

Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

Economics &
business

Environment

Geography

History &
culture

An AFSSSE Project funded by the Australia-China Council



Australian Government



Acknowledgments

The financial support provided to AFSSSE by the Australia-China Council for the writing and publishing of these units is gratefully acknowledged.

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AFSSSE Australia-China project

Beijing 2008 Olympic Games resource

Historical and cultural unit

1. Introduction

This unit relates to how students can develop an understanding of the history and cultures of China and the history of the Olympic movement. Teachers will ask students to recall their memories of the last Olympics in Athens (2004) and also of the Melbourne Commonwealth Games (2006) as examples of major international sporting events. They will be informed that at each such event there is usually a cultural festival held, and that the event begins with an opening ceremony that depicts the culture and history of the host nation.

Their mission will be to develop a cultural festival and to imagine an appropriate opening ceremony for the Olympic Games to be held in Beijing, China in 2008. In order to do this they will need to investigate Olympic traditions, the multiethnic nature of Chinese society, the history of the nation and the gifts it has given to the world.

2. Focus questions

To conduct the investigation there are four focus questions:

- 2.1 How will the Beijing Olympics reflect the traditions of the Olympic movement?
- 2.2 What is 'culture' and what is Chinese culture?
- 2.3 What gifts has China given to the world?
- 2.4 How would you create an opening ceremony to display Chinese culture and history to the world?

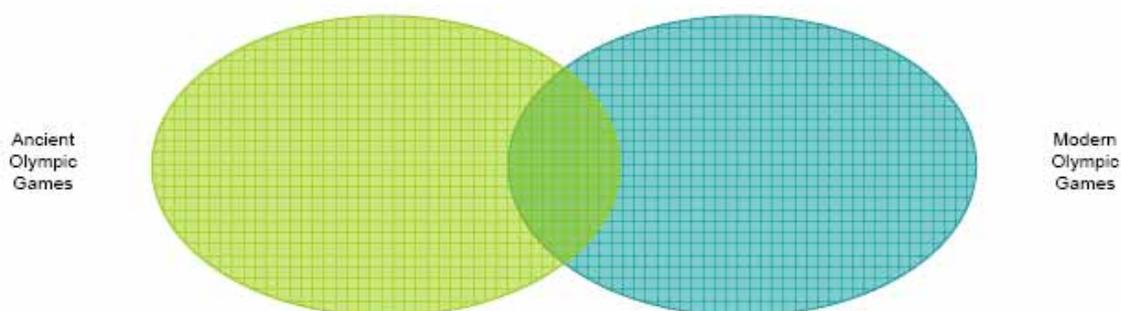
Activities related to each Focus question will be described below. Student worksheets for each question can be found after the explanatory notes for teachers.

2.1 How will the Beijing Olympics reflect the traditions of the Olympic movement?

This initial inquiry allows students to briefly delve into the history of the Olympic Games (both ancient and modern) and to use this information to evaluate the proposed arrangements for the Beijing Olympics.

Notes for teachers:

- Provide students with a range of media to investigate the traditions of the ancient Olympics and their modern revival in the late nineteenth century. This could be done using learning centres containing library books, encyclopaedias, videos etc, and internet sites such as:
<http://en.beijing2008.com/99/11/column212011199.shtml> (the education section of the official Beijing website);
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Olympics/>; <http://olympics.fhw.gr/ancient/>;
<http://www.museum.upenn.edu/new/olympics/olympicintro.shtml>. (The latter website contains the critical thinking questions mentioned on the student sheet). In the interests of time, this exercise could be done as a Scavenger Hunt, with students competing to find the most answers. The teacher would then develop the Venn diagram as a class exercise, using either a brainstorm approach or asking students in turn to provide new information (Part A).



- Ensure that each student has a chance to peruse and understand the Principles of Olympism outlined in the Olympic Charter. (See page 9 of the pdf article on the Olympic Charter at <http://en.beijing2008.com/00/12/article212011200.shtml>). Discuss as a class the questions that are outlined in Part B of the student resource sheet.
- Organise students into groups to survey sections of the official site for the Beijing Olympics and note the information about the Olympic rings, the slogan, the emblem and the mascots planned for Beijing, as well as the special features that are planned (Part C).
- Students should be encouraged to individually answer the focus question above using all the research done so far (Part D).

Resource Sheet 1

Focus question: How will the Beijing Olympics reflect the traditions of the Olympic movement?

The modern Olympic Games serve the function of bringing together athletes from around the world to compete in a variety of sports. They are based on older traditions from Ancient Greece where athletes from a number of city states competed regularly. **Your task as a class** is to determine the similarities and differences between the ancient and modern Olympics (Part A) and to think critically about some myths and ideas about the Games (Part B). **Your task as an individual** is to answer the Focus question above (Parts C and D).

