

Create a Country or Culture

Description

Although every country or culture is unique, they share common features as well. One way of learning about the similarities and differences between different countries and cultures is to create an imaginary place and figure out how people develop, change, grow, and interact in this culture.

Planning

1. After deciding to invent a country or culture, the first step is to decide on a name for it. The name can come from a special historical place or period, from a particular belief system or philosophy, or from an important person or event. It is also important to determine the origin of the country or culture in terms of historical periods such as Ice Age, Industrial Revolution, Middle Ages, Neolithic Age, Twentieth Century, Renaissance, Bronze Age, Victorian Age, Colonization Age, or Space Age.
2. The second step in the process is to determine both geographical features of the area and the demographics of the people inhabiting it. Identify and describe such things as the natural resources, climate, landscape features, population size, growth rate, physical characteristics of the people, and their typical aging patterns, income levels, family size, and educational levels.
3. Then explain the most common structures for living quarters and buildings as well as the basic blueprint for city spaces vs. rural spaces. Communicate this information through maps, diagrams, sketches, drawings, or descriptions.
4. The next task is to plan the governmental, economic, and currency structures of the country or culture. Is it an aristocracy, democracy, monarchy, oligarchy, plutocracy, theocracy, dictatorship, or totalitarian type of government? Who leads the country or culture? What does the money look like? What denominations are there? What types of goods, services, and businesses dominate the economy?
5. Next, make decisions related to education, religion, rituals, and celebrations. How do people acquire educations and receive religious training? What rituals or rites of passage are key to the country or culture's continuation and growth? What holidays or celebrations are central to the beliefs and philosophy of the country or culture?
6. Finally, other aspects of the country or culture to consider in this project are:
 - a. design of the clothing
 - b. design of the flag
 - c. creation of the anthem

- d. description of the toys, games, or sports
 - e. description of the common food, meals, or dishes
 - f. description of the dances, music, or drama
 - g. methods of defense or protection
7. In a detailed paragraph, describe why people would want to visit your country or culture. Create a travel poster advertising the key elements of your proposed country or culture. Create a guidebook for tourists.

Assessing

1. Using a scale of 0 (lowest number of points) to 10 (highest number of points), rate yourself on components of the project such as these.
 - a. The name and origin were carefully selected and documented according to a predetermined historical period.
 - b. The geographical features were consistent with its location.
 - c. Where people lived made sense in relation to other elements.
 - d. Living conditions, housing, and development of towns or cities were well-designed.
 - e. Descriptions and graphics of the government, economic, and currency structures were detailed and reasonable.
 - f. Education, religion, rituals, and celebrations were adequately depicted.
 - g. Other designated dimensions of the country were included in the overall creation of the place.
2. Complete each of the starter statements below.
 - a. The strengths of this finished project are ...
 - b. The parts of this finished project that could be improved are ...
 - c. The most difficult part of this project for me was ...
 - d. The easiest part of this project for me was ...
 - e. The most enjoyable part of this project for me was ...
 - f. Something I would do differently if I were to do a similar project would be ...

Technology Connection

Using the Internet, collaborate with students in another country to create a country or culture. Work with the students to create a country that is “inviting, safe, and supportive of all.” Share your ideas, writing, artwork, and music by using Skype and wikis; your teacher can search for students to partner with through epals or iEARN (the International Education and Resource Network).