

Cross-Cultural Comparison Workshop

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Title

Cultural Comparisons Between Janseung and Totem

Reflection

This curriculum project is being designed for use in a Geography & History of the World class. This lesson serves as an introduction to the *janseung*, the village guardians of Korea. *Jangseung* are wood or stone carvings that villages in Korea would erect to keep the village from harm. Offerings would be held throughout the year to ask for the benevolence of the village god, ranging from good crops and protections from disease to being sent a male child. Sizes and shapes vary, as well as construction. Regions may have certain types of *jangseung* that may differ from neighboring regions.

Similarly, Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest often participate in the creation of totem. Totems are often referred to as spirit beings, sacred objects, or symbols of a tribe or clan, family, or individual, and these objects may guide a person or group through their lives. The guide offers wisdom and power to those who communicate with it, showing a respect to that being and a willingness to learn its lessons.

Students are much more likely to be familiar with totems in the United States. I felt that this would be a great opportunity to incorporate some Korean culture in my classroom, while using Schein's three layers as discussed by Dr. Kuchinke.

Explanation of Opportunities

I am able to teach about East Asia in both classes that I teach. The easiest in which to implement the subject area is in my Honors World History classes, but I am increasingly finding ways to incorporate it into my U.S. Government classes. My Honors World History class is a yearlong class that meets for approximately 4.5 hours per week. Classes are divided into two 90-minute blocks and one 35-minute block. I currently have 40 sophomores enrolled in Honors World History. My U.S. Government classes also are broken down into the same time frames, and I currently instruct 87 seniors in this course. In World History (and sometimes Geography & History of the World, which we alternate), we talk about different cultural aspects, bringing in ideas as we touch upon a historical topic, and provide opportunities for students to link what we are learning about with what we identify as our own culture. In U.S. Government, we compare and contrast different government types. I will have the opportunity to share my lesson with colleagues within my department at school, as well as with the art teacher, who may be interesting in pairing on this project.

Description

This lesson plan is designed for use in a 90-minute block in a suburban high school. It is a Social Studies unit, designed according to the standards for Geography & History of the World, for the ninth grade student. The lesson will take place over three 90-minute blocks. Students will need to do work outside of class in order to complete the activities required for this lesson.

Standards

- GHW.2.2 Differentiate among selected countries in terms of how their identities, cultural and physical environments, and functions and forms of government* are affected by world religions.
- GHW.2.3 Compare and contrast different religions in terms of perspectives on the environment and attitudes toward resource use, both today and in the past.
- GHW.2.4 Give examples and analyze ways in which people's changing views of places and regions reflect cultural change.
- GHW.4.10 Identify the cultural contributions of various ethnic groups in selected world regions and countries, including the United States.

Days and Class Time Required

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Lesson activities

Day 1

- Students will be given a writing prompt upon entering the classroom. The prompt (Why did the Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest carve totems? What significance do you think that they have?) will serve as a veiled introduction to the *jangseung*.
- Discussion and brainstorming about totems. Additional lecture to provide more background about the use of totems if necessary.
- Students will view a Google Slides presentation that will introduce them visually to the *jangseung*. It will also give them basic background knowledge about the history and customs of the use of village guardians in Korea.
- Students will be divided into groups of two. Each group will travel to two websites that give information about *jangseung*. They will have time to read and take notes on these sites in class.

Day 2

- Students will break back into their groups and share notes on their articles. They will then break into groups of four, sharing their information with other members of the class.
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- Students will split up and move back to their original seats. At this time, using the notes that they have taken, students will create a list of characteristics of the *jangseung*, and sketch their own drawing of a *jangseung* that would best represent them.
 - While it would be nice to be able to carve a wooden *jangseung*, or have the resources to create a stone version, this does not lend itself well to the general classroom environment! Instead, students will carve their *jangseung* from a bar of Ivory soap with a wooden stylus. I've chosen Ivory because it is soft enough to work with in class. I recommend before working that students cover their work area with a sheet of newspaper for easy cleanup (although a good soapy wash of the desks can't hurt!). Students will more than likely have to finish this outside of class.
 - Students will also write up a descriptive essay about their *jangseung*, explaining their choices.

Day 3

- Presentation of projects to the class
- Students will have the opportunity to move around the room to view the work of their classmates. We will keep the *jangseung* in the room for the remainder of the year as a protection!

Resources

"Fascinating Physogs – A Tour Of Some Korean Totem Poles". *Elwood 5566*, 2020, <https://elwood5566.net/2012/01/29/fascinating-physogs-a-tour-of-some-korean-totem-poles/>.

"What Are Korean Totem Poles?". *The University Of Sheffield*, 2020, <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/seas/news/what-are-korean-totem-poles>.

Bars of Ivory soap and wooden styli for each student

