

Concept Connector Study Guide

Cultural Diffusion

Essential Question: In what ways have migration and trade affected cultures?

A. Define *cultural diffusion*. _____

B. Record information about the topics listed in the Cumulative Review or your answers to the questions in the Cumulative Review below. Use the Concept Connector Handbooks at the end of your textbook, as well as chapter information, to complete this worksheet.

1. Cultural Diffusion in Early Human History

Cultural diffusion has long been a key source of change in society. Some of the changes that took place during the Old Stone Age, the New Stone Age, and the time of early civilizations were likely the result of cultural diffusion. Developments during these periods include the use of fire, the creation of stone tools, the painting of caves, the domestication of plants and animals, and the development of early civilizations. These technologies were not invented everywhere at the same time. Knowledge traveled slowly, perhaps taking thousands of years to spread across continents.

2. Arabic Numerals

The system of writing numbers that we use today was devised by Gupta mathematicians in India. The Guptas ruled from A.D. 320 to about 540. The system is commonly called Arabic; however, Hindu-Arabic is the more accurate term. Arab merchants and traders introduced the numerals as they traveled around the Mediterranean. The numerals may have been introduced in Europe via the Muslim empire in Spain. A European manuscript containing the numerals was written in Spain in 976. The superiority of the Hindu-Arabic numeral system is evident by its use nearly everywhere.

3. Decimal System

Indian mathematicians also originated the concept of zero and developed the decimal system of numbers based on ten digits that we still use today. Mathematicians in the Islamic world adapted it to include decimal fractions. It was introduced to the West when a text written by the Muslim mathematician al-Khwarizmi in the 800s was translated into Latin in the 1200s.

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4. Hinduism

Unlike most major religions, Hinduism has no single founder. Instead, it grew out of the overlapping beliefs of diverse groups who settled in India. Aryans began arriving in India by 1500 B.C. They added the gods of the Indus civilization to their own. Later people brought other gods, beliefs, and practices. As a result, Hinduism became one of the world's most complex religions, with many gods and goddesses, and many forms of worship. It has been said that Hinduism accepts all forms of belief and worship, and does not eliminate any.

5. Buddhism

Buddhism developed in India around 600 B.C. Its founder, Siddhartha Gautama, became known as the Buddha. Buddhism and Hinduism have some similarities, including ideas about nonviolence and reincarnation. Unlike Hinduism, with its focus on priests and rituals, Buddhism urges each person to seek enlightenment through meditation. Missionaries and merchants spread Buddhism to many parts of Asia. By A.D. 500, Buddhism had spread from India into China, Tibet, Korea, and Japan. Buddhism slowly declined in India. However, Hinduism absorbed some Buddhist ideas and added Buddha as another Hindu god.

6. Evolution of the Alphabet

Even today, we can see examples of the important effects of cultural diffusion all around us. Indeed, the words on this page are the result of cultural diffusion. The alphabet we use today was developed by the Phoenicians. The Phoenician system used 22 symbols that stood for consonant sounds. The Phoenician alphabet was borrowed and modified by the Greeks. The Greeks added symbols for vowel sounds. That alphabet was then borrowed and adapted by the Romans. The alphabet was spread through trade and conquest, and because it was easier to use than other ancient writing systems, such as cuneiform or hieroglyphics.

7. The Spread of Roman Culture

Roman conquests and the empire (A.D. 27–A.D. 476) helped to spread Roman culture. That culture included language, literature, values, engineering, and laws. The Romans built roads to allow them easy access to all parts of the empire, and these roads allowed Roman culture to spread throughout Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. The Romans developed laws to govern their large empire. Even after the empire fell, the Roman concept of law remained. Language, too, became a vehicle for spreading Roman culture. Romans wrote histories and epic poems that are read today. Latin remained the language of educated people and of the Roman Catholic Church for hundreds of years.

8. The Spread of Christianity and the Spread of Buddhism

The spread of religions depends on a variety of factors, including the appeal of the religion's message and political support. Both Buddhism and Christianity spread far and wide from their original locations. Buddhism developed in South Asia in the late sixth to fourth century B.C. Today there are 373 million followers all over the world. Christianity developed in the early first century A.D. in the Middle East. There are over 2 billion Christians today. Both religions used missionaries to spread their beliefs.

