different languages, Dioula being the most prevalently spoken. French, however, is the country's official language.

The Atlantic Ocean borders Cote d'Ivoire on its southern shore. Its east, west, and northern borders are surrounded by land. Ghana lies to the east, Burkina Faso to the northeast, Mali to the northwest, Guinea along its western border, and Liberia to its southwestern boundary. Its highest mountain is Mount Nimba, which is 5,784 feet above sea level. Cote d'Ivoire's chief products are bananas, cacao, cassava, coffee, corn, palm oil, pineapples, rice, timber, and yams.

Most Ivoirians are farmers who live in small village communities. Most families live in clusters of housing in rural and suburban areas. The eastern part of the country is a flat and sandy stretch of land. Lagoons are interspersed in this area. The western part of the coast consists of small, rocky cliffs. Inland one finds tropical

forest. To the north, the forest undergoes change, becoming a savanna area.

The Badama, the Cavally, The Komoe, and the Sassandra rivers flow from a northward to southerly direction through the country. The Bandama is the longest river. Each river consists of strong-flowing rapids and falls, so travel along them is very often limited. The land, particularly along the coastal region is very humid and hot. Temperatures there vary from 76 to 83 degrees F. Temperatures in the rainforest areas vary from 57 to 103F. In the country's northern savanna region, temperatures rise to as high as 120 degrees. To the far north, the region is semi-arid.

Long ago, Cote D'Ivoire was known for its dense tropical forest. Today, that no longer holds true, for deforestation has impacted it dramatically. Deforestation occurred as a result of the wooded areas being cleared by the timber industry. Water pollution has impacted many of the country's waterways. The pollution has been caused by sewage and industrial and agricultural waste along the coastal areas.

Activity 1: Film - *The Beggar of Soutile* (26 minutes)

You are about to view a film that takes place in a Cote D'Ivoirian township. The story may appear to be very real because it actually takes place in the land we have recently learned about. The story, however, is fiction. Were you to travel to Cote D'Ivoire today, you would experience a blend of modern-day living and traditional lifestyles. This story depicts a time long, long ago. It is a folktale acted out by Ivoirian actors. We will observe the film, focusing in on the storyline that is being conveyed. We are also going to pretend that we are actually in this section of Cote D'Ivoire. Look closely at the setting. Make a mental note of all the landscapes and the noticeable ways of life.

Questions to Explore

Students will record their observations on a film observation form (see Attachment A). While viewing the film, students are asked to keep in mind the following:

What types geographic regions did you observe?

How might the landscape impact the way people traveled?

What type of community did you observe? Describe it.

Based on surrounding geography, how might its people have made a living?

Was deforestation evident in this film? If applicable, why might deforestation have such a terrible impact on the township?

What type of climate is depicted?

How did climate impact the way people dressed?

What language(s) were spoken throughout the film?

Activity 2: Story Map/Film

Students will complete a story map highlighting their basic understanding of the film. (See Attachment B.)

Senegal: An Up-Close Look

Words to Highlight

Senegalese Wolof canal beach foothills plain
semi-arid millet cassava rice groundnuts poultry
kola nut compound villages bungalows yams tropical forest

Senegal is a small country located on the northwestern coastline of Africa. Like many other African countries, it is a developing country with a blend of modern and traditional lifestyles. Its people refer to themselves as Senegalese. Many languages are spoken within the country: Wolof is widely spoken in many areas. French, however, is the country's official language.

The country itself is a plain. Along its coastal areas are sandy beaches. To its southern region lies tropical forest; forest areas decrease towards the northern region. Rolling foothills are found in both locations. The average temperature in the region ranges between 71 to 84 degrees.

Senegal's chief products are peanuts, millet, cassava, cotton, poultry, rice, and vegetables. Its people are primarily farmers. The processing of peanuts into oil is one of its chief industries. The fishing industry is also prevalent in this region.

A large number of Senegalese people live in rural village communities. Many homes are mud-slabbed and covered with thatched-roofs. These homes, often situated in clustered fashion and surrounded by a wall or fence, are known as compounds. Others live in modern-type apartment buildings or bungalows.

