



CULTURAL CURRENCIES OF THE WORLD



Grade Levels & Subject Area: 7-12 World Geography. 9-12 Art. Grade level easily adapted.

Concept: Students will research the peoples the world to create *Fundred* currency informed and inspired by these perspectives.

The goal of *Fundred* is to collect over 3,000,000 of these unique hand-drawn interpretations of U.S. \$100 bills to raise awareness and funding for a solution lead-contaminated soil in New Orleans. This lesson plan allows students to imagine how other people of the world might respond to this call for action. As lead-contamination is a problem in big cities all over the world, students will explore the relationship between people and their environment and consider many forms of currency.

Students can work alone or in groups of no larger than 3 for grades 7 through 12 but each student should create their own currency artwork to contribute to the project.

Standard(s) Addressed:

National Geographic Standard 10, Human Systems

The Characteristics, Distribution, and Complexity of Earth's Cultural Mosaics

National Art Education Visual Arts Standard 3

Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

Proficiency:

Students

- a. reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture
- b. apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life

General Goal(s): To expose students to various cultural and ethnic groups across the globe so that students may establish a relationship between the group's internal and external interactions and their place within a geographic landscape. Students will also conduct research using a variety of materials to better understand a group not their own, will complete a research worksheet cataloging findings, will create a *Fundred* bill, and will be encouraged to write to support the final product.

Specific Objectives:

1. Students will also create a developmentally appropriate definition of culture and will apply the their research in their final products of representative cultural currency.

2. Students will conduct internet, encyclopedic and atlas research about a regional group's physical environment, main food sources, historical relationship to the site, and the group's primary governing or social structure (matrilineal, monarchical, theistic, animist, etc.).
3. Students will read and write about a cultural group and the interaction of that group's cultural identity with a home geographical environment.
4. Students will be able to incorporate symbols meaningful to their chosen group into a representative form of *Fundred* cultural currency.

Required Materials:

The *Fundred* bill template, access to the Internet (optional, but highly desired), books or websites on symbols (suggestions enclosed), world atlases, colored pencils, research worksheet. This lesson will take a minimum 2 days.

Anticipatory Set & Background Information: A country's or culture's currency is a concrete representation of not only what the people value but any currency is a very physical representation of how the people of any particular place and time interact. Thus, the creation of a form of currency to represent a group and its interaction is powerful shorthand for what people value as a source of identity.

Procedures, Lesson Content:

1. Ask students if anyone has a dollar bill on them. Have everyone describe one feature they see on the bill's front then back. Observations from students may include:
 - The Treasury Seal which has 13 stars for the 13 original colonies
 - There is an uncapped pyramid, which represents an ever-evolving nation.
 - Over the pyramid is an eye in a triangle - an ancient symbol for divinity, the Franklin committee's conceptualization of a greater democracy.
 - *Annuet Coeptis* means "God has favored our undertaking." Again, the Franklin committee believed that the founding of a new nation depended upon a collective of individuals who with God could do anything.

These features are up for interpretation, but could spark interesting conversations about what the students have seen and heard about the bill's symbolic elements. This conversation can last as long you see fit. Source:

<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/triviadollar.htm>

2. Then transition the students into the project. They will be asked to research an ethnic or cultural group from some part of the world. A group not of their own membership.
3. In either groups or individually have students chose a group and locale to research. Suggestions include but are not limited to the: Inuit, Moors, Maori, Flemish, Uighurs, Palestinians, Nepali, Bangladeshi, Yaqui,

Aborigines of Australia, Welsh, Celts, Zulu, Arapaho, Cree, Hmong, Karen, Persians, Tlingit, Croats, Zapotec, Yanomami, Romani, Tutsi, Tuareg, Basques, Ingush, Sami, Tibetans, Pygmies, Thao, Chinook, Haida. These groups are selected to reflect indigenous peoples from every continent in a variety of geographical environments, and some names are in flux.

4. Once groups are assigned, students are asked to complete the provided worksheet in class. Review worksheet with students. Students need access to encyclopedias, atlases, world maps, the Internet, etc. to complete it. The worksheet cannot be completed solely using Wikipedia or a like product.
5. The worksheet can be divided into multiple days, can be given for homework, or turned in for a formative or summative assessment along with the finished piece of representative currency.
6. Once the worksheet is complete, students need to take information from the worksheet to create their representative *Fundred* currencies.

