

# Cultural Investigations

## Grade Cluster – 6 - 8

### NETS-S – 2 - Communication and Collaboration

#### Quick Look:

Chittenden County's student population is growing more diverse, as families move in from all over the world. As part of a study of world geography and cultures, student teams select a country and work together to research aspects of the country's culture including education, religion, politics, government, and holidays/cultural traditions, as compared to the United States. Students conduct research using the Internet and through communication with other students (in the country they are studying) via email, [wikis](#), and [videoconferencing](#). They create online resources such as websites, *wikis*, [podcasts](#), videos, or multimedia posters using [Glogster](#) to be shared with families relocating to the area.

#### Scenario:

Students discuss the changing population in their school and community as the result of refugee resettlement, the changing economy, and other factors. Questions arise as to whether or not people from other countries celebrate the same holidays, observe the same religions, receive the same education, have the same government, and more. How is the United States similar to and different from other countries? Students develop a genuine interest in learning more about other countries in general, as well as the countries of origin of their classmates.

Students divide into teams, each of which selects a country to study. The students work collaboratively with their teammates to research aspects of the country's culture including education, religion, politics, government, and holidays/cultural traditions in comparison to the United States. Members of each team select which cultural aspect they wish to study. Teams use a [wiki](#) or a [graphic organizer](#) to generate questions to guide their research and organize the information they collect (2d, 6a).

Students begin with Internet research. Members of each team collect and share information with each other in a wiki (2a, 6a).

With the guidance of their teacher, students search for connections with other students or classrooms using sites like [ePals](#) (6a, 6d). The students communicate with students in other countries through email and [videoconferencing](#) using [Skype](#) (2a, 2b, 2c, 6a, 6c). Using an online graphic organizer such as [Mindomo](#), students create collaborative graphic organizers, to compare and contrast aspects of their countries' cultures with American culture. (2c, 6a, 6b) Students use photo sites such as [Flickr](#) to share pictures with and collect pictures from students in other countries. They assemble collections of pictures that illustrate their countries' cultures (6a).

Student teams work together to create a brochure using a publication resource such as <http://www.mybrochuremaker.com/>. In addition, teams create an additional compilation of all their work to share using their choice of a website, video, [blog](#), [podcast](#), or [Glogster](#) (2a, 2b, 2d, 6a, 6b, 6c). Resources are shared with families who move to the school from another country and are also distributed through refugee resettlement programs. In addition, final products are shared by teams at a school Cultural Fair and posted online (2a, 2b, 2d, 6a, 6b, 6d).

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**Student Standards** – The following NETS-S are noted in the Scenario:

2. Communication and Collaboration A, B, C, D
6. Technology Operations and Concepts—A, B, C, D

**Teacher Standards** –Teachers who teach this unit address the following NETS-T:

1. Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity—A, B, D
2. Design & Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences & Assessments—A, B, C, D
3. Model Digital-Age Work and Learning—A, B, C, D
4. Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility—B, C, D
5. Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership—B, C

## Content Grade Expectations

The scenario writer has identified the following content grade expectations that s/he felt might be assessed in this scenario. In most of these scenarios, there may well be opportunities to assess other or additional content grade expectations across a variety of disciplines. If you are interested in developing a unit or lessons based on the following scenario, and you don't see any grade expectations in your content area, we encourage you to capture the ideas presented in the scenario and make it your own by adding components that address the grade expectations you are most interested in assessing.

### **H&SS7-8:1 Students initiate an inquiry by...**

- Asking focusing and probing questions that will lead to independent research and incorporate concepts of personal, community, or global relevance

### **H&SS7-8:3 Students design research by...**

- Identifying the quality and quantity of information needed, including primary and secondary sources.
- Identifying tools and procedures needed for collecting, managing, and examining information, including a plan for citing sources
- Determining possible ways to present data H&SS7-8:5 Students develop reasonable explanations that support the research statement by...
- Choosing and using appropriate methods for interpreting information, such as comparing and contrasting, summarizing, illustrating, generalizing, sequencing, synthesizing, analyzing, and/or justifying

### **H&SS7-8:7 Students communicate their findings by...**

- Developing and giving oral, written, or visual presentations for various audiences.

### **H&SS7-8:13 Students analyze how&why cultures continue & change over time by...**

Identifying and comparing expressions of culture in Vermont, the U.S., and the world through analysis of various modes of expression such as poems, songs, dances, stories, paintings, and photographs