Activity 1: Film - *The Greedy Child* (26 minutes)

You are about to view a film that takes place in a township of Senegal, West Africa. The story may appear to be very real because it actually takes place in the land we have recently learned about. The story, however, is fiction. Were you to travel to Senegal today, you would experience a blend of modern-day living and traditional lifestyles. This story depicts a time long, long ago. It is a folktale acted out by Senegalese actors. We will observe the film, focusing in on the storyline that is being conveyed. We are also going to pretend that we are actually in this section of Senegal. Look closely at the setting. Make a mental note of all the landscapes and the noticeable ways of life.

Questions to Explore

Students will record their observations on a film observation form (see Attachment A). While viewing the film, students asked to keep an eye out for the following:

What types geographic regions did you observe?

How might the landscape impact the way people traveled?

What type of community did you observe? Describe it.

Based on surrounding geography, how might its people have made a living?

Was deforestation evident in this portion of Africa? Explain.

What type of climate is depicted?

How did climate impact the way people dressed?

What language(s) were spoken throughout the film?

Activity 2: Story Map/Film

Students will complete a story map highlighting their basic understanding of the film. (See Attachment B.)

Burkina Faso: An Up-Close Look

Words to Highlight

Mande	Gurunsi	Lobi	Bobo	Senufu	Fulana
Tuareg	nomadic	grassland	savannah	swamp	valley
plateau	hills	yiri	sorghum	millet	corn
arid	fonio	shea nuts	groundnuts	cotton	cattle raising

A developing nation, Burkina Faso is an inland plateau. It is a landlocked country: to the north is Mali, to its southwestern region lies Cote d'Ivoire, to the south, Ghana, and to the western region, Niger. Burkina Faso is primarily dry and rocky. Its soil is quite thin and does not sufficiently absorb and retain water. Wooded grasslands (savannahs) cover most of the country. Many of its people refer to themselves by ethnic and linguistic groupings, e.g., the Mande, Mossi, Bobo, Gurunsi, and Lobi. Many people who reside in this country work as farmers. Farmers live in the central and eastern portions of the country.

Burkina Faso is a semi-arid land. Thirty to forty-five inches of rain per year constitutes the country's average rainfall. Because of this, the land is not conducive to expansive agricultural. Farmland found in this country is located near river valleys. This land is used to raise corn, millet, rice, sorghum and fonio, a crabgrass-like plant with seeds that are used as cereal. Cotton, peanuts, and shea nuts do well in this region. Cattle raising, however, is the most important source of work and income for many of Burkina Faso's inhabitants.

Burkina Faso's people reside in different types of homes depending upon the area in which they reside. The Bobo, found quite often in the southwestern region, live in large villages in castle-like dwellings. Their houses are often made of hand-made clay brick walls and straw roofs. The Gurunsi tend to live in more modernized, urban settings in the northwestern area near the city of Koudougou. The Mossi, an agrarian people, tend to live in small groups of mud-brick dwellings known as yiris. The Mossi primarily dwell in the eastern and central portions of the country. Because of land conditions, climate, and the need to find work, many inhabitants of Burkina Faso are nomadic.

Activity 1: Film - *The Drop of Milk* (26 minutes)

You are about to view a film that takes place in two very different parts of the world. The story begins somewhere in Burkina Faso, West Africa. It later shifts to a countryside in southern France. At this time, we will pay very close attention to our storytelling adventure in Burkina Faso. The story may appear to be very

real because it actually takes place in the lands we are studying. The story, however, is fiction. Were you to travel to Burkina Faso today, you would experience a blend of modern-day living and traditional lifestyles. This story depicts a time long ago. It is a folktale acted out by actors who come from the countries of both of the noted countries. We will observe the film, focusing in on the storyline that is being conveyed. We are also going to pretend that we are actually in this section of Burkina Faso. Look closely at the setting. Make a mental note of all the landscapes and the noticeable ways of life between the two depicted countries.

Questions to Explore

Students will record their observations on a film observation form (see Attachment A). While viewing the film, students are asked to keep in mind the following:

What types geographic regions did you observe?

How might the landscape impact the way people traveled?

What type of community did you observe? Describe it.

Based on the terrain you observed, why might people in Burkina Faso be nomadic?

Explain?

Based on the geography of Burkina Faso, how might its people have made a living?

What type of climate is depicted?

How did climate impact the way people dressed?

What language(s) were spoken throughout the film?

Look at the landscape in Burkina Faso. Think of the landscape filmed in the French countryside. How do they differ? How are they similar?

