



Shared Holidays Around the World

Description: In this lesson, students will explore and discuss holidays and customs around the world related to honoring the dead such as Día de los Muertos, observed in South America and Mexico, and The Qingming Festival, a traditional Chinese festival. Students will use maps to visualize the different countries and cultures that have celebrations honoring the dead and conduct research in order to compare and contrast these traditions.

Grade Level(s): High School

Region(s): Global

Background Knowledge: Students will have read *The Distance Between Us* by Reyna Grande. This book focuses on a Mexican immigrant, and she talks about Day of the Dead. The instructor will relate this to Halloween and discuss how Day of the Dead is a way for people to remember family members who have died.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to compare and contrast similar holidays and customs from other countries to those celebrated in the United States.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast holidays celebrated in Asian countries included in the teacher's WHG place collection.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast holidays and customs in countries studied in literature class to countries in other parts of the world.
- Students will be able to find these countries on a map and hypothesize as to how such similar holidays and customs are found in such disparate countries.

Standard - CC.1.2.11-12.G

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Standard - CC.1.2.11-12.L

Read and comprehend literary non-fiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

Procedures:

Part 1

- Students will use World Historical Gazetteer and access the place collection titled

“Shared Holidays”: https://whgazetteer.org/collections/164/browse_pl

- They will click on the different points on the map to locate the countries and cities that have some sort of holiday or custom that honors the dead (pre-populated in the place collection).
- Once they locate a country, they will use the internet to learn about the holiday and fill out a chart with the data (see an example of the chart at the end of the lesson). Some example places are:
 - China - Qingming Festival
 - Korea - Chuseok
 - Japan - Obon Festival
 - Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam - Ghost Month or Ghost Festival
 - Nepal - Gai Jatra
 - Pchum Ben - Cambodia
 - Ecuador - Day of the Dead
- Using their research, students will write annotations for countries and cities in their chart describing the holiday in the place. Either the students or the instructor will add these annotations to the WHG place collection.
- Students will then then compare their annotations to see which places share the same holidays.

Part 2

- In small groups, students will do further research about countries that were not in the place collection (for example Totensonntag in Germany and Switzerland and Famadihana in Madagascar).
- Students will then write annotates for the new places and add these places to their charts. Either the students or the instructor will add these new places and annotations to the WHG place collection.
- Students will then then compare their annotations to see which places share the same holidays.

Part 3

- Looking at the final map after the students or teacher has added additional countries, the students will discuss what they have learned from the map. Discussion questions could include:
 - Where does honoring the dead happen around the world? Why do you think that is?
 - Why are there so many instances of honoring the dead in Asian countries?
 - China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan, and Vietnam all celebrate The Ghost Festival. Why do you think all of these different countries celebrate the same festival?

Part 4 (optional)

- In groups, have the students focus on America’s Independence Day and research which countries also celebrate an independence day
- Create a new place collection using these countries.
- Discuss why this holiday is more widely celebrated.

Assessment: The teacher will assess the students in the following ways:

- Assess the chart which will be filled in with information about different holidays and countries.
- Assess participation in the class discussion.
- Assess the map created on the WHG for Independence Day celebrations.
- A final reflection paper on what they learned from using the WHG.

Example of chart

Place	Holiday Name	Description/Annotation	Differences/similarities to other holidays
China			
Japan			
Cambodia			
Taiwan			