

Holidays Around the World

Internet Lesson Plan

Grade level: 5-8

Teacher Activities

Goal:

To utilize Internet resources to learn about cultures, traditions and holidays around the world celebrated during December.

Objectives:

At the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

- Correspond with a key pal to research the holidays of his/her native country.
- Create a calendar featuring holidays and festivals around the world.
- Calculate and graph the percentages of countries which celebrate certain holidays.
- Complete a holiday treasure hunt.
- Design a brochure highlighting India's Diwali celebration.
- Write a story about the celebration of Boxing Day.
- Outline winter festivals from the past and present.
- Design and create a greeting card for the Chinese New Year celebration.
- Compare and contrast the Chinese and Japanese New Year celebrations.
- Create a "peace card" and either post it to a Web page or create a paper "quilt of peace."

Duration:

Two weeks, one hour of on-line time each day.

Instructional strategy:

Divide the class into pairs or small groups of approximately 3-4 participants each. Provide each group with a two-pocket folder. Distribute the activities in the left pocket of each folder to encourage problem-solving strategies within the group. Have students utilize the right hand pocket of the folder to record their strategies, take notes, and track project completion. Students should store information they have gathered or printed from the Internet in this pocket as well.

Additional suggestions for off-line activities and projects have been included. You may find current curriculum projects, lessons and activities may also be incorporated into this unit, providing a cross-curricular approach to the subject.

Prerequisite:

A short introduction to the Internet with information on access and addresses is required before participants go on-line. Ensure that students are familiar with the Web browser they will be utilizing.

Assessment/Evaluation:

The activities in this unit will be evaluated on the basis of student participation and performance. Team folders will include information gathered in the process of completing the activities. Encourage cooperative learning, group process, problem-solving, competition, and the use of the Internet as these activities are completed. Serve as facilitator and guide throughout the activities.

Other projects:

- Learn everything about any specific day by visiting the Web site "Today's Date and Time" at <http://www.panix.com/~wllinden/calendar.shtml>.
- Host an international festival highlighting the holidays celebrated during this season.
- Keep a holiday journal outlining your personal holiday traditions and customs.
- Design and paint your own wrapping paper.
- Discuss "New Year's Resolutions" and what yours are.
- Teacher: Create a bulletin board displaying holiday calendars created by the kids. Highlight a different holiday every week, providing information on the holiday.
- Teacher: Have students write fortunes. Prepare and bake fortune cookies for the class.
- Teacher: Invite community members from various cultures to speak to students about their culture, traditions and holidays.

- Teacher: Participate in charitable activities like the "Toys for Tots" program sponsored by the Marine Corps Reserve. Learn how you can make a difference in the life of underprivileged children by collecting toys for the holidays at the "Toys for Tots" Web site at <http://www.toysfortots.org/>.
- Teacher: Explore the wonderful extension ideas found on the "Middle School Resources: Readergize" Web page at http://dcps.dade.k12.fl.us/www/inst/dec_mid.html. This site contains a rich collection of activities that explore the world of traditions through literature.

Materials needed by teacher:

- Two-pocket folders
- World map for each group
- Construction paper/drawing paper
- Rulers
- Crayons
- Markers or colored pencils
- Scissors
- E-mail access and address
- Calendar software (optional)
- Desktop publishing software (optional)

Teacher notes:

Before beginning this unit on "Holidays around the world," make yourself familiar with your school or district's policy on the topic. Some schools frown on the celebration or study of holidays. The activities provide a social studies perspective on holidays rather than a religious one. They are cross-curricular in nature, providing opportunities for hands-on learning experiences. Also note that although students will be studying and learning about holidays around the world; they will not actually be celebrating them.

Activities have also been geared towards a middle school population, however they could easily be adapted to meet the needs of lower or even higher grade levels.

In order to complete Activity #1, students will need to establish key pals with a class or student in another country. You may already be familiar with Web sites that allow you to set this up, or you may already have key pals. If not, use one of the following sites to accomplish this:

- "National Geographic - Pen Pals" at <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/ngo/penpal/>
- "Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections" at <http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc/>
- "Welcome to Teachnet.Com: Key pals" at <http://www.teachnet.com/pals.html>

Provide students with access to an e-mail address, a brief introduction to key pal guidelines and etiquette. Additionally, be sure they are familiar with the e-mail software they will be using.

For Activity #9, students are required to use specific software in order for their work to be e-mailed and posted to the Web site. Visit the Web site "MidLink Magazine's Celebration of Peace and Tolerance" at <http://longwood.cs.ucf.edu/~MidLink/peace.html> and go to the "simple mailing instructions" for details. Provide students with instructions for saving their work appropriately. Decide if you or your students will submit their work for posting. Note that students can complete this activity even if they do not have the appropriate software to create greetings on-line. Students can simply create the greetings using paper and pencil.