Activity 2: Story Map/Film

Students will complete a story map highlighting their basic understanding of the film. (See Attachment B.)

Section 2: Asia

When we think of Asia, China immediately comes to mind, but this largest of the seven continents extends from the Arabian Peninsula, Turkey, and the Ural Mountains eastward to the Pacific Ocean. From the Arctic Ocean, it reaches south to the Indian Ocean. A tremendous number of islands off the mainland are considered to be part of the Asian continent. Generally from west to east, these include Cyprus, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, most of Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Japan.

Asia and Europe are part of the same mass of land. No body of water separates the two completely. Because

of this, many classify the continent as Eurasia. Certain physical features, however, mark the division between these two continents. The Ural Mountains, Ural River, and Caspian Sea act as an east-west boundary in the north. The Dardanelles, Sea of Marmara, Bosphorus Strait, Black Sea, and Caucasus Mountains connect to form a north-south border in the west.

The Asian continent is as diverse as it is vast. Enormous forests, tall snow-capped mountain ranges, deserts, plains, plateaus tundra, coastal regions, bays, lakes and more are abundant across the continent. In the southern region towards its northern border lie the Himalayas that include Mt. Everest, the world's highest mountain range. Rich, fertile soil lies south of the mountains. Central Asia has much of the continent's poorest land. Its main features include deserts, mountains, and rocky plateaus. East Asia's major rivers, the Huang He (Yellow River) and Yangtze, begin in the Tibetan Highlands and flow east across China. The Huang He empties into the Yellow Sea, and the Yangtze empties into the East China Sea. The Yangtze, which measures 3,900 miles (6,275 kilometers) long, is Asia's longest river. Have students conduct research on countries within this region, highlighting geographic similarities.

China: An Up-Close Look

Words to Highlight

Zhongguo	Chinese	Mandarin	Sichuan	highlands	uplands
harbors	basin	terraced fields	gorges	plateaus	wasteland
drought	desert	arid	mountain	valleys	lowland
uplands	delta	stream	river	irrigation	conservation
Himalayas	Mt. Everest	Yangtze	commune	sorghum	kaoliang

China, endearingly referred to as Zhongguo (Middle Country) by its people, is the largest country in world population. It is a blend of past and present, of modern and traditional lifestyles. Approximately 1,300,000,000 people reside there today. Its major cities are found in the eastern portion of the country, where land is most suited for agriculture. Mt. Everest is its tallest mountain. It is bordered to the north by Mongolia, to the northwest Krygyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, to the southwest by India. Many languages are spoken throughout the country, however Mandarin (Putonghua), Min, Wu, and Yue (Cantonese) are considered major languages.

Most Chinese inhabitants live in traditional communities. Homes are often built of mud, brick or stone-covered with thatched straw or tiled rooftops. Family and community life is important here. Hundreds of households situated in the same locale constitute a communal-type neighborhood. Its people depend upon one another; they work for the good of the collective body. Although the land generally is not conducive to agriculture, farming is a major source of employment for its people. Sorghum (kaoliang), corn, and wheat are grown in the north. In southern China, sweet potatoes, rice, and tea serve as major crops. Apples, cabbages, carrots, corn, melons, potatoes, rubber, sugar beets, sugar cane, tomatoes, and wheat. Effective soil irrigation, diligent hand labor, coupled with the use of organic fertilizers helps to ensure productive use of farmland and soil conservation.

Geographers have divided the China into eight basic landmasses:

The desert areas of northeastern China constitute the *Xinjiang-Mongolian Uplands*. The Ordos and part of the Gobi Desert are in this locale.

The *Tibetan Highlands of Southwestern China* is an enormous plateau. The Huang and Yangste rivers begin in this region. Despite the existence of these waterways, Tibet suffers from drought. Surrounding lands are barren, laden with rock, gravel, snow and ice.

The *Mongolian Border Uplands* , where little farming occurs due to the rugged terrain and extensive mineral deposits. Rich in mineral resources, it is thinly populated due primarily to its rugged terrain.

The *Eastern Highlands* , known for its great forests, has hilly regions with rich coal deposits and excellent harbors.

The *Eastern Lowlands* house the best farmland in the country. Here lies the Yangtse River valley area, whose river helps to create the fertile soil.

The *Central Uplands* are brimming with hills and mountains. Wheat is grown north of the Qin Ling Mountains located in this region.

