

# Cultural Diffusion:

*What do Greek and Roman Cultures Have to Do with West Virginia's Culture?*

A Lesson by Dan Cosgrove

## Big Idea(s):

*The focus of this lesson is to have students understand how cultural diffusion resulted in the unique characteristics of West Virginia's culture by enabling students to understand how cultural diffusion impacted cultures throughout world history—from Alexander the Great's spreading of Greek culture throughout Persia and beyond, to the Romans spreading their culture throughout their empire, to the world-wide spreading of European cultures during the Age of Imperialism.*

## Essential Questions

- What are some examples of cultural diffusion in West Virginia?
- How can migration patterns be determined by cultural diffusion?
- How has cultural diffusion created a “smaller” world?

## Lesson Standards

**SS.7.11:** Use correct geographic terminology (e.g., absolute and relative location, latitude, longitude, equator, prime meridian, time zones, and physical features of the earth) to draw conclusions about information on a variety of maps, graphs, and charts.

**SS.7.12:** Identify, locate, and draw conclusions about information on a variety of maps (e.g., seven continents, bodies of water, countries, cities, climate regions, transportation routes, and natural resources)

**SS.7.13:** Analyze the impact of cultural diffusion on a variety of regions.

**SS.7.17:** Demonstrate an understanding of the ancient civilizations.

- Identify the contributions and influences of ancient civilizations and categorize the factors that led to their downfall (e.g., philosophy, architecture, civics, literature, the arts, science, and mathematics).

**SS.7.18:** Demonstrate an understanding of the Middle Ages.

- Discuss the preservation of ancient Greek and Roman learning and traditions, architecture, and government.

## Student Materials

- Frayer Diagram - [Customizable Template](https://www.worksheetworks.com/miscellanea/graphic-organizers/frayer.html) (<https://www.worksheetworks.com/miscellanea/graphic-organizers/frayer.html>)
- Paper for foldables and drawing
- Colored Pencils
- Student devices/access to internet/multimedia tools

## Learning Plan

*\*\*This lesson is designed to take a **minimum** of 2 forty-five to fifty minute class periods.*

### DAY 1:

1. Begin by explaining the definition of culture.
  - a. Have students brainstorm examples of different cultures. Be sure to ask students what research they did to know this information or when they have traveled to those countries. When

students respond that they had tacos, hit a piñata, ate a Japanese restaurant, etc., explain that these are examples of cultural diffusion.

- i. Starting point Conversations:
  1. Mexican culture (i.e. Foods like enchiladas, tacos, tamales, etc., Día de los Muertos, piñatas, etc.)
  2. Japanese culture (i.e. Foods like soba, sushi, miso soup, etc., kimonos, origami, etc.)
2. Have students use an atlas, map, or globe to determine what continents Mexico and Japan are located.
  - a. You may also introduce other geographic terms and concepts at this time. For example, “What transportation routes were used to spread these events or products?”
3. Have students complete a Frayer Diagram for cultural diffusion.
4. Brainstorm with students what makes up West Virginia’s Culture.
  - a. This could be done as a whole class or in small groups of 3-4 students per group
5. Have students research and/or view artifacts found at the West Virginia State Museum in order to complete one of the Project Options below.

*\*While this can be done online, enhance the experience with a field trip to the West Virginia State Museum.\**

- a. Students should gather as much information as possible. In particular, for artifacts related to WV, they will need to record the origin of the artifacts, the first area the artifact(s) were introduced to WV, etc.)

#### **Online Resources:**

- i. [West Virginia State Museum Education | Additional References](#)
  1. Contains links to information about the printing press, Rumsey steamboat model, Mountain Boy display, Cutlass pistol, telephone switchboard, automatic voting booth, and USS West Virginia Model artifacts located within the museum
- ii. [West Virginia State Museum Education | Museum Newsletter](#)
  1. Contains links to digital copies of *The West Virginia State Museum Heritage* Newsletter. Each edition of the newsletter contains information about various artifacts within the museum’s collection.

#### **Differentiated Instruction**

*The culminating result of this lesson is split into different options that can be further modified to meet individual student needs. For instance, the 6 items total featured in each project could be reduced as necessary (i.e. 4, 2, or even 1). Students can work individually or in groups. If students work in groups, time requirements will likely be shortened. For example, each individual student working in their group could produce one drawing on a full sheet of paper and then combine it with their team members to present a “quilt portion.” The entire class could even create a “class quilt” featuring the artifacts.*

**Project 1:** Fold a paper so that there are 6 equal square sections. Draw and label 6 examples of a component of West Virginia’s culture. (i.e. quilts, banjo, etc.)

**Project 2:** Create a multimedia presentation with 6 items representing West Virginia’s culture.

**Project 3:** Research ancient cultures. Draw and compare 3 artifacts from an ancient culture with 3 artifacts from West Virginia (i.e. architecture, pottery, musical instruments, etc.)

#### **DAY 2:**

6. Students research the origin of the West Virginia artifacts listed in their projects from Day 1 of this Learning Plan. Based on their findings, students will draw conclusions about immigration patterns to West Virginia in order to write a narrative essay on their findings.
  - a. **Alternative Writing Assignment:** Students respond to the following prompt:  
*How are we better off, with other countries and cultures?”*

## LINKS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

- **Further Studies on Cultural Diffusion**

- <https://www.thoughtco.com/culture-hearths-and-cultural-diffusion-1434496>
- <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/cultural-assimilation-cultural-diffusion-and-origin-wealth-nations>
- <https://anthropology.ua.edu/theory/diffusionism-and-acculturation/>

- **West Virginia State Museum Education Website**

- **HOME:** [wvstatemuseumed.wv.gov](http://wvstatemuseumed.wv.gov)
- **PLAN A VISIT:** <https://wvstatemuseumed.wv.gov/Planning-visit.html>
- **ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:** <https://wvstatemuseumed.wv.gov/Additional-references.html>
- **NEWSLETTER:** <https://wvstatemuseumed.wv.gov/Newsletter.html>