



## About This Guide

*World Communities: What Is a Culture?* is an online resource guide designed for teachers, to expand their understanding of world communities and cultures from the perspective of two branches of social science: anthropology and geography. It also provides teachers of the New York State grade 3 social studies core curriculum with specific guidelines for selecting world communities for classroom study.

Two papers provide content background for teachers in understanding culture from multiple perspectives. As such, these papers are not intended for classroom use.

The first paper, [What Is a Culture?](#), is an anthropological approach to understanding culture and was written by Dr. Nancy Jervis, vice president and director of education at the China Institute, New York City.

The second paper, [Culture: A Geographical Perspective](#), is a geographical approach to understanding culture and was written by Dr. Charles Heatwole, professor of geography at Hunter College, New York City.

A "crosswalk" connects each paper to the applicable units and understandings of the grade 3 social studies core curriculum. These connected units and understandings provide the framework for planning instruction based on the information and suggestions found in the papers. The page numbers for the applicable units and understandings are from the SED online publication, [Social Studies Instructional Strategies & Resources: Prekindergarten Through Grade 6](#). The papers are also connected to specific key ideas in all five New York State learning standards for social studies.

[How to Select World Communities](#) lists specific factors to consider and includes a sample checklist to use when planning curriculum for world communities in the grade 3 classroom. These suggestions were gleaned from the papers' authors, as well as teachers and supervisors from across New York State. Also included in the publication are a template for planning units of study, graphic organizers on understanding geography and anthropology in relation to culture, and brief recommendations of print and online resources for teachers and students.

A [glossary](#) defines the major terms found throughout the two papers. These terms are linked directly from the papers to the glossary.

This guide will undergo periodic updates. A future section will feature lesson plans and instructional strategies developed by grade 3 teachers across New York State on the basis of their use of this resource. To submit learning experiences for this section, please visit our Call for Content ([html version](#) / [pdf version](#)). This guide is not intended for students, although some resources on books and Web sites for both teachers and students are included.

In the grade 3 social studies program, students study about communities throughout the world. The five social studies standards form the basis for this investigation as students learn about the

social, political, geographic, economic, and historic characteristics of different world communities. Students learn about communities that reflect the diversity of the world's peoples and cultures. They study Western and non-Western examples from a variety of geographic areas. Students also begin to learn about historic chronology by placing important events on timelines. Students locate world communities and learn how different communities meet their basic needs and wants. Students begin to compare the roles of citizenship and the kinds of governments found in various world communities. (Taken from [Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum](#) p.25.)



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