

AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

UNIT 3

# Cultural Patterns and Processes



**12–17%**  
AP EXAM WEIGHTING



**~19–20**  
CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Personal Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Personal Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

### **Personal Progress Check 3**

**Multiple-choice: ~25 questions**

**Free-response: 1 question**

- 2 stimuli

# Cultural Patterns and Processes



## Developing Understanding

### BIG IDEA 1

#### *Patterns and Spatial Organization* **PSO**

- How does where people live and what resources they have access to impact their cultural practices?

### BIG IDEA 2

#### *Impacts and Interactions* **IMP**

- How does the interaction of people contribute to the spread of cultural practices?

### BIG IDEA 3

#### *Spatial Patterns and Societal Change* **SPS**


- How and why do cultural ideas, practices, and innovations change or disappear over time?

The main focus of this unit is on cultural patterns and processes that create recognized cultural identities. Students consider the physical environment to determine the effects of geographical location and available resources on cultural practices. Visuals representing artifacts, mentifacts and sociofacts all shed light on cultural landscapes and how they change over time. Practice in analyzing images of different places at different times for evidence of their ethnicity, language, religion, gender roles and attitudes, and other cultural attributes builds students' understanding of cultural patterns and processes.

This unit also considers from a temporal and spatial perspective how culture spreads, through traditional forces such as colonialism and imperialism and through contemporary influences such as social media. Rather than emphasize the details of cultural practices associated with specific languages and religions, this unit instead focuses on the distribution of cultural practices and on the causes and effects of their diffusion. For example, students might study the distribution of Chinese versus English languages or the diffusion patterns of religions such as Hinduism and Islam, at local, national, or global scales.

An understanding of the diffusion of cultural practices provides a foundation for the study of political patterns and processes in the next unit.

## UNIT AT A GLANCE

Enduring Understanding	Topic	Suggested Skill	Class Periods
			~19–20 CLASS PERIODS
PSO-3	<b>3.1 Introduction to Culture</b>	<b>4.A</b> Identify the different types of information presented in visual sources.	
	<b>3.2 Cultural Landscapes</b>	<b>4.B</b> Describe the spatial patterns presented in visual sources.	
	<b>3.3 Cultural Patterns</b>	<b>4.C</b> Explain patterns and trends in visual sources to draw conclusions.	
IMP-3	<b>3.4 Types of Diffusion</b>	<b>1.D</b> Describe a relevant geographic concept, process, model, or theory in a specified context.	
SPS-3	<b>3.5 Historical Causes of Diffusion</b>	<b>2.C</b> Explain a likely outcome in a geographic scenario using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories.	
	<b>3.6 Contemporary Causes of Diffusion</b>	<b>5.B</b> Explain spatial relationships across various geographic scales using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories.	
IMP-3	<b>3.7 Diffusion of Religion and Language</b>	<b>4.E</b> Explain how maps, images, and landscapes illustrate or relate to geographic principles, processes, and outcomes.	
SPS-3	<b>3.8 Effects of Diffusion</b>	<b>2.B</b> Explain spatial relationships in a specified context or region of the world, using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories.	
 Go to <a href="#">AP Classroom</a> to assign the <b>Personal Progress Check</b> for Unit 3. Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.			

## SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page provide ways to integrate the teaching of skills and content from the unit into your classroom instruction. They are completely optional and may be altered to suit the needs of your class. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on page 133 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	3.2	<p><b>Discussion Group</b></p> <p>Arrange students into small groups (4–6 students per group is recommended) and have them analyze a set of images from a place. Have groups look for evidence of different languages, religions, and ethnicities in the landscape. If students are not accustomed to “reading” images, you may first want to demonstrate reading the cultural landscape with a set of images from the community surrounding the school and walk students through the analytical process as a whole class. If student groups are given different places to analyze, you may ask each group to share with the rest of the class.</p>
2	3.3	<p><b>Look for a Pattern</b></p> <p>Using different data sets, have students analyze regional patterns associated with religions and languages. Have students hypothesize as to the reasons behind the existence of the patterns they identify along with the consequences of the observed patterns. Students will confirm or alter their reasons and consequences as they progress through the unit. They can also reflect back on Topic 3.2 and predict how the cultural landscape would reflect the identified patterns.</p>
3	3.6	<p><b>Fishbowl</b></p> <p>Using secondary sources about the current spread of different phenomena and the process of globalization, ask students to discuss how we became so connected globally. The inner group models discussion while the outer group listens, responds, and evaluates. Then the groups switch roles. You might also ask students to reflect back on Topic 3.5 and explain why the historical causes of diffusion have changed.</p>



### Unit Planning Notes

Use the space below to plan your approach to the unit. Consider how you want to pace your course and your methods of instruction and assessment.

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**SUGGESTED SKILL** Source Analysis**4.A**

Identify the different types of information presented in visual sources.

**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources > [Understanding Land Use Patterns](#)

## TOPIC 3.1

# Introduction to Culture

### Required Course Content

#### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

**PSO-3**

Cultural practices vary across geographical locations because of physical geography and available resources.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

**PSO-3.A**

Define the characteristics, attitudes, and traits that influence geographers when they study culture.

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

**PSO-3.A.1**

Culture comprises the shared practices, technologies, attitudes, and behaviors transmitted by a society.

**PSO-3.A.2**

Cultural traits include such things as food preferences, architecture, and land use.

**PSO-3.A.3**

Cultural relativism and ethnocentrism are different attitudes toward cultural difference.

# TOPIC 3.2

# Cultural Landscapes

**SUGGESTED SKILL**

 *Source Analysis*

**4.B**

Describe the spatial patterns presented in visual sources.



