



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

Guide for Curriculum Unit 03.01.05
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If we canvass America's population, we find that for many of us, our ancestries are rooted in Europe, Africa, Asia, South America, and beyond. Imagine taking a journey through cinema and research to explore those countries of origin, experience the terrain, the people, and their adaptation to their surroundings. Perhaps despite recognizing the obvious diversity among 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.

Targeted at students in Grade 3, the unit introduces young learners to the geographic features of Africa, Asia, and Europe, providing a regional overview of diverse terrain found therein. Students take a closer look at these areas via "cinema excursions" to select locales: Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Burkina Faso, China, Southern France, Poland, and areas surrounding the Czech Republic city of Prague. Film selections by locale respectively include *The Beggar of Soutile*, *The Greedy Boy*, *One Drop of Milk*, *Not One Less*, *Le Ballon Rouge/The Red Balloon*, and *Zlateh The Goat*.

Through this exciting blend of geography and realistic fiction and folklore through film, students will (1) view and compare geographic aspects of each country, (2) be immersed in rich language arts experiences, and (3) zero in on common-thread life experiences found across cultures. Interdisciplinary in content, this unit is written in alignment with New Haven Public School Social Studies and Language Arts standards.

(Recommended for Geography and Language Arts, grade 3.)

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