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9. The Roman and Byzantine Empires

Byzantine rulers thought of their empire as the successor to the Roman empire. Like the Romans before them, the Byzantines spread their culture across a wide expanse of Europe. Both empires diffused language and learning, religion, art and architecture, and political ideas. The Byzantine Church, known as the Eastern, or Orthodox, Church spread throughout Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Russia. Byzantine scholars preserved the classic works of ancient Greece. As the Byzantine empire weakened in the 1400s, scholars left the Byzantine capital to teach in universities in the West. The work of these scholars contributed to the cultural flowering in Europe known as the Renaissance.

10. The Spread of Islam

Islam began in the Middle East in the A.D. 600s. Islam's founder, Muhammad, created rules that governed and united Muslims, and brought peace. As his reputation grew, thousands of Arabs adopted Islam. Islam is both a religion and a way of life. After the death of Muhammad, Islam continued to spread as the Muslim empire grew. Conquered people were treated fairly; Islam's message emphasized equality; Arab trade networks developed; and Muslim empires developed in Spain, Persia, and India. All these factors contributed to the spread of Islam. Today, there are over one billion followers of Islam all over the world.

11. The Spread of Ideas and Culture as a Result of Buddhist and Christian Missionaries

Missionaries share more than their religious beliefs. They also help to spread language, values, technology, and ideas about laws and government. In the 500s, Buddhist missionaries introduced Chinese writing and customs to Japan. A Buddhist form of architecture, known as the stupa, developed into the Japanese pagoda. In the 800s, Christians from the Eastern, or Orthodox, Church adapted the Greek alphabet so they could translate the Bible into the Slavic languages. This alphabet is still used in Russia, Ukraine, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Russians adopted other aspects of the missionaries' culture, including art, music, and architecture.

12. The Renaissance and Islam

During the Middle Ages, many European peoples were cut off from one another as trade broke down and disease ravaged populations. With the Renaissance, renewed trade and increased curiosity about the world led to great cultural diffusion. For example, art techniques developed in Italy spread to northern Europe, and vice versa. Cultural diffusion also occurred as Islam spread between 750 and 1200. Muslim merchants introduced the Indian numerals we use today to the western world. Muslim advances in mathematics and medicine spread as books were translated into Latin. These books became the standard texts in European schools for hundreds of years.

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CULTURAL DIFFUSION *(continued)*

13. The Renaissance and the Tang and Song Dynasties

The European Renaissance ushered in a period of great cultural achievements that would eventually influence people far beyond Europe. The Tang and Song dynasties of China also saw important accomplishments. The Chinese achievements came earlier and in some cases paved the way for later European developments. For example, the Chinese invention of movable type foreshadowed the later European invention of the printing press. The Chinese developed a small-pox vaccine, invented a spinning wheel, and pioneered the use of arches in bridge building. Many of these developments traveled westward.

14. Indian Influence on Southeast Asia

Indian culture influenced the cultures of Southeast Asia. Indian merchants and Hindu priests traveled throughout Southeast Asia, slowly spreading their culture. Later, Buddhist monks and scholars introduced their beliefs. Following the path of trade and religion came the influences of writing, law, government, art, architecture, and farming techniques. Southeast Asians visited India as pilgrims or students. As these contacts increased, Indian beliefs and ideas won widespread acceptance. The Khmer empire (800–1350) is one example of where this occurred. In the 1100s, a Khmer ruler built a temple complex in present-day Cambodia. Hundreds of carvings depict Hindu myths.

15. The Growth of Christianity and the Growth of the Roman Empire
(Chapter 1, page 49)

16. Influence of Ancient Civilizations on Enlightenment Thinkers
(Chapter 2, page 77)

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C. Sample Topics for Thematic Essays

Below are examples of thematic essay topics that might appear on a test. Prepare for the test by outlining an essay for each topic on a separate sheet of paper. Use the Concept Connector Handbooks at the end of your textbook, as well as chapter information, to outline your essays.

1. Describe how Greco-Roman culture spread through the Roman empire during the *Pax Romana*.
2. Explain the role of cultural diffusion in the spread of Christianity. What factors encouraged Christianity's spread?
3. Describe how the migration to Ireland in the 1600s changed the political and economic structure of the country and the impact of the Great Hunger of the 1840s.
4. Describe how British rule led to cultural diffusion in India, and explain the attitude of Ram Mohun Roy toward Indian and Western culture.
5. Analyze the role of cultural diffusion in the modernization of Japan beginning in the 1850s.
6. How does migration and trade affect culture? Provide at least two examples from world history of the effects of migration and trade on cultural diffusion.
7. Discuss how increased trade and the demands of a global economy have changed people's lives in today's developing countries.
8. Describe at least two examples of cultural diffusion in the world today.