Holidays Around the World

Student Activities

Activity #1: Holiday key pals

As you begin to study holidays celebrated around the world, what better way to learn about a country's holidays, traditions and festivals than from the people of the country. The Internet provides you with a perfect vehicle for making a friend in a far away land. If you have already been corresponding with a "key pal" from another country, send him/her a note regarding the holidays he/she celebrates and gather information on his/her celebrations.

If you do not have a key pal, your teacher will provide you with an e-mail address to a new friend in a different country. As you begin writing to your key pal, be sure to introduce yourself and learn more about each other before you dive right in to all the questions. Once you have gotten to know each other, begin your research on the holidays and celebrations of your new friend.

- Get a key pal from another country from your teacher. Ask them the following:
 - What holidays do you celebrate during December?
 - How do you celebrate these holidays?
 - What traditions go along with the holidays of this season?
 - Describe the origin of your holiday(s).
 - Does Santa Claus play a part in any of your celebrations?
 - In what family traditions do you participate each year during these holidays?
- Create a calendar highlighting the country, holidays and traditions. Hang these calendars on your classroom bulletin board so others can learn about this country.
- As you gather information from your pen pal, be sure to share your own holiday celebrations and traditions. And don't forget to send them a holiday greeting on his/her special day of celebration!

Activity #2: On this day ...

Do you think everyone around the world celebrates the same holidays you do? It's easy to forget how large and diverse our world is when we have technology

like the Internet to bring us closer to people everywhere. But the fact remains, we live in a multicultural, diverse world about which we know little. Let's take a closer look at some of the holidays and festivals celebrated around the world. Visit the Web site "Holidays and Festivals Around the World 1997" at <http://spiralpath.dm.net/holidays/holmenu.htm>.

- Select a month to explore in detail. Which month did you select? Create a calendar highlighting the holidays and festivals celebrated during this month. Create pictures along with the name of each holiday or festival.
- Another way to complete this activity is to select a country and complete a calendar of holidays for one particular country. Visit the Web site "Armchair World: International Holidays 1997" at <http://www.armchair.com/info/holidays.html>. Select a country to explore. Create a calendar outlining the 1997 holidays for the country you selected.
- Make a table listing the country and number of holidays celebrated.
 - Australia
 - Germany
 - Hong Kong
 - Indonesia
 - Japan
 - Macau
 - Philippines
 - Singapore
 - Thailand
 - United Kingdom
 - United States
- How many holidays does each country celebrate? Graph the results.
- What percentage of the countries celebrate the following:
 - New Year's Day
 - Christmas
 - Boxing Day
 - Thanksgiving
- Bonus: Do you want to learn more about one particular holiday or festival? Use one of the search engines to conduct your own research and see what you can find about one of the holidays or festivals in your calendar. Incorporate what you learned about this holiday into the calendar you created. Provide a brief description of the holiday or festival naming the country and the reason for the celebration.
 - "Yahooligans" at <http://www.yahooligans.com/>
 - "Excite" at <http://www.excite.com/>
 - "Alta Vista" at <http://www.altavista.com/>

Activity #3: Name that holiday

One way to learn more about cultures around the world is to explore, understand and appreciate its holidays and traditions. As you learn more about the holidays and festivals of others, you may begin to see similarities in the holidays your country celebrates. You may even discover a favorite holiday tradition actually originated in another land and was simply adopted by your country.

Go to the World Wide Web site "Holidays Around the World" at <http://www.pathfinder.com/pathfinder/kidstuff/holiday/world/world.html>. Explore this site by clicking on holiday names.

Determine the holiday celebrated by the clues given below.

<i>Holiday</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Tradition/Fun Fact</i>
1 Luciadagen		
2	Russia	Father Frost comes to ring in the New Year
3	The Netherlands	
4		Celebrated Dec. 26 to Jan. 1
5	Thailand	
6		Deliverance in Hebrew
7	Mexico	9 day party beginning on Dec. 16
8	Great Britain Australia	
9		Buddhist holiday
10	Germnay	

Activity #4: India's Diwali celebration

Diwali is a Hindu festival that lasts five days. It is one of the happiest of the Indian festivals and is celebrated all over India. Diwali has similar traditions of Thanksgiving and Christmas rolled into one huge celebration. Discover more about this festival by visiting "Diversity Calendar - Diwali" at http://www.kumc.edu/diversity_calendar/diwali.html.