Part A

Using materials such as library books, encyclopedias, videos and the websites that follow below, find information to fill in the following Table. You will need to copy the Table into your workbook.

Websites: <http://en.beijing2008.com/99/11/column212011199.shtml> (the education section of the official Beijing website);
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Olympics/>; <http://olympics.fhw.gr/ancient/> (make sure to click on "Revival");
<http://www.museum.upenn.edu/new/olympics/olympicintro.shtml> (Click on the five sections at the top of the page).

Comparison of ancient and modern Olympic Games

Features	Ancient Olympic Games	Modern Olympic Games
Reason for holding the Games		
Participants (ages, where from, accommodation, clothing, training etc)		
Sites/ venues		
Number and type of sports played (give a number and some examples)		
Type of honours/prizes (and penalties)		
Other traditions (how often held, Olympic flame, flag, festivities etc)		

- **Your teacher will develop a Venn diagram** on the board to show the similarities and differences between the two eras, with you providing the information.

Part B

Here are some critical thinking questions for you to **discuss as a class**, based on your research so far.

(a) Consider the questions that appear before the heading on the following page: <http://www.museum.upenn.edu/new/olympics/olympicintro.shtml>, which deal with some commonly held ideas about the Olympic Games (too commercial etc).

(b) The Olympic Charter is the document that outlines the agreed principles and operating conditions for each Olympic Games. Peruse the Principles of Olympism as outlined on the following website, page 9: <http://en.beijing2008.com/00/12/article212011200.shtml>).

Also the following quote appears on the official Beijing Olympics website:

Beyond the physical well-being, sport can play an important role for a safer, more prosperous and more peaceful society, through its educational values and worldwide network. Although the beneficial effects of sport for development are still not exploited to their full extent, sport can help bridge cultural and ethnic divides, create jobs and businesses, promote tolerance and non-discrimination, reinforce social integration, and advocate healthy lifestyles. Through sports development, we can achieve wider human development goals.

Do you think that these principles and ideals are achievable?

Part C

Divide into groups to research the following websites and report to the class about the current preparations for the Beijing Games:

- Look at the information provided on the official site for the Beijing Olympics, *Image and Look* section, <http://en.beijing2008.com/62/67/column211716762.shtml>, and note the information about the decisions already made on the Olympic rings, the slogan, the emblem and the mascots planned for Beijing. Also
- <http://en.beijing2008.cn/61/17/article212011761.shtml> (education),
- <http://en.beijing2008.cn/71/67/column211716771.shtml> (program)
- <http://en.beijing2008.cn/86/66/column211716686.shtml> (main features).

Part D

Using all your research so far, **in your own words** write an answer to the Focus question: How will the Beijing Olympics reflect the traditions of the Olympic movement? (Please note that this refers to the modern Olympic movement, so refer to the second column in your Table).

2.2 What is culture and what is Chinese culture?

This inquiry rests on general information provided in Resource sheet 2a about the nature of 'culture'. While the majority of China's population belongs to the Han ethnic group, there are altogether 56 ethnic groups in China. Australian culture and the policy of multiculturalism in Australia are used as reference points for looking at this diversity of ethnicities within China.

Notes for teachers

- The teacher assists students to develop a working definition of "culture", its elements and their functions in fulfilling needs, using Resource sheet 2a.
- Students use this definition (which includes an understanding of material and non-material culture) to **briefly** consider what they know about some traditional societies and then consider modern Australian culture (Resource sheets 2b and 2c. These three sheets could be dealt with in one 40 minute lesson).
- Discussion of Australian culture invokes understandings about its multicultural nature, which becomes the basis for consideration of the multiethnic nature of Chinese society later.
- A **brief** case study of the role of Chinese in Australia (as an example of multiculturalism) is optional and teachers could use one or more of the resources mentioned on Resource sheet 2d. **The first resource** requires internet access and could involve showing students the painted "Harvest of Endurance" scroll which is held in the National Library of Australia <http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/history/scroll.php> (NB It scrolls backwards). One of the lessons on the Multicultural Australia website suggests cutting up the text on the main web page <http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/displayWindow.php?mediaCode=doc&id=298> into 14 sections. Pairs of students would read their allotted section and be able to explain the context to the class when the scroll reaches their section. This also allows time for the scroll to continue to load onto the web page. **The second resource** is the Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation website <http://www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/education/lessons.htm>. There are lesson plans for lower and middle secondary, and students will be directed to the text containing an outline history of Chinese in Australia. Again, internet access is required. **The third resource** can be chosen by the teacher from Access Asia resources such as *Australia Kaleidoscope*, and *The Really Big Beliefs Project*, to indicate the variety of Chinese influences in Australia.
- The previous activities are preliminary to understanding the nature of China's population. It is important that this exercise be directed simply towards having students **understand the cultural complexity of China**. Using Resource sheet 2e, students will be introduced to the multi-ethnic nature of China. This website contains a map of ethnolinguistic groups in China, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:China_ethnolinguistic_83.jpg which simplifies the complexity somewhat. Either show this map to students using a data projector (or in a computer network situation) or reproduce it as an OHT. Similarly, show them the demographic map showing population density <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/geo/people.htm#tht1>. Used together these maps show that the Han are the dominant cultural group. Students read on to find answers from this website about Chinese government's population policy.