The *Sichuan Basin* , located south of the central uplands, is an agricultural region. Level strips of land known as terraced fields are used grow crops.

Limestone is abundant in the *Southern Uplands* of China. Much of this region is so mountainous and hilly that little agriculture and cultivation go on in this region.

Activity 1: Film - *Not One Less* (106 minutes)

(Because of the length of this film, it is suggested that *Not One Less* be presented in four sessions, constituting approximately 25 minutes per viewing. Have students record their observations on individual worksheets [see Attachment A] for each section.)

You are about to view a film that takes place in a village in northern China, on the outskirts of the country's capital and second largest city, Beijing. *Yi Ge Dou Bu Neng Shao* , the title of the film in Mandarin, is a somewhat modern-day story. Things have changed dramatically in China since that time. Were we to visit this beautiful region today, we would experience a blend of modern-day and traditional lifestyles. Nevertheless, we will pretend we are in this region and will intensely observe the film, focusing in on the storyline that is being conveyed. Look closely at the setting. Make a mental note of all the landscapes and ways of life you notice.

Questions to Explore

Students will record their observations on a film observation form (see Attachment A). While viewing the film, students are asked to keep in mind the following:

What types geographic regions did you observe?

How might the landscape impact the way people traveled?

What type of communities did you observe? Describe them.

Based on surrounding geography, how might its people have made a living?

What type of climate is depicted?

How did climate impact the way people dressed?

What language(s) were spoken throughout the film?

Look at lifestyles, environment, and overall landscape both within and outside of Beijing. How do they differ?
How are they similar?

Activity 2: Story Map/Film

Students will complete a story map highlighting their basic understanding of the film. (See Attachment B.)

Section 3: Europe

Generally, Europe consists of four major land regions: the northwest mountains region that traverse France, Ireland, Norway, Finland and portions of Russia; the great plains area consisting of extensively flatlands, some rolling hills, and similar land masses extending from Russia to portions of France; the central and upland regions, that include high plateaus, low-lying mountains extending through central Europe; and the Alpine Mountain range that spans Southern Europe from Spain to land found near the Caspian Sea. Some of the highest mountains are found in this region. Rivers and lakes lie throughout many of its countries. Weather in this portion of the world is generally milder than in its Asian and African counterparts. Found within this area are rich deciduous and evergreen forests (particularly in the northern area), grasslands that include steppes (dry areas where only short grasses grow) and prairies (fertile areas with taller grasses used primarily by farmers for grazing cattle), and high mountains and tundra. Have your students conduct independent research to learn more about this beautiful region.

France: An Up Close Look

Words to Highlight

agriculture Parisians border coastline plains plateaus
mountain valleys lowlands channel bay river
sea lumber lumbering industry urban area countryside

France is the largest country in Western Europe. Its world-renowned capital, Paris, is its largest city; its major landmarks are the Eiffel Tower, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and the largest art museum in the world, The Louvre.

France has a population of approximately 60 million people, many who reside in or near the metropolitan region of Paris. Many of its residents were not born in the country, but rather traveled from such countries as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and Indochina. This constitutes about 7-10% of today's population. French is the dominant language spoken in this European country.

France is diverse in its geography. To the north and western regions lie flat or rolling plains. Hills and

mountains are located in its east central and southernmost regions. Plateaus are found in the Northeast. Valleys and lowlands, central highlands, and major mountain ranges such as the French Alps, Jura and Pyrenees mountains dot the land. The richest farmlands lie in the country's north and northeastern regions. The northwestern portion is used primarily for grazing cattle and sheep. Beef and mutton are its major meat products. Grapes, which grow abundantly in Southern France, are used primarily for wine production.

France has many rivers. The Loire is the country's longest river. It is approximately 650 miles long. France is bordered to the North and Northeast by Belgium and Germany, to the east by Switzerland, to the Southeast by Italy, and to the South by Spain. The English Channel and Bay of Biscay borders its western coastline. The Mediterranean Sea lies to the southeast portion of the country. Taking a closer look at the country, we find it has 10 distinct geographic features:

The *Brittany Normandy Hills*, located in the northwestern portion of France, consist of ancient rock covered with poor soil and some fertile areas. Dairy farms and grasslands dot the land. Its bay indents the rugged coast and in some places serve as a fishing harbor.