Currency Instructions:

7. Once students are done data gathering and have completed their worksheets use the *Fundred* template as a source for the finished product - a bill of currency that the students best feels represents the cultural group in its geography.
8. Finished currencies need to be in color, have a denomination on them that the student feels represents the information gathered and needs to have at least 3 symbols that represent or are dominant within the group.
9. Completion of the currencies can happen in class or for homework.
10. Finished currencies may be presented in class along with supporting research. Moreover, the finished currencies and the research can be a launch pad for reading that is more sophisticated and writing in class.
11. Please mail completed class currencies to a collection center in your area. Found at:
http://www.fundred.org/pages/Involved/involved_collection_centers.htm
These currencies will be used as part of the *Fundred* presentation in Washington D.C. this spring!

Number of Days: Flexible. Minimal 2 classroom days.

Plan For Independent Practice: The worksheet is divided into two parts: one part that is for recording researched facts and another that asks students to synthesize their work into short answer responses. Both sections can be used for their final product presentations or completed for homework.

Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set): This varies depending upon how the lesson is used in the classroom (groups v. individuals, multiple in-class days v. mix of in-class and homework, summative v. formative assessment).

Assessment: Again, this is highly variable. The worksheet can be collected at the end of each in-class workday. It may be used as a planning tool or used to support a presentation of the final currency.

Adaptations for Students with Learning Disabilities or English Language Learners:

1. This project can easily be adapted into one where students work in groups. Specific individual jobs may include but are not limited to: recorder, artist, manager, presenter, and timekeeper.
2. This project can easily be broken into multiple days of mixed homework and class work. Additionally, the *Fundred* currency produced can easily become a verbal presentation instead of written or drawn.
3. The assignment can also be one where a student may research a home cultural group - this becoming an expert who uses his or her home resources.

Extensions:

1. Students may create a union of their two or more cultural groups and then create, through conversation and even treaty, a new form of collective currency that represents the merging of the groups. Students need to support their resulting choices can complete a merged *Fundred* product.
2. Students can also create a chronological series of currencies that track the evolution of this group over time. Each changed currency represents major events within the group from migration to political upheaval to colonization.
3. Students can create multiple bills - arranged in a form of cultural hierarchy with the greatest denomination the most significant events and the smallest denomination as the least significant event.

Possible Connections to Other Subjects:

This multidisciplinary assignment is integrated arts and geography. It can easily be expanded into social studies, world politics, or a larger cultural project.

Resources:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/standards/matrix.html>

This site contains the National Geographic Standards for geography in chart form.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/standards/10/index.html>

This is National Geographic Standard 10 in its expanded form. Descriptive, but brief and a nice guide to read before the lesson.

<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/mapcenter/map.aspx>

This site has a great world map that is interactive with increasing levels of regional specificity. However, this product will be discontinued as of Oct. 31, 2009.

Book Sources- *These are my favorite books of signs and symbols. They are easily and cheaply found via a used book source. And are comprehensive without overt bias and with easy to use categorization.*

Bruce-Mitford, M. (1996). *The Illustrated Book of Signs and Symbols.* London: Dorling Kindersley.

Frutiger, A. (1998). *Signs and Symbols: Their Design and Meaning.* NY: Watson & Guptill.

Koch, R. (1995). *The Book of Signs.* NY:Dover Publications.

Internet Symbol Sources

<http://www.symbols.net/>

There is a lot of information here. I would assess the students then edit, print, copy and then distribute to them what is pertinent.

http://www.ancient-symbols.com/alchemy_symbols.html

Again, it is easy for students to get overwhelmed and many learning communities need conversations about the power of symbolic meaning. Still, this site has more ancient symbols than modern, but might generate classroom conversation.

Name(s): _____

Cultural Group _____

Traditional Areas of Dominance or Residency

Current Area of Dominance or Residency

Language and Language Groups

Dominant Geographic Features of Homeland or Territory like deserts, forests, mountains, etc.

Description of Home Environment

- *average seasonal temperatures*
- *water sources*

- *large flora (plants)*

- *large fauna (animals)*

- *environmental hazards like hurricane, blizzards, volcanoes, high altitude.*

History of the People in this Place like first discovery by outsiders or immigration

Primary Foods and relationship to people (religious or social uses, festivals, medicine, exports, farming or acquisition methods).

Short Answer. Please answer as completely as possible.

What images come to mind as you find information on these people? Draw or list them.

What is the interaction of the people and their environment? Are they hunter-gatherers? Agricultural? Aquacultural? Nomadic? Shepherds?

How have the people and this place changed over time?

What are the features that distinguish them from other dominant groups in the region?

What did you find that interested or surprised you?

Name 3 ways these people remind you of your own cultural group in habit or home environment.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If you had to design a bill that represented these people what would you put on it and why?

Sources - Where did your information come from?