



Time
Required:
30 minutes

Grade Level:
6-12th grades

Skills for the 21st Century Marketplace Activity

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“Observing Other Cultures” Activity

Infusionomics Themes, Keystone Economic Principles, and Skills for the 21st Century Marketplace:

•**THEME: COSTS**

- Skills:** 8. Contextual Learning – knowing and applying the “rules” of a given context; c. Global Awareness and Cross Cultural Skills – sensitivity and inclusivity; c.i-iv
- Skills:** 10. Global Awareness; c. Determine the impact of cultural and social environments on world trade

•**THEME: RESOURCES**

- Keystone Economic Principle™ #6:** Do what you do best, Trade for the rest
- Keystone Economic Principle™ #8:** Quantity and quality of resources impact living standards

•**THEME: INCENTIVES**

- Keystone Economic Principle™ #9:** Prices are determined by the market forces of supply and demand and are constantly changing

** For additional standards and content references, please see the [end of document](#).

Overview:

In the Observing Other Cultures activity, students will read and present information on six different countries around the world. Following the presentations, students will have a conversation about differences found in countries that might not be on the “fact sheet.” Students will discuss culture and how cultural differences affect global commerce.

Objectives:

This activity will help students see that there are many quantitative and qualitative differences between cultures. This exercise will also help students begin to think about the global economy and how it is affected by the array of diverse cultures found in the world.

Materials and Handouts:

Copies of [Handout #1](#) for each group

One copy of each country profile ([Appendix A](#))

- Have enough country profiles for each group (3-4 students) to have one.
 - Each group should have a different country.

One copy of each of these articles:

- <http://www.worldbusinessculture.com/Chinese-Business-Communication-Style.html>
- <http://www.worldbusinessculture.com/Brazilian-Business-Communication-Style.html>

Activity:

- Break students into groups of 3-4. Give each group one country profile (see [Appendix A](#)).
- Give one copy of [Handout #1](#) to each group. Tell students to read over their country profile to get a general idea about the country to which they have been assigned. Have the students write the answers to the questions on [Handout #1](#) on another sheet of paper. (Note: They may not have the answers to all of the questions, but give them about 15 minutes to read and work.)
 - If computers are available, have students read the profile online and then do other research, such as looking up pictures of the country, identifying natural resources of the country, etc.
- Have each group present some interesting facts about its country.
 - If a computer/projection is available, use Power Point #1 to show students pictures of each country.

Writing Prompt or Class Discussion:

Here are some optional questions for writing prompts and/or class discussion.

- What are some of the major differences between these countries from the information on your profiles?
- Do you think there are difference between these countries other than the “facts” that are on the fact sheet? (i.e., differences other than population, fertility rates, etc.) What are some examples of differences between countries that you might not find on a fact sheet like these?
- What is culture? (See <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=culture> for some definitions)
- Do you think culture affects business?
- Is business done in the same way in each of the countries that we observed?
- Print off these short articles on communication in business in China and Brazil and have one student read each allowed:
 - <http://www.worldbusinessculture.com/Chinese-Business-Communication-Style.html>
 - <http://www.worldbusinessculture.com/Brazilian-Business-Communication-Style.html>
- How do you think Brazilians and the Chinese might have trouble communicating in a business setting?
- What can be done to facilitate communication between cultures?
- Is doing business between different countries a good thing? Why or why not?
- Is one culture “right” and another culture “wrong,” regarding their cultural practices?
- What does it mean to be bi-cultural? (*Being able to know and apply the rules of another culture.*)
- Is it important to know and understand different cultures across the world? Why? Why not? How can we be better about doing this?

Additional Standards and Content References

Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics:

- Standard #5 : Trade; Barriers to Trade, Exports, Imports, Voluntary Exchange, Exchange Rate
- Standard #6 : Specialization; Factor Endowments, Gains from Trade
- Standard #10 : Institutions; Legal and Social Framework, Legal Forms of Business
- Standard #15 : Economic Growth; Technological Changes, Human Capital, Economic Equity, Economic Freedom, Health and Nutrition

Partnership for 21st Century Life Skills Concept:

- Life and Career Skills > Social and Cross-Cultural Skills

National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education:

- Ready Skills, F. Economics; International Concepts; F.30 Determine the impact of cultural and social environments on world trade

Economics Vocabulary:

- **Barriers to Trade** - Restrictions on trade such as tariffs, quotas and regulations.
- **Economic Freedom** - The freedoms of the marketplace--the freedom of consumers to decide how they wish to allocate their spending among various goods and services; the freedom of workers to choose to change jobs, join unions and go on strike; the freedom of individuals to establish businesses and to decide what to produce and when to change their pattern of production; and the freedom of savers to decide when and where to invest their savings.
- **Economic Equity** - The application of our concepts of what is "fair" or "unfair" and what is "right" or "wrong" to an economic policy. Ultimately deals with the distribution of income and wealth.
- **Exports** - Goods and services produced in one nation and sold in other nations.
- **Exchange Rate** - The price of one nation's currency in terms of another nation's currency.
- **Factor Endowments** - The theory that differences in factor endowments among countries result in different opportunity costs; countries have comparative advantages in the production of commodities that are intensive in the use of the factors of production with which their endowments are relatively abundant.
- **Human Capital** - The health, education, experience, training, skills and values of people. Also known as human resources.
- **Imports** - Goods and services bought from sellers in another nation.
- **Legal and Social Framework** - The system of laws, institutions, traditions and customs, and incentives that forms the basis of a society and its economy.
- Source: *EconEdLink.org* by the Council for Economic Education

Keystone Economic Principles™:

- For more information: http://infusionomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Keystone_Cheat.pdf

Appendix A

CIA World Factbook – Country Profiles

United States: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/countrytemplate_us.html

China: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/countrytemplate_ch.html

Mali: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/countrytemplate_ml.html

India: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/countrytemplate_in.html

Brazil: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/countrytemplate_br.html

Haiti: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/countrytemplate_ha.html

Or to find other countries: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ha.html>

Handout #1

Country Questions

1. How large is this country? How does it rank compared to other countries in the world? What impact would the size of a country have on the people living there?
2. What is the country's most important resource? What impact does that resource have on the environment?
3. What are the current environmental issues that this country deals with? What impact does that have on the people living there?
4. How many people live in this country? How does it rank compared to other countries in the world? Compared the population to the size of the country; do you think people are more spread out or do they live closer together?
5. Is this country growing fast compared to the rest of the world?
6. What is the life expectancy for the total population? How does that compare to the rest of the world? What impact does that have on this country?
7. What is the school life expectancy rate? What does this rate mean?
8. What is this country's GDP per capita? How does that compare to the rest of the world?
9. What is the percent of the population that lives below the poverty line?
10. What is this country's oil consumption rate? How does that compare to other countries in the world? What might be the impact of this rate?
11. How many internet users are in this country? How does that compare to the rest of the world? What impact might that have on this country?