The *Northern France Plains* are a blend of forested hills and plateaus, with very fertile soil on surrounding flat or rolling plains. Here, sugar beets, wheat, potatoes, barley, and oats grow in abundance and are the primary crops in this region. Coal is mined near its Belgium border. This portion of France is heavily populated.

The Rhine Valley, located in the eastern portion of France, consists of steep slopes and rich farmlands. Fertile soil along the Rhine Rivers contributes to the rich agricultural area. The Rhine is a major waterway in Europe around which major roads and thoroughfares have been developed.

Its *Northeastern Plateau* is a region brimming with woodlands and rugged cliffs. The Ardennes Mountains, which lies between France and Belgium, are located in this area. An abundance of iron ore deposits are found in these mountains. Hereto lies fertile slopes where farmers raise livestock and a variety of crops. Many people who reside in the Northeastern Plateau area- work in the lumbering industry.

Sandy beaches are found in the *Aquitania Lowlands* . Pine forests and sand dunes are abundant in the inland portion of this region. The land is conducive to the growing of grapes.

The French Alps and the Jura Mountains border on Italy and Switzerland. Mont Blanc, part of the French Alps mountain chain, is the highest point in France. Snow always blankets the top of this mountain. Streams that run off these mountainous regions serve as a source of hydroelectric power for the country.

Massif Central or the Central Highlands consist of valleys where rye and other grains grow in abundance. The Louve River runs through this part of the country. This region is dotted with low-lying grasslands, and forests that cover elevated slopes. Soil here is very poor.

The *Mediterranean Lowlands and Rhone Saone Valley* are France's most productive farming areas. They are bordered by the Mediterranean Sea. Fruits, vegetables, and grapes used for the manufacturing of wine grow abundantly in this southern portion of France. One of the country's largest seaports, Marseilles, is located in this region. The Riviera, a famous French resort, is also located in this area.

Corsica is a small island off the coast of France. Although physically unattached from the mainland, Corsica

belongs to France. Its hills and mountains are similar to those found in France's central highlands. Land here is generally infertile. Crops, however, do grow in its valley, and sheep graze in its mountainous region.

Activity 1: Film A - *Le Ballon Rouge/The Red Balloon*

You are about to view a film that takes place in a Parisian village. The story takes place many years ago, back in 1956. Things have changed dramatically in France since that time. Nevertheless, we will intensely observe the film, focusing in on the storyline that is being conveyed. We are also going to pretend that we are actually in France. Look closely at the setting. Make a mental note of all the landscapes and ways of life you notice.

Questions to Explore

What types geographic regions did you observe?

How might the landscape impact the way people traveled?

What type of community did you observe? Describe it.

Based on surrounding geography, how might its people have made a living?

What type of climate is depicted?

How did climate impact the way people dressed?

What language(s) were spoken throughout the film?

Activity 1: Film B - *The Drop of Milk* (26 minutes)

We are revisiting this film, this time paying major attention to the French segment. Notice that this image of France differs greatly from the images portrayed in *The Red Balloon*. Again, the story may appear to be very real because it actually filmed in France. The story, however, is fiction. Were you to travel France today, as in most of the countries we have visited thus far, you would experience a blend of modern-day living and traditional lifestyle even a golf course! This story depicts a time long, long ago. It is a folktale acted out by actors who come from southern France. We will observe the film, focusing in on the storyline that is being conveyed. We are also going to pretend that we are actually in this section of France. Look closely at the setting. Make a mental note of all the landscapes and the noticeable ways of life.

Questions to Explore

Students will record their observations on a film observation form (see Attachment A). While viewing the film, students are asked to keep in mind the following:

What types of geographic regions did you observe?

How might the landscape impact the way people traveled?

What type of community did you observe? Describe it.

Based on surrounding geography, how might its people have made a living?

What type of climate is depicted?

How did climate impact the way people dressed?

What language(s) were spoken throughout the film?

Think about the French landscape experienced in *The Drop of Milk* . Think about the landscape you observed in *The Red Balloon* . Compare. How do the landscapes differ? How are they similar?

Activity 2: Story Map/Film

Students will complete a storymap highlighting their basic understanding of the film. (See Attachment B.)