**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources > [Understanding Land Use Patterns](#)
- Classroom Resources > [Cultural Landscape Study](#)

## Required Course Content

### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

**PSO-3**

Cultural practices vary across geographical locations because of physical geography and available resources.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

**PSO-3.B**

Describe the characteristics of cultural landscapes.

**PSO-3.C**

Explain how landscape features and land and resource use reflect cultural beliefs and identities.

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

**PSO-3.B.1**

Cultural landscapes are combinations of physical features, agricultural and industrial practices, religious and linguistic characteristics, evidence of sequent occupancy, and other expressions of culture including traditional and postmodern architecture and land-use patterns.

**PSO-3.C.1**

Attitudes toward ethnicity and gender, including the role of women in the workforce; ethnic neighborhoods; and indigenous communities and lands help shape the use of space in a given society.

**SUGGESTED SKILL**

 *Source Analysis*

**4.C**

Explain patterns and trends in visual sources to draw conclusions.



**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources > [Cultural Landscape Study](#)
- Classroom Resources > [Maps and Spatial Thinking Skills in the AP Human Geography Classroom](#)

# TOPIC 3.3

# Cultural Patterns

## Required Course Content

### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

**PSO-3**

Cultural practices vary across geographical locations because of physical geography and available resources.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

**PSO-3.D**

Explain patterns and landscapes of language, religion, ethnicity, and gender.

### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

**PSO-3.D.1**

Regional patterns of language, religion, and ethnicity contribute to a sense of place, enhance placemaking, and shape the global cultural landscape.

**PSO-3.D.2**


Language, ethnicity, and religion are factors in creating centripetal and centrifugal forces.



# TOPIC 3.4

## Types of Diffusion

**SUGGESTED SKILL**

 *Concepts and Processes*

**1.D**

Describe a relevant geographic concept, process, model, or theory in a specified context.

### Required Course Content

#### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

**IMP-3**

The interaction of people contributes to the spread of cultural practices.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

**IMP-3.A**

Define the types of diffusion.

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

**IMP-3.A.1**

Relocation and expansion—including contagious, hierarchical, and stimulus expansion—are types of diffusion.

## SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Spatial Relationships*

## 2.C

Explain a likely outcome in a geographic scenario using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories.

## TOPIC 3.5

# Historical Causes of Diffusion

### Required Course Content

#### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

**SPS-3**

Cultural ideas, practices, and innovations change or disappear over time.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

**SPS-3.A**

Explain how historical processes impact current cultural patterns.

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

**SPS-3.A.1**

Interactions between and among cultural traits and larger global forces can lead to new forms of cultural expression; for example, creolization and lingua franca.

**SPS-3.A.2**

Colonialism, imperialism, and trade helped to shape patterns and practices of culture.

## TOPIC 3.6

# Contemporary Causes of Diffusion

## SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Scale Analysis*

## 5.B

Explain spatial relationships across various geographic scales using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories.



## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources > [Scale](#)
- Classroom Resources > [Globalization](#)

## Required Course Content

### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

## SPS-3

Cultural ideas, practices, and innovations change or disappear over time.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

## SPS-3.A

Explain how historical processes impact current cultural patterns.

### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

## SPS-3.A.3

Cultural ideas and practices are socially constructed and change through both small-scale and large-scale processes such as urbanization and globalization. These processes come to bear on culture through media, technological change, politics, economics, and social relationships.

## SPS-3.A.4

Communication technologies, such as the internet and the time-space convergence, are reshaping and accelerating interactions among people; changing cultural practices, as in the increasing use of English and the loss of indigenous languages; and creating cultural convergence and divergence.

**SUGGESTED SKILL** Source Analysis**4.E**

Explain how maps, images, and landscapes illustrate or relate to geographic principles, processes, and outcomes.

**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources > [Maps and Spatial Thinking Skills in the AP Human Geography Classroom](#)
- Classroom Resources > [Cultural Landscape Study](#)

**TOPIC 3.7****Diffusion of Religion and Language****Required Course Content****ENDURING UNDERSTANDING****IMP-3**

The interaction of people contributes to the spread of cultural practices.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE****IMP-3.B**

Explain what factors lead to the diffusion of universalizing and ethnic religions.

**ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE****IMP-3.B.1**

Language families, languages, dialects, world religions, ethnic cultures, and gender roles diffuse from cultural hearths.

**IMP-3.B.2**

Diffusion of language families, including Indo-European, and religious patterns and distributions can be visually represented on maps, in charts and toponyms, and in other representations.

**IMP-3.B.3**

Religions have distinct places of origin from which they diffused to other locations through different processes. Practices and belief systems impacted how widespread the religion diffused.

**IMP-3.B.4**

Universalizing religions, including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Sikhism, are spread through expansion and relocation diffusion.


**IMP-3.B.5**

Ethnic religions, including Hinduism and Judaism, are generally found near the hearth or spread through relocation diffusion.

# TOPIC 3.8

## Effects of Diffusion

**SUGGESTED SKILL**

 *Spatial Relationships*

**2.B**

Explain spatial relationships in a specified context or region of the world, using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories.



**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources > [Scale](#)

### Required Course Content

#### ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

**SPS-3**

Cultural ideas, practices, and innovations change or disappear over time.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

**SPS-3.B**

Explain how the process of diffusion results in changes to the cultural landscape.

#### ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

**SPS-3.B.1**

Acculturation, assimilation, syncretism, and multiculturalism are effects of the diffusion of culture.