- What is another name for this festival?
- What mythological God is being welcomed?
- Outline what occurs during the five days of the celebration:

Day 1:

Day 2:

Day 3:

Day 4:

Day 5:

To learn more about Diwali traditions, visit the Web site "India's Diwali Celebration" at <http://www.sonnet.com/turlock/ics/diwali2.htm>.

- When is Diwali celebrated?
- Why do they choose the darkest night of the year?
- List three traditions practiced on this holiday.

Using the information you've learned about Diwali, create a brochure for the Indian government encouraging tourists to visit the country and participate in the festival. Be creative as you design your brochure.

Activity #5: Boxing Day

Although there is some controversy surrounding the naming of this holiday, most agree that Boxing Day began in Britain. Usually celebrated on December 26th, this holiday is based on gift giving. Some believe the box in which the gifts were given is the origin of the name. Learn more about this holiday by exploring various newspaper articles written about this holiday at the "Urban Legends Reference Page: Wooden Spoons" at

<http://snopes.simplenet.com/spoons/fracture/box-day.htm>.

- What countries celebrate this holiday? Find and label them on a world map.
- Using the information in the articles, describe this holiday.
- When did this holiday begin?
- What do Ontario merchants have to worry about on Boxing Day?
- Write a story about the origin of this holiday using the facts woven in with your own creativity. Share your stories with the class. Vote on the "true story of Boxing Day's origin."

Activity #6: Winter festivals around the world

Long ago, before Christmas was deemed to be celebrated on December 25 by the fourth century AD priest Pope Julius I, there were many winter celebrations across the world. Many of the traditions we now associate with the celebration of Christmas came from some of these winter celebrations. You will be amazed by the diversity of the celebrations and the countries in which they originated.

Explore the site "Winter Festivals From the Past and Present" at <http://www.maui.net/~mcculc/xmas.htm>.

Festival name	Country of origin	Description of the celebration
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Dosmoche		
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Butter Sculpture		
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Festival		
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Chaomos		
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Night of the		
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Radishes		
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Hari-Kuyo		
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Activity #7: Chinese New Year

Festivals are a very important part of the Chinese culture. The traditional festivals of China are one of the strongest cultural bonds that exist in this society. The most important festival of the year marks the Chinese lunar year or the new year. The Chinese New Year is a celebration marked by a parade of gymnasts, magicians and dancers dressed to look like the new year's animal. To explore this holiday further, visit the site "Traditional Chinese Cultures in Taiwan" at <http://www.houstoncul.org/culdir/fest/fest.htm>.

- What is the purpose of a festival in the Chinese culture?
- What elements are common to all Chinese festivals?
- How were the festivals determined in the calendar?
- What is being celebrated on Chinese New Year?
- Does the Chinese New Year have any other names?
- Describe some of the traditions which go along with Chinese New Year.
- What other festivals are celebrated in the Chinese culture?
- Design and create a greeting card for this holiday. Utilize appropriate art and words to capture a sincere greeting.

Activity #8: Japanese New Year

In Japan, the celebration of the new year is a time to start fresh. It is a time of celebration, family gathering, remembrance and renewal. The Japanese culture is rich in tradition and customs. To learn more about this festive holiday, explore the following Web sites and locate the answers to the questions listed below:

"KIDPROJ MCC: New Year" at <http://www.kidlink.org/KIDPROJ/MCC/1.1.7.html>

"Japanese New Year" at
<http://naio.kcc.hawaii.edu/bosp/Horizons/horizons96/12JNYr.html>

"Japan's New Year Day" at
<http://eagle.fedu.uec.ac.jp/FEDU/Events/data/NYear.html>

- What is the Japanese New Year called in Japan?
- How long does the celebration last?
- Outline four traditions or customs the Japanese participate in during this celebration.
- What does Kadomatsu symbolize?
- What part does food play in this yearly celebration?
- Compare and contrast the Chinese and Japanese New Year celebrations. Outline how they are alike and how they differ.

Activity #9: Peace on earth

No matter what religion, nationality or holiday you celebrate, the season we are approaching conjures up images of hope, goodwill and peace around the world. Join kids around the world, like yourself, in designing and mailing "electronic peace cards."

- The Web page "MidLink Magazine's Celebration of Peace and Tolerance" at <http://longwood.cs.ucf.edu/~MidLink/peace.html> is hosting this international activity. Spark your imagination by taking a look at the section titled "Jump to Peace Cards" to see what has already been posted.
- If desktop publishing software is available, create your peace card using the computer. Your teacher will assist you with the saving and sending of your greetings.
- If you do not have access to desktop publishing software, create your peace greeting using pencil and paper. You don't have to mail your card to join in the celebration of peace. Instead, use your peace greetings as quilt squares to create a "quilt of peace." Display your class quilt on a bulletin board or school hallway.