Poland: An Up-Close Look

Words to Highlight

Poles peat bog peat uplands highlands lowlands
woodlands swamps rye sugar beets fertile industrialized
lumber lumbering harbors beach precipitation

Officially referred to as the Republic of Poland, this European country is diverse in geography and climate. Poland itself is divided into seven land regions, and its climates vary greatly dependent upon the region. The country is a blend of mountainous regions and lowland areas. As is expected, the mountainous areas are much cooler than lowland areas. Its coastal regions also have much milder weather than is found in the inland region. Temperatures throughout the country average 26°F in January and 73°F (23°C) in July. Average rainfall, snowfall, and other forms of precipitation totals 24 inches annually.

Excluding a portion of its northwestern border adjacent to the Baltic Sea, seven European countries surround Poland: To the west lies Germany. The Czech Republic lies to the southwest of the country. To the south lies Slovakia, to the southeast the Ukraine, to the east Belarus, and to the northeast, Russia and Lithuania.

Polish people refer to themselves as Poles, and the language most widely spoken throughout the country is Polish. The majority of its inhabitants are Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians. A minority of the population consists of Jews, Muslims, and other religious groups. These people reside throughout the regions noted below:

The *Coastal Lowlands* is located in the northwestern portion of the country, surrounded by smooth beaches and natural harbors (with Gdansk, Gdynia, and Szczecin respectively comprising the only major cities in this area).

The *Baltic Lakes Region* , comprised of decayed-plant laden swamps (peat bogs) and hilly tree-laden areas, covers most of Northern Poland. The Baltic Lakes region consists is surrounded by thousands of small lakes and lush woodland areas. The area is known for lumbering and vacation camping;

The *Central Plains* are a low-lying area south of the Baltic Lakes. This region is brimming with rich soil suitable

for growing rye, potatoes, sugar beets, and other crops. It is one of Poland's major agricultural areas.

The *Polish Uplands* consist of low-lying mountains and plateaus overlaid with rich, fertile soil; coal, lead, zinc, and copper. Located south of the Central Plains region, the Polish Uplands are found within mountainous regions. Coal-mining and metal-processing are major industries here; Katowice, a large city, is the country's most highly industrialized region in Poland. Fertile soil also covers much of the Polish Uplands, particularly in the eastern region: Here, corn, potatoes, and wheat rank among the region's major crops

The *Western Carpathian Mountains* are located at the southernmost portion of the country. They are thickly forested and serve as a scenic vacation spot and woodland campers' paradise.

The *Sudeten Mountains* , laden with valleys and rolling foothills, are located in Southwestern Poland. The land is suitable for crop-raising and cattle-grazing.

Carpathian Forelands, a fertile region brimming with rolling hills and farmland. Located in the southeastern part of the country, it is one of the most densely populated areas.

Most Polish families who live in or near city areas in any of the above-noted regions usually live in simple two- or three-room apartment dwellings. In rural areas, small brick or wooden cottages serve as housing.

Activity 1: *Zlateh The Goat* (20 minutes)

You are about to view a film that takes place in a small Polish town. This story, however, was not filmed in Poland, but rather in a countryside near the Czech Republic capital city of Prague. Often, filmmakers produce films in specific regions because of similarities in landmasses, as holds true in this instance. The story takes place long ago. Things have changed dramatically in Poland and Prague since that time. Nevertheless, we will envision ourselves being in this region, intensely observe the film, focusing in on the storyline that is being conveyed. We are also going to pretend that we are actually in Poland. Look closely at the setting. Make a mental note of all the landscapes and ways of life you notice.

Questions To Explore

Students will record their observations on a film observation form (see Attachment A). While viewing the film, students are asked to keep in mind the following:

What types geographic regions did you observe?

How might the landscape impact the way people traveled?

What type of community did you observe? Describe it.

Based on surrounding geography, how might its people have made a living?

What type of climate is depicted?

How did climate impact the way people dressed?

What language(s), if any, were spoken throughout the film?

Activity 2: Story Map/Film

Students will complete a storymap highlighting their basic understanding of the film. (See Attachment B.)

Section 4. 3-D Map Creation Project

This project will require six groups of 3, 4, to 5 students. It is suggested that "team leaders" be established and specific responsibilities doled out to avoid any minor conflicts that may arise. Students will collaboratively create a 3-D relief map for each country. Team 1 = Cote d'Ivoire; Team 2 = Senegal; Team 3 - Burkina Faso; Team 4 - China; Team 5 - Poland; and Team 6 - France. A map key indicating the type of terrain found in specific regions will be included. Students will use a copy of a relief and previously gathered information to determine color scheme for noted landmasses.