- Students are then asked to find some information about the different ethnic groups. They should not become immersed in detail, but concentrate only on finding a few distinguishing features of each cultural group. However, this exercise gives an opportunity for students to refine their internet search skills and critical literacy in relation to judging the worth of information on a website. For this reason they should start with the Wikipedia information, which comes from a US federal agency, and compare it with information from the Chinese government website (which tends to put a gloss on the current condition of each group) and the information from a travel company.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Chinese_ethnic_groups (organised by size of population. US federal agency).
<http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/achang/index.htm> (organised alphabetically. A member of the Pan Asia Travel Association);
<http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-bouyei.htm> (A Chinese government website in no particular order).

As there are 56 ethnic groups, the class will have to be divided so that some basic information can be gained on each ethnic group and where it can be found. Teachers may wish to allow students to read the information directly from the website, or to photocopy the web pages, cut them up and distribute information on two or more ethnic groups to each student.

- The teacher begins to develop on a large piece of butcher paper a mind map of Chinese culture (See Resource sheet 2f). The elements of culture described earlier will form the “spokes” of the mind map, and students will contribute what they now know of both the material and non-material aspects of the dominant Han culture. Check for gaps and do not have great expectations at this stage. The mind-map will be returned to in Section 3.

Resources

- <http://uk.oneworld.net/guides/china/development>. Teachers may wish to use this article to discover information about modern China, and possibly use it for extension work with some students. In particular, the section on **Human Rights** might be useful for encouraging students to think critically about China’s treatment of its minorities, including ethnic minorities. There is mention of Tiananmen Square, the results of the ‘one child policy’ on females, and the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners and the Buddhists in Tibet.
- If teachers wish to extend the work on multiculturalism in Australia, the website of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/voices/index.html#stories> contains information about a text called *Voices of Australia: 30 Years of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975-2005*, which has been sent to schools. It includes short stories by some Chinese Australians (pages 29, 37, 48, 51) and a Plain English Guide to the Racial Discrimination Act.
- Another useful text related to political issues in China might be: David H Brown 2005, *Cross Currents: Discovering Civics and Citizenship in our Region*. Curriculum Corporation (Access Asia series).

Resource sheet 2 (a): The meaning of culture

Focus question: What is 'culture' and what is Chinese culture?

There are many definitions of the word 'culture'. Anthropologists are the people who study cultures, and they explain that any human group will develop their own ways of fulfilling their needs within a particular setting. The main point to note is that all human groups are trying to fulfil the same needs.

What are these needs? They are:

- **Basic physical needs** (e.g. the need to gain resources for food, shelter etc)
- **Safety needs** (e.g. the need for decisions to be made about safety and security, the need for rules etc)
- **Social and emotional needs** (e.g. the need for love and affection, to belong to a group and the need to procreate)
- **Communication needs** (e.g. the need to communicate with each other, the need to pass on the culture and educate children)
- **Belief needs** (e.g. the need to understand the world, the need to believe in something).

Over time, the people in the group or society establish particular ways of fulfilling their needs so that they become habits or customs or laws or systems. There are now set ways of behaving that everyone in the group or society comes to understand, and this makes life easier for everyone. These set ways are passed on to the next generation, sometimes with changes to suit new times, but often not. These ways of behaving become 'institutionalised'. They become the institutions or systems that make a society work. For example:

Needs	System
Basic physical needs	The finding, trading and use of resources to fulfil our basic needs become the Economic system .
Safety needs	The giving of authority to one person or a small group to make decisions and rules about the safety of the group becomes the Political system .
Social and emotional needs	The search for affection and belonging develops into a Social system that may have many layers to it. The family is the mainstay of the social system.
Communication needs	If people are to work together they need to have a language, but they also communicate through stories, drama and art. They learn these initially through the Education system .
Belief needs	The need to understand the world has usually led humans in two different directions – either science or religion. Thus we have different Belief systems . In small or traditional societies religion is the most common belief.

In these ways all cultures are **similar**. However, because human groups established themselves in different environments and had different experiences, used different resources and had different talents, all cultures also are **different** from each other.

Fill in Resource sheet 2b to see these differences, and Resource sheet 2c to relate this knowledge to Australian culture.

Resource sheet 2(b): Cultural differences

Focus question: What is 'culture' and what is Chinese culture?

A.

