

1.5 Expressing culture

Culture can be expressed in many ways, through music, dance, sports, fashion, religion, language, etiquette, gender roles, courtship, design, and gestures.



TOPIC 1.2

Describing Culture

Do you have the same culture as someone who lives in another province or country?

What do you think is the most significant way that culture is expressed in your class?

Introduction

What cultural traits do you share with your neighbour? With someone who lives in a different town in Newfoundland and Labrador? With someone who lives in another province or country?

Culture complexes reveal a lot about our lives. Some patterns of behaviour, such as playing music, are practised in many parts of the world. Other culture complexes, such as catching capelin, are not as widespread. By examining the various culture complexes that make up our lives we can begin to define ourselves.

When you identify on a map the places where a particular culture complex is found, you are identifying a **culture region**. Culture regions can be as small as a neighbourhood or larger than a continent. Generally, culture regions are grouped into three categories:

Local culture – expressions of culture that are not widely practised. For example, the practice of

cooking Jiggs dinner as a family Sunday dinner is not common to many parts of the world.

Regional culture – these expressions of culture are practised over a broad geographic area. For example, the use of chopsticks is common throughout much of East Asia.

Popular culture – when a culture complex is widely accepted and practised by people around the world, it is referred to as popular culture. Often, popular or mainstream culture is associated with commercial products and conveyed through mass media such as magazines, television, and the Internet. Eating hamburgers at fast food restaurants or the use of Facebook are both examples of popular culture.

With increased globalization, culture regions are less confined by national borders or other human-made divisions – their shapes are constantly evolving.



*Did you know?
Ches's was opened in
St. John's in 1951
by Ches Barbour. He
used to fish outside
The Narrows in the
morning and cook up
his catch for
customers for dinner.*



1.6 Locations of Ches's Fish & Chips restaurants

What category of culture does this represent?



1.7 Provinces/states in which Tim Hortons stores are located.

This map illustrates the culture region where Tim Hortons franchises are located. What category of culture does this represent? Are you wondering about the Tim Hortons located smack in the middle of Asia? It's operating out of the Canadian military base in Kandahar, Afghanistan.



1.8 Countries in which McDonald's restaurants are located.

What category of culture does this represent?



1.9 Victoria Day celebrates the birthday of Queen Victoria who reigned from 1837 to 1901.

Long before the death of Queen Victoria, when May 24 was decreed to be Empire Day, the date was widely celebrated. In St. John's, the cornerstone of the Colonial Building was laid on May 24, 1847. What is your family's tradition for the May 24 holiday?

In addition to examining how culture is organized **spatially**, you can also examine how culture is organized **temporally**. For instance, some culture complexes in Newfoundland and Labrador trace their roots back through hundreds of years, while other culture complexes are quite recent. Culture traits that have been passed down to us from our ancestors are referred to as **traditional**

culture. Examples of traditional culture include the celebration of holidays such as Christmas or Valentine's Day. Culture traits that originate in modern times are known as contemporary culture. Examples of these are the use of digital cameras and cell phones, bungee jumping, indoor wall climbing, parasailing, and paintball.



1.10 Countries that have or had Idol shows

Reality and star search shows are examples of contemporary culture. Prior to 2001, the culture region shown left would not have existed.



1.11 Countries where Christmas is celebrated as a national holiday

The celebration of Christmas is an example of a traditional culture trait that is still widely observed.

Experiencing The Arts

Photography is a good medium for exploring the basic ideas related to the examination of culture. Select one of the themes listed below and explore it by making a series of photographs:

1. Traditional Culture and Contemporary Culture
2. Local Culture and Popular Culture
3. Youth Culture in the Twenty-First Century

Ideally you should make at least 20 photographs — from which you can choose six for this assignment. (Keep the other photographs for use in the future.) While you are making your photographs, pay particular

attention to the principles of design — in particular focusing on balance and composition.

Arrange your images in a **viewbook**. As you select and arrange your images, be sure to include a title for each image and a brief caption that provides an explanation of what you were attempting to capture or represent.

As you think about your subject matter, attempt to capture those representations that you feel are significant or revealing. Explain the significance of each item in the caption.

Questions:

1. How do popular culture and local culture influence your lifestyle? Give specific examples.
2. Is your lifestyle influenced at all by traditions of your parents and grandparents? Explain.