Materials

You will need:

*Quick & Easy Clay

Ingredients include:

- 2 cups of water
- 2 cups of flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 4 teaspoons of cream of tartar

Mix dry ingredients in an oversized saucepan. Slowly add and stir in water until the ingredients liquefy. Continuously stir over medium heat until the ingredients begin to form sticky dough. Remove from heat. Knead after the mass has cooled. It's ready for use.

*an 18" X 24" sheet of heavy duty oaktag or cardboard with country of study outlined thereon

*thematic region reference map (highlighting geographic areas [accessible through *World Book Atlas*])

*acrylic paints (green, yellow, brown, blue, black)

*paintbrushes

*newspaper

*plastic containers of water

*paper towels

Designate monitors to carry out distribution of materials and clean up. Cover tables with newspaper. Set up paints. Select students to individually carry out the responsibility of molding the clay within the outline, painting the terrain, creating the map key and so on, making map study a tactile/logical thinking experience.

The finished project can be strategically mounted on bulletin boards immediately outside of the classroom. Student research papers highlighting key facts about each country, the climate, its people, lifestyles, and related info should accompany the exhibit. Photos of highlighted regions serve as an impressive addition!

Section 5: Bringing It All Together

This culminating exercise concludes our unit. The instructor will require several pieces of oversized chart paper that should be posted strategically on the blackboard to record student responses. One sheet will read "Similarities", the other "Differences." General categorizations for each locale will be recorded.

Ask your students to think about their extensive journey throughout portions of our world, to take a moment to discern whether a commonality exists between the visited regions. Allow students to revisit previously completed worksheets, and collectively record their individual findings. Encourage each student to think about instances where life within the six countries was similar (e.g., the need to work, living together as a community, being dependent upon the land as a source of survival...) Subsequently, do the same with a focus on differences (e.g., terrain, necessary clothing as it related to climate, foods, homes...). Student responses will be impressive!

Conclusion

We live in a world rich in diversity, brimming with beautiful people. Take time to learn about others. By doing so, we serve as the catalyst to transform our world into a culturally accepting, extraordinary haven for us all!

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FILMS

Note that several of these films are accessible through your local public library, Yale University resources, or foreign film and children's film distributors as noted herein. Prices for these films range anywhere between (\$60 to \$100)

Folktales and Legends from Around the World Film for the Humanities and Sciences Series (To order, telephone 800-257-5126.):

The Beggar of Soutile (26 minutes). This traditional tale, usually told in the Ivoirian oral tradition, highlights the inhospitable people of an imaginary (or is it?) Ivory Coast township. One day, an impoverished beggar stumbles upon the well-to-do West African village.

Hungry and thirsty, the stranger seeks the aid of the townspeople. Only one child, Balou, and her family offer him food and sanctuary. What ensues is a valuable lesson for all.

The Greedy Child (26 minutes). This film is based on a folktale told in oral tradition in Senegal. Thirteen-year old Joomay, a mischievous youngster who never gives his sibling a helping hand in carrying out daily chores, gets him into trouble. To avoid being scolded, he runs away from home and encounters the unexpected! The lesson learned is one worth sharing with young people everywhere.

The Drop of Milk (26 minutes). This film, based on a story told in the oral tradition in Burkina Faso, brings two very different worlds (France and Burkina Faso) together. In Burkina Faso, a land where drought is prevalent, a young boy who was milking his emaciated goat, has allowed the last drop of milk fall to the ground; his grandfather sends the boy to search for that magical last drop of milk. The scene shifts to a French pasture filled with rich soil and healthy cattle. The contrast is thought provoking, urging viewers not to take life and natural resources for granted.

Weston Woods Film Series (To order, telephone 800-243-5020.):

Zlateh The Goat. (20 minutes). This Jewish folktale by Pulitzer Prize-winning folklorist Isaac Bashevis Singer is beautifully depicted in a snow-laden agrarian community. The story begins with a rural family who, due to a harsh winter, has to sell their goat, Zlateh. Zlateh has been an integral part of the family for many years, and the son is reluctant to follow through with his father's instructions. En route to the butcher, the son encounters a grueling snowstorm. What happens next is worth the watch with valuable lesson learned.