- This will be a Think, Pair, Share exercise. You will do some individual **thinking** to start with, using your own general knowledge. Then you will **pair** with someone and together build more knowledge. You can then **share** this knowledge with the rest of the class.
- In your workbook, draw up a Table titled 'Cultural differences' like the one below. Begin to fill it out by yourself, remembering the needs being fulfilled by each system. Don't worry if you can't fill every box.

Culture	Economic system	Political system	Social system	Communication system	Belief system
Inuit (Eskimo)					
Traditional Aboriginal					
Ancient Egypt					
Colonial Australia in early 1800s					

B.

Every culture also can be divided into its **material culture** and **non-material culture**.

Material culture consists of all those things that we can see and touch, and which we use in our daily lives. They may be artefacts, tools, books, furniture, vehicles, buildings, clothes, DVDs, computers, paintings, food, etc. Material culture can change very quickly as new inventions are made that can make our lives easier.

- Look around your classroom and identify the items of material culture you can see and touch.

Non-material culture consists of all the ideas, customs, knowledge, values, beliefs and rules of behaving that we carry around in our heads. It cannot be seen, but the behaviours associated with these ideas etc can be seen.

- Think about the non-material culture of your classroom. What is the 'accepted culture' of a classroom?

C.

Now return to the table above. Use a red pen or a highlighter to show which of the things you have written in the Table form part of the **material culture** of each group. Check your answers with the partner you paired with originally.

N.B. Very often we judge cultures by their material culture only. Their clothes, food, dance and customs may seem exotic and exciting. Other societies may seem to have primitive material culture. However, those societies may have a very rich non-material culture. All cultures are extremely complex and all undergo change, and all parts of the culture are interconnected.

Resource sheet 2(c): Modern Australian culture

Focus question: What is 'culture' and what is Chinese culture?

As reinforcement, your task is to relate your knowledge of culture to a culture that you should know well – Australian culture - before attempting to look at Chinese culture.

Summing up Australian culture can be difficult because our population comes from such diverse backgrounds and many people retain aspects of the culture they were born into. However, there is a public culture that we all understand and work with every day and which involves the way our institutions and systems work. For example, we all understand the hours that shops or cinemas open, what happens at schools, what happens on election day, how many TV channels there are, and what our public holidays are. These probably differ in most other countries.

A.

Draw up the following table in your workbook, leaving enough room to write in a number of examples of material and non-material aspects of Australian culture. Try to think of things that are characteristically Australian and probably would not be found elsewhere.

This time the sequence will be **Think, Pair, Square (team up with another pair), Share** as you work through the table below:

System	Material culture	Non-material culture
Economic system		
Political system		
Social system		
Communication system		
Belief systems		

B.

Multicultural Australia: United in Diversity (May 2003), is the Australian Government's key statement on cultural diversity policy. This policy promotes acceptance and respect between Australians of all cultural and religious backgrounds. Find out more on the website of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/a-diverse-australia/index.htm>.

- How do your class and your school reflect a multicultural Australia?
- What cultural groups living in Australia have you heard of but not met?
- Generally speaking the government's policy works well. Can you think of any instances where multiculturalism works and where it has not worked?
- Do you think that an understanding of the meaning of 'culture' and how it develops would assist more people to be accepting of others from different cultural backgrounds?

Resource sheet 2(d): The role of Chinese in Australia

Focus question: What is 'culture' and what is Chinese culture?

People of Chinese cultural background have been connected to Australia for a very long time. In fact, there is some suggestion that Chinese sailors had explored parts of the Australian coastline centuries before Europeans arrived in the seventeenth century.

Your task in this Resource sheet is to discover more about the existence of Chinese people after colonial settlement by the British in Sydney in 1788. The Chinese have been and continue to be a very important component of multicultural Australia.

There are three resources. Your teacher will decide how you will organise and share this research. Write details on this sheet of new things you have learned.

1. The "Harvest of Endurance" scroll in the National Library of Australia <http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/history/scroll.php> is a very comprehensive history from the viewpoint of Chinese Australians themselves. (NB It scrolls backwards, reflecting the way that Chinese documents are read from the back forward, and is painted in the style of old Chinese scrolls).
2. Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation website <http://www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/education/history.htm> - a history of Chinese in Australia.
3. Access Asia resources such as *Australia Kaleidoscope* (Chapters 1 and 4 and possibly 5); *The Really Big Beliefs Project* (pages 20-23 are about Chinese religions of Buddhism and Taoism) will both provide insights into the ways particular Chinese people or habits have been incorporated into our society.

Resource sheet 2(e): Multi-ethnic China

Focus question: What is 'culture' and what is Chinese culture?

Your teacher will show you a map of the ethnolinguistic groups in China. An 'ethnic group' is a cultural group and 'ethnolinguistic' means that a number of different cultural groups speak the same, or a similar, language.

