**CULTURE**

**PRESENTATION NOTES**

**What is Culture?**  
 -**Culture** is the way of life of a group people who share similar beliefs and customs. 

A particular culture can be understood by looking at language, religion, daily life, history, art, government, and the economy.

**Cultural Regions**  
 The Earth is divided into culture regions. Each culture region includes countries that have certain traits in common. They may share similar economic systems, forms of government, and social groups. Their histories, religions, and art forms may share similar influences

**Seven Elements of Culture**

1. **Social Organization**

\* Creates social structure by organizing its members into small units to meet basic

needs

\* **Family Patterns**= Family is the most important unit of social organization.

Through the family, children learn how they are expected to act and what to

believe.

\* **Nuclear family**= parents, children. This is a typical family in an industrial

society.

\* **Extended Family**= several generations living in one household,  working and

living together: grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins. Respect for elders is

strong.

\* **Social classes**=rank people in order of status, depending on what is important to the

culture (money, job, education, ancestry, etc.)

2. **Language**

\* Language is a key element in a culture's development.

\*Through language, people communicate ideas and experiences and pass on cultural

values and traditions.

\*All cultures have a spoken language (even if there is no developed forms of writing).

\*People who speak the same language often share the same culture.

\*Some societies, however, include large groups of people who speak different

languages. India, for example, has more than 700 languages.

\***Language Families**=Large groups of languages having similar roots.

ex.  Romance Languages(French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese).

\*Each language can have several different dialects.

3. **Religion**

**\***Religion helps people answer basic questions about the meaning and purpose of life.

It supports the values that a group of people consider important.

\*Religious beliefs vary around the world.

\***Atheism**=the belief in no god or gods

\***Monotheism**=the belief in one god

\***Polytheism**=the belief in many gods

\*Religious practices such as prayers and rituals vary from one culture to another.

Struggles over religious differences are a problem in many countries. These troubles

often find their roots in the past.

\*In many cultures, however, religion enables people to find a sense of identity.

*With more than 200 independent countries existing in the world today, it is important to understand   
what characteristics defines a country  
. 1. clearly defined territory*

*-the land, water, and natural resources within its boundaries.*

*2. population*

*-the people; the size of the population does not matter.*

*3. sovereignty*

*-freedom from outside control*

*4. government*

*-the institution through which a society makes and enforces its public policies and*

*provides for its common good.*

4. **Government**  
 \*Government is the institution through which a society makes and enforces its public

policies and provides for its common good.

\*These needs include keeping order within a society, protecting the society from

outside threats, and providing some services to its people.

\***Government Structure**=the relationship between the central government and

smaller internal units of government

\*Each government system or political system can be classified according to its structure

and its basis of authority.

\***Unitary**= one central government runs the nation.

Local governments have only the powers given them by the central

government.

\***Federation**: some powers are given to the national government while other

powers are reserved for more local governments.

\***Confederation**: smaller political units keep their sovereignty and give the

central government only very limited power.

\***Government Authority**=the source of a government's authority; where does it get it

power to govern.

\***Authoritarian**=: the leader(s) hold all or nearly all of the power.

\***Dictatorship**= ruler/ruling group holds power by force usually relying

on the military for support

\***Totalitarianism**= government tries to control every part of society.

\***Monarchy**= kings/queens. The most common kind of authoritarian

government throughout history.

\***Democracy**= people have supreme power, government acts by and with the

consent of the governed.

\***Direct Democracy**= all citizens have a direct voice in the functions of

government.

\***Representative Democracy**= citizens choose representative to carry

out the functions of government.

5. **Economics**

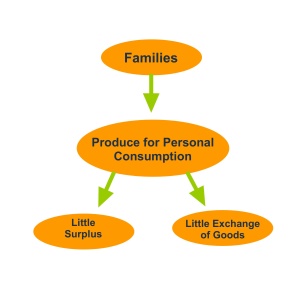
**\***How societies use limited resources to satisfy the wants and needs of the population.

\*Any economic system must answer **three basic questions**

1. What (and how many) goods and services will be produced?

2. How will these products be produced?

3. How will the products and the wealth gained from their sale be distributed?

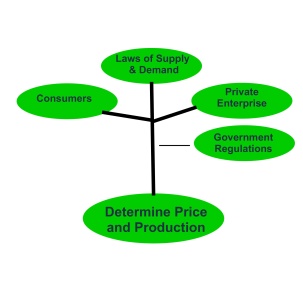
 \*Types of Economic Systems

\***Traditional Economy** = (subsistence economy)

people produce most of what they need to survive

(hunting, gathering, farming, herding, make their

own clothing/tools).



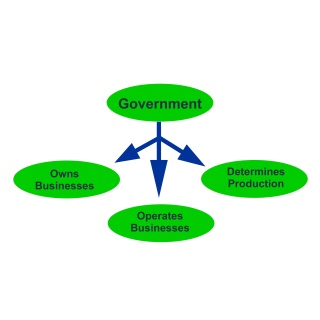
\***Market Economy**= (free enterprise) is the

buying and selling of goods and

services; gives great freedom to individuals

and groups; capitalism is the primary form

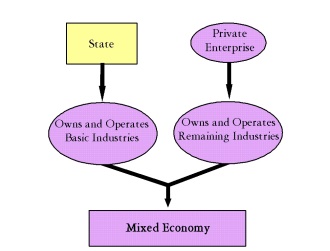
today.



\***Command Economy**= government controls

what/how goods are produced and what they

cost. Individuals have little economic power.



\***Mixed Economy** = Individuals make some

economic decisions and the government makes

the others.

6. **Traditions and Norms**

**\***A **Tradition** is a belief or behavior passed down within a group or society with symbolic

meaning or special significance with origins in the past.

\*A **Norm** is a group-held belief about how members should behave in a given context or

situation. These are informal understandings that govern society's behaviors and

promote a great deal of social control.

7. **Arts and Entertainment**

**\*** The products of the human imagination.

\*They help us pass on the culture's basic beliefs.

\*Art

\*Music

\*Literature

\*Folk Tales

**Cultural Hearth**=center or birthplace where important ideas begin and from which they spread to

surrounding cultures.

**Folk Culture**=

\*traditional

\*typically hard to trace to one origin

\*developed over a long period of time

\*preserved among aging generations  
  
**Popular Culture**=

\*typically traceable to a specific person or group that arises from advances in technology

**Cultural Landscapes**=Technology is an important part of culture. As human beings use natural resources

or alter the surface of the earth, they produce unique cultural landscapes that reflect specific

cultures

(Differences illustrated by the different tools and technique used in places like China

and the United States Midwest. Similarities illustrated by the similarities in city skylines

and amenities of modern cities)

**Cultural Change**=Cultures change by both internal and external influences.

**Internal**: new discoveries, inventions, technologies.  
 **Externa**l: contact with other cultures.

\***cultural convergence =**occurs when skills, arts, ideas, habits, and institutions of one  culture come in contact with another.

\***cultural diffusion**=the process by which a cultural element is transmitted across distance from

one group or individual to another. This often occurs through migration or through the

exchange of goods and ideas.

\***cultural divergence**=the restriction of contact with outside cultures in order to limit the spread

of ideas. This occurs when repressive governments seek to control transportation and

communication in and out of an area in order to control the population of the area.