Le Ballon Rouge/The Red Balloon (25 minutes). Written and directed in 1956 by Albert Lamorisse. A seemingly alive red balloon befriends a lonely Parisian boy. That friendship takes viewers on a visual tour through the bustling streets of his community. Students will be captivated and touched by the film, particularly the unanticipated ending.

Not One Less (106 minutes). Written by Zhi Xiasng Sheng; directed by Zhang Yimou. In an impoverished rural township outside of Beijing, a schoolteacher must temporarily leave his classroom duties for one month. Wei Minzhi, a 13-year old girl in need of money, is ordered by the town mayor to serve as a substitute teacher during the instructor's absence. Before departing, Wei Minzhi learns she must keep the class intact during the teacher's absence and ensure each student remains in school throughout the duration. If both tasks are successfully completed, she will receive 50 yuan (\$6) plus an additional 10 yuan (\$1.20) bonus for her efforts. Wei Minzhi agrees, but while carrying out her task, Zhang Mingshan, a mischievous student, leaves the school grounds to seek employment in the big city. What will Wei Minzhi do?! Perseverance and the importance of education are the empowering focus of this must-see film!

ON-LINE RESOURCES

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<http://www.aolsvc.worldbook.aol.com/ar?/na/ar/co/ar436700.htm>, April 9, 2003.

Thomas J. Bassett, Ph. D., Cote d'Ivoire, **World Book Online Americas Edition**,

<http://www.aolsvc.worldbook.aol.com/ar?/na/ar/co/ar710346.htm>, April 5, 2003.

Lucy E. Creevey, Ph.D., *Senegal*, *World Book Online Americas Edition*,

<http://www.aolsvc.worldbook.aol.com/ar?/na/ar/co/ar710346.htm>, April 10, 2003.

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<http://www.aolsvc.worldbook.aol.com/ar?/na/ar/co/ar710346.htm>, April 10, 2003.

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Vojtech Mastny, Ph.D., *Prague*, *World Book Online Americas Edition*,

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William M. Reddy, *France*, *World Book Online Americas Edition*,

<http://www.aolsvc.worldbook.aol.com/ar?/na/ar/co/ar208640.htm>, April 5, 2003.

www.lizardpoint.com/fun/geoquiz/index.html A fun-filled way to build world-wide map-study skills: Note: some landmasses are inaccurately depicted (e.g., Egypt as part of East Asia, Asia excluding Middle Eastern countries...). Where applicable, have students accurately determine location of specific countries.

<http://www.africa-map.net> Provides a wealth of info re: specific African countries.

www.askasia.org Provides a wealth of background info on Asian culture from Turkey to Japan.

FILM OBSERVATION FORM

My name is _____

Film Title _____ Film Director _____

Year of Film _____ Country Depicted _____

Color in the circle next to the most appropriate answer for the questions below.

Which of these geographic features did you observe in the film.

<input type="checkbox"/> tropical forest	<input type="checkbox"/> sahal	<input type="checkbox"/> desert	<input type="checkbox"/> savannah	<input type="checkbox"/> plains
<input type="checkbox"/> coastal regions	<input type="checkbox"/> plateaus	<input type="checkbox"/> mountains	<input type="checkbox"/> valley	<input type="checkbox"/> foothills
<input type="checkbox"/> river	<input type="checkbox"/> ocean	<input type="checkbox"/> beaches	<input type="checkbox"/> evergreen forest	
<input type="checkbox"/> river	<input type="checkbox"/> lagoon	<input type="checkbox"/> lake	<input type="checkbox"/> swamp	<input type="checkbox"/> bog

In what type of community did the people reside?

☐ compound ☐ village ☐ urban area ☐ rural setting

What language(s) were spoken throughout the film?

☐ French ☐ Wolof ☐ Mandarin ☐ Polish ☐ English ☐ Dioula ☐ Mandi

Write out answers to the questions below.

Based on the terrain, how might the people make their living?

Based on the terrain, how did people travel in this region? Why?

Attachment A

What might the temperature or climate be in the region? How does temperature or climate affect the way people live in that country? Support your statement.

[illegible]

FILM STORYMAP/CRITIQUE

My name is _____

Film Title _____

Name of Filmmaker _____

Year of Film _____ Country Depicted _____

Who were the main characters in the film?

Where did the story take place?

What was/were the main problem(s) in the story?

Attachment B

How was/were the problem(s) resolved?

What major lesson was conveyed in the story?

[illegible]

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