- Look at the map. Talk to a partner about the following things: Where would you expect most people to live in China? Why do you think some areas are uninhabited? How many linguistic GROUPS are there? Which linguistic group seems to dominate? Where are most of the smaller linguistic groups? – Why so?

Your teacher will show you another map, which shows population density (or the number of people who live in a square kilometre). This map is at <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/geo/people.htm#tht1>. Use information from this website to answer the following questions in your workbook:

- Which is the largest cultural group in China?
- Where do they live?
- What changes in population policy have there been since 1949?
- What percentage of the population is Han Chinese?
- How many ethnic groups are recognised by the Chinese government?

Your task now is to find out something about **two or more of these ethnic groups**. Your teacher will allocate the groups to you. You can use the following three websites to develop (a) your internet search skills and (b) your critical literacy skills.

- (a) Go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Chinese_ethnic_groups. This website is based on information from a United States federal agency. The list of ethnic groups on the left hand side is organised by size of population. The groups range in size from about 20 million to about 10,000 people. Click on one of the groups allocated to you. Look at the general description, the contents box (click for information) and the box on the right hand side that provides population figures and religion/s. There are also external links to follow for more information. Then compare this information with either of the other two websites:

<http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-bouyei.htm> (A Chinese government website, arranged in no particular order) and <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/achang/index.htm> (the site of a travel agency; arranged alphabetically). Now answer the following questions in your workbook **for each ethnic group**:

- What is the name of the ethnic group?
- Where in China does this group live? (refer back to the earlier maps)
- What is the size of its population?
- What are some distinctive cultural aspects of this group? SCAN the information on the websites and choose only distinctive aspects of culture (i.e. food, dress, houses, beliefs, customs etc) and NOT history. **Find at least three interesting facts about their culture.** Save this information for a later exercise.

Write a general statement about the cultural complexity of China. Refer back to sheet 2c. Compare the Australian government's policy on multiculturalism to the Chinese recognition of ethnic minorities. (This might require some research).

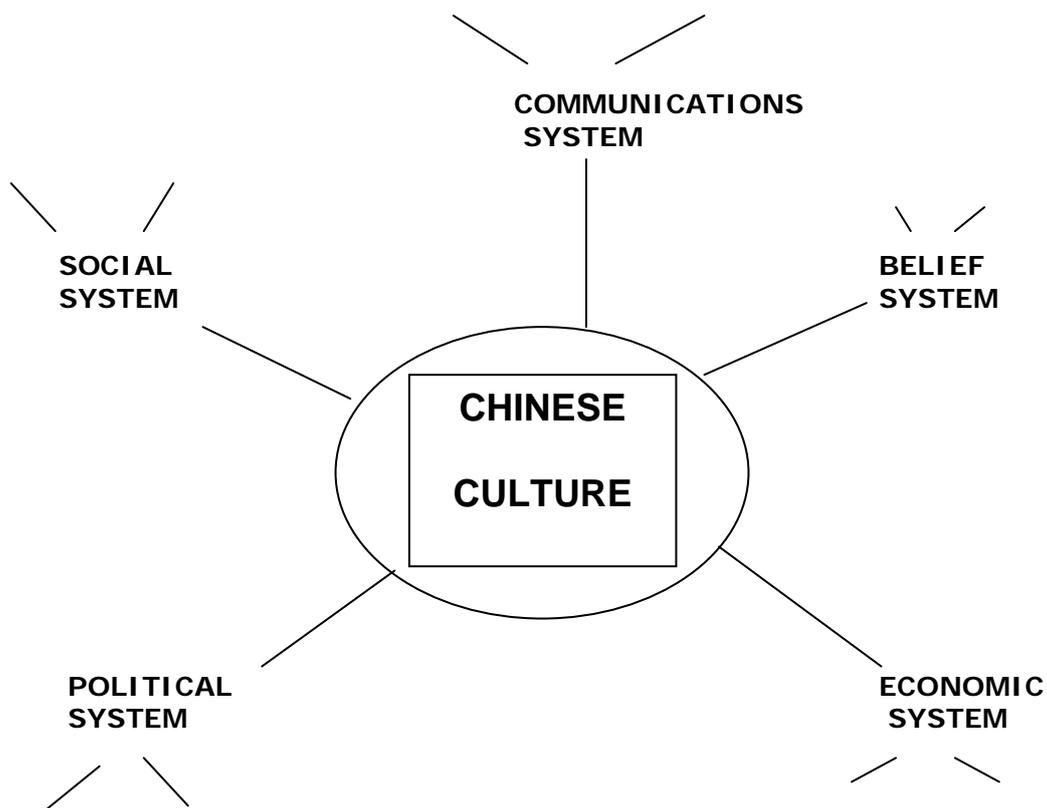
- (b) Did you notice any differences between the websites? How can you relate these differences to the group responsible for writing the article? Was there anything in particular that you noticed about the description on the Chinese government website when they described the modern conditions of the ethnic group?

Resource sheet 2(f): A Mind-map of Chinese culture

Focus question: What is 'culture' and what is Chinese culture?

You are now about to bring together all that you have learned in Section 2 so that you can answer the Focus question. Look back at Resource sheet 2a about the **meaning of 'culture'**, sheet 2b about the **systems within all cultures** and how the systems differ between cultures, sheet 2c and 2d about **material and non-material culture**, especially in **multicultural Australia** and 2e about **multiethnic China**.

Your task is to begin to build a mind-map about Chinese culture, using the **systems as the spokes** and referring to both **material and non-material culture** for each system as the arms leading from each system. This is only the beginning of building this mind-map, as you will return to it after the next Focus question. You could try doing it on your own to start with and then brainstorm ideas as a class.



2.3 What gifts has China given to the world?

This inquiry allows students to discover the rich cultural history of China throughout its historical periods, including the innovations that later became the legacy of the rest of the world. This new knowledge will form the basis for their own **cultural festival** that the students are to prepare to accompany the Olympic Games. Teachers need to be aware in advance if they intend to invite parents, community members or other classes to attend the cultural festival.

Teacher notes

- The teacher divides the class into five groups representing five historical periods of Chinese history. The students are to develop a dynamic Timeline illustrated by a display of the events, people and cultural developments of each period. The basis of this timeline is one accompanied by maps, to be found at <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/timeline.htm>.
- The periods to be investigated will be based around:
 - 2500 to 250 BCE (approximate dates of Neolithic, Shang and Zhou)
 - 250 BCE to 600 CE (approximate dates of Han and Sui)
 - 600 to 1360 CE (Tang to end of Yuan period)
 - 1360 to 1911 CE (Ming to Qing)
 - 1911 to 2007 CE (Revolution and People's Republic of China)

Either the teacher procures a long piece of Hessian or cloth divided into the time periods to which pictures etc can be attached, or each student group is given a large piece of cardboard or similar which can be eventually attached to the wall. Each group is responsible for deciding who will research different aspects, but each group must present a display that includes at least one important person, event, and cultural innovation. (Most periods will have more than one of each of these). The group members decide on the relative importance of the aspects they read about. To help, they should use the previous timeline and refer to the website

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/song/readings/inventions_gifts.htm. First, click on the Timeline of Chinese inventions, match them with the group's time period, and then click on the information about the inventions themselves. For younger students a simpler version of the information is found at http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/song/readings/inventions_ques.htm. Other websites can be used, (e.g. <http://www.chinapage.com/china.html>; http://www.education-world.com/a_sites/sites085.shtml) or books available in the school library.

- Teachers need to encourage students to ask parents, neighbours, fellow students or other teachers if they have any of the objects they are studying (e.g. porcelain teacup, lacquer ware, compass, kite etc) that could be put on display at the cultural festival.
- When the students have finished their research, each group decides how they will display their new knowledge. Some pictures and information can go on the cardboard or Hessian, which has the allocated time period as its title. However, on the day of presentation (to an audience of other classes or parents) the group can be more dynamic – perhaps showing an artefact (e.g. kite), describing a technique (e.g. for making paper), explaining a picture (e.g. of a Chinese garden) or telling a story of an important person (e.g. Confucius), building (e.g. Great wall) or event (e.g. arrival of Marco Polo in China).

- On festival day, the pieces of cardboard or strip of Hessian are attached to a wall in a performance area, and each group stands in front of its display. After an introduction by the teacher, each group performs in chronological order.
- In order for each student to perform, a session of about one and a half hours will be required. Perhaps the festival could be arranged to include morning tea or lunch time breaks, or perhaps teachers might consider a twilight event.
- Extensions to this festival could consist of the following:
 - A presentation by some students of the Timeline of Chinese Inventions from http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/song/readings/inventions_gifts.htm, showing how these inventions preceded their introduction to the West, often by centuries.
 - an explanation accompanied by the maps shown in the timeline <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/timeline.htm> to show when particular ethnic groups were incorporated into the borders of modern China.
 - A feast of Chinese foods from different regions/ ethnic groups of China.

Resource sheet 3: Preparing a cultural festival

Focus question: What gifts has China given to the world?

- Your teacher will divide the class into five groups, each of which will study one historical period in China's history. The periods to be investigated will be based around:
 - 2500 to 250 BCE (approximate dates of Neolithic, Shang and Zhou)
 - 250 BCE to 600 CE (approximate dates of Han and Sui)
 - 600 to 1360 CE (Tang to end of Yuan period)
 - 1360 to 1911 CE (Ming to Qing)
 - 1911 to 2007 CE (Revolution and People's Republic of China to the present)
- **The task of the group** is to study the culture of the period in order to prepare a visual display of the important events, people and cultural developments of that time. This information will be displayed on cardboard or a strip of Hessian supplied by the teacher. The display will be arranged chronologically as a large Timeline, and will form the backdrop to a **cultural festival** for invited guests.
- **During the festival, your group will present your information in various ways as you stand in front of the Timeline.** This may involve, for example, one person telling a story about an important person, another explaining a picture of a building, another might explain an artefact, and yet another might display a process developed by the Chinese, or outline a major event. It is up to you and your imagination as a group to decide what you will show and how you will do it.
- In order to prepare for the festival, your teacher will talk to you about (a) who should be invited as **your audience** and (b) asking parents, neighbours, teachers and others if they have **artefacts that you can borrow** to display.
- Your research begins with the Timeline and maps on the following website: <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/timeline.htm>. The maps show the changing border of China throughout its history, and the Timeline is accompanied by some information and pictures relevant to particular periods. In addition, refer to http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/song/readings/inventions_gifts.htm. First, click on the **Timeline of Chinese inventions** (at the bottom of the page), match the inventions with your group's time period, and then click on the information about the inventions themselves (but only those for your allocated time period). For younger students or slower readers a simpler version of the information is found at http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/song/readings/inventions_ques.htm. Other websites can be referred to, (e.g. <http://www.chinapage.com/china.html>; http://www.education-world.com/a_sites/sites085.shtml), or books available in the school library.
- In your workbook, write the following:
 - Historical period: _____
 - What I am researching from that period _____
 - Why I think it is important _____
 - How I would like to display my research at the cultural festival _____

(a) what can go on the cardboard/Hessian _____

(b) what I can present to the audience and how (story, artefact, picture, slide display, PowerPoint, dress up, invite an expert)

2.4 How would you create an appropriate opening ceremony for the Beijing Olympic Games?

The culminating activity in this unit is for students to bring all their new knowledge about the Olympics and China's history and culture together in order to imagine a suitable opening ceremony for the Beijing Olympic Games.

Teacher notes

- The teacher needs to introduce the students enthusiastically to the idea of creating an opening ceremony for the Beijing Games that reflects all they have learned. As they don't actually have to perform this they can let their imaginations go! However, there are a number of steps to follow first.
- The initial step is to return to the mind-map from Resource sheet 2f and add as much information as possible to it so that everyone has a **big picture view of the Chinese culture** they will depict in the opening ceremony.
- Secondly, there needs to be agreement on what **aspects are common to an opening ceremony**. Ask the students what they can remember of the opening ceremony for the Sydney Olympics, the Athens Olympics and/or the Melbourne Commonwealth Games. Send them to the websites listed on Resource sheet 4 to discover more information, and to work out the order of presentation (e.g. cultural display, welcome ceremony, athletes' entry, unfurling the flag, torchbearer's entry, and lighting of the cauldron).
- The class could be divided into three (one group to each site) to save time. As well, students should look for the use of historical information, 'icons' and symbols of the culture and people (e.g. a Melbourne tram; Aboriginal ceremony), and the creative use of space as well as performers, to provide them with some initial ideas. In order to incorporate some of the meaning of the mascots and the emblem into the ceremony, check again the *Image and Look* section of the official Beijing website: <http://en.beijing2008.com/62/67/column211716762.shtml>. Students' new knowledge should help them understand the descriptions.
- Teachers may also like to refer to the excellent educational materials prepared for the Melbourne Commonwealth Games, especially if they are developing cross disciplinary studies of the Games, or want to expand the study. These include http://education.melbourne2006.com.au/content/classroomresources/let_games_begin/content/cg_hosting_me_acts.htm and http://education.melbourne2006.com.au/content/classroomresources/let_games_begin/content/cg_hosting_plan_cultural.htm.
- Depending on the size of the previous groups, teachers should now form students into **new groups of five**, with each person representing a **different time period** from their cultural studies for the festival. Each person will bring with them the knowledge of aspects of Chinese culture from their display in the cultural festival, and knowledge of the **different ethnic groups** within China from their previous cultural investigation.

- Groups will be instructed to
 - (a) decide on some specific roles within the group;
 - (b) follow as specifications the commonly accepted order of presentation decided on above;
 - (c) be prepared to accept the majority view through a decision-making process;
 - (d) share their design brief with the class for evaluation on how well they have depicted Chinese culture and history.

- As a final exercise, groups can compare their creative ideas and reflect on how well they and others have captured the Chinese culture/s and history in their imagined ceremonies. Which one was the most creative?

Resource sheet 4: Preparing an Olympic Games opening ceremony

Focus question: How would you create an appropriate opening ceremony for the Beijing Olympic Games?

- Finally you can let your imagination go! You will work in groups and **your task** will be to cooperatively prepare for an Olympic Games opening ceremony that depicts Chinese culture and history. You don't need to perform the ceremony and you don't have to worry about costs, so this is an opportunity to show your creativity.
- Firstly, your teacher will ask you to add to the **mind-map** on Resource sheet 2f so that everyone has the same information about Chinese culture. In addition, you will need the **information on ethnic groups** from Resource sheet 2e.
- Secondly, you need to know the **requirements of an opening ceremony**. You may know some already, but recent models of opening ceremonies will give you some ideas. Your teacher will direct you to research e.g. Sydney Olympics 2000 <http://www.specialevents.com.au/archiveprev/sydney2000/opening.html>; Athens Olympics 2004 <http://www.mediainfo2004.gr/cgi-bin/hweb?-A=1587&-V=news&-w>; and Melbourne Commonwealth Games 2006 <http://www.mcg.org.au/default.asp?pg=CommonwealthGames&articleid=1588>. Look for (a) **the order of presentation** of events in an opening ceremony and (b) **the use of historical information, 'icons' and symbols of the culture and people** (e.g. a Melbourne tram; Aboriginal ceremony), and the creative use of space as well as performers, to provide you with some initial ideas. In order to incorporate some of the **meaning of the mascots and the emblem** into the ceremony, check again the *Image and Look* section of the official Beijing website: <http://en.beijing2008.com/62/67/column211716762.shtml>.
- You will now form **new groups of five**, representing the five historical periods you studied. The combined information about history, cultural artefacts and inventions, plus knowledge of ethnic groups and the symbols already decided for the Games will be the basic material you will use for your presentation.
- However, there are some ground rules. You must (a) decide on some **specific roles** within the group. For example: a manager, a time-keeper, a recorder, a reporter, a creative artist? a researcher? (you decide) ; (b) follow as specifications the **commonly accepted order of presentation** decided on above; (c) be prepared to **accept the majority view** through a decision-making process; (d) share their design brief with the class for **evaluation** on how well they have depicted Chinese culture and history.
- Brainstorm all ideas first. You will find yourselves bouncing off other people's ideas. Try to imagine what the Chinese would regard as important, and include Chinese conventions (e.g. calligraphy or mascots etc). Then settle down to developing a cultural presentation of about 1½ - 2 hours within a total program of about 3½ hours.
- Use a decision-making process to come to a final decision: List all the options; decide on positives and negatives for each option; make final choices based on the positives and how each segment will mesh together in a whole performance.

- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation and share your ideas with the rest of the class. Your teacher will help you evaluate how well each group has undertaken the task.
- As a class, it will be an interesting exercise to compare your ideas with those that are used in the actual ceremony in 2008, and to see if your knowledge of the culture and history of China helps you to interpret aspects of the event.

3. Key terms

Ancient Olympics

The idea for competitive sports between neighboring states began in ancient Greece during the period from about 776 BCE to about 450 CE.

Animism

Animism is a very early form of religion that is based on the idea that animals, plants, and other material objects have souls. A belief that these spirits play a role in daily life.

Anthropology

Anthropology is the science that studies the origin and development of human beings, especially their cultural development.

Artefact

An artefact is any object made and used by human beings.

Beijing

Beijing is the capital city of China. It used to be known as Peking. It had a population of 13.82 million at the 2000 census. It is to be the major site of the 2008 Olympic Games.

Cauldron

Literally, a cauldron is a large pot or boiler. In Olympic terms it is the large vessel which is set alight by the last athlete in the torch relay.

Chronological

Events arranged in the order of time are arranged chronologically.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity relates to a person's cultural background.

Ethno-linguistic

This pertains to the members of a recognizable cultural group or groups who can be classified by the language they speak.

Historical period

A period of past time that has a recognizable beginning and end (e.g. the time during which a king or queen reigned).

Human rights

This rights that we all ought to be able to claim as fellow human beings. They include rights to certain things (e.g. free speech) and freedom from things such as poverty.

Innovation

The introduction of new things or methods.

Invention

The creation of a new thing or idea.

Material and non-material culture

Material culture consists of those artefacts that may be distinctive to a culture and can be seen or touched; non-material culture consists of ideas, beliefs, values knowledge that we carry in our heads and cannot be seen or touched.

Modern Olympic Movement

The modern Olympic movement began in 1896 when a Frenchman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin decided to revive the idea of the ancient Olympic Games by bringing together athletes from many of the new nation states that had formed in the 19th century (e.g. Italy, Germany). The first international Olympic Games took place in Athens, Greece.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is the official policy of the Australian government. It states that "Australia's cultural diversity policy promotes acceptance and respect between Australians of all cultural and religious backgrounds".

Olympic Charter

The Olympic Charter outlines the principles and rules by which Olympic Games will be organised and run.

Olympism

Olympism is the basic philosophy of the Olympic movement and embodies ideas about health, culture, education and "a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play".

Acknowledgments

The financial support provided to AFSSSE by the Australia-China Council for the writing and publishing of this unit is gratefully acknowledged.

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