

Cultures, Places and Resources in Developing Countries



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Teachers' Notes

Cultures, Places and Resources in Developing Countries enables you to introduce your students to the people and the cultures of the developing world. Media outlets often present developing countries as negative places in need of westernising. This book contains teaching ideas and practical activities which encourage students to see a selection of developing countries as places which are diverse and rich in culture and tradition.

The five countries which are explored are Afghanistan, Laos, Peru, Papua New Guinea and Ethiopia. Students are encouraged to look closely at the following:

- How these countries' beliefs and practices are linked to their pasts, their present states and their vision for the future.
- How their geographical positions and/or political bodies determine the resources that they use and the way that they live their lives.
- How these people adapt to often rugged and unforgiving environments and engage in courageous battles to overcome pasts full of conflict and bloodshed.
- What is being done and what students can do to help these countries continue to keep their cultures and traditions alive and meet their needs.

This book is an excellent way to change and enhance students' understanding of the developing world and invite the world into your classroom through curriculum linked activities.

This book contains:

Background Information pages

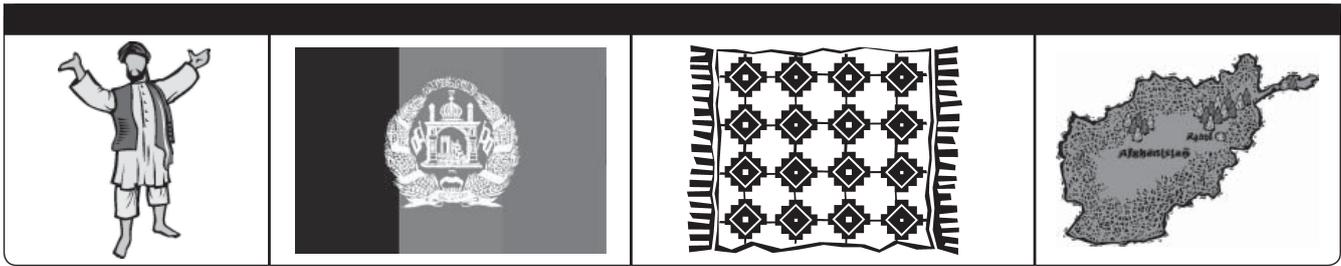
The information found in these pages is intended to give teachers an overview of each country examined. The information is broken down under the following headings: *Introduction, Overview, Quick Facts, Suggested Classroom Activities* and *For Further Information*. The *Information* section contains some basic facts about each country for the teacher and the *Overview* expands on these facts for those interested in investigating the topic further. *Quick Facts* provides the teacher with interesting and quirky trivia on the country. *Suggested Classroom Activities* provides some ideas for the teacher to extend the worksheets provided and *For Further Information* provides the teacher with a list of extra resources that may be useful when teaching this topic.

Think Big! sections

These sections provide extension ideas and encourage students to think a little differently about each topic.

Pebble Power! sections

Ideas for children who want to make a difference.



Introduction

Afghanistan is bordered by Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China. The customs of this country are heavily influenced by its neighbours, ancient trade and migration. Being in such a strategic position along the famous 'Silk Route', means that its borders have been long fought over despite the countryside being rugged and forbidding. Afghanistan has experienced almost continuous civil war since the late 1970s and this has meant that much of its heritage has been lost. These years of war and foreign occupation have left the country's economy and infrastructure in ruins as well as turning many of its citizens into refugees.

The customs and culture of the people reflect their predominately tribal origin. The people of Afghanistan are very proud of their land, their religion and their ancestry. Their lives are centred on the home and family. Anything that is seen as interfering in the life of their family is viewed as hostile. Poverty, unexploded landmines, the illegal poppy crop and the opium trade, as well as a poor infrastructure, continue to make life difficult for those in Afghanistan. Many Afghans suffer a shortage of housing, clean water, electricity, medical care and employment.

Overview

Country:	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
Land:	652 230 square kilometres. The terrain is landlocked, mountainous and mainly made up of desert. The climate is dry with cold winters and hot summers.
Capital:	Kabul.
Population:	The population is 28.396 million (2009).
Religion:	80 per cent are Sunni Muslim, 19 per cent are Shi'a Muslim.
Main Languages:	Dari (Afghan Persian) and Pashto.
Government:	Islamic Republic. They refer to the chief of state as the President.
Known For:	Weaving, embroidery, kite running and buzkashi.
Economy:	GDP per capita is \$865. GDP growth is 3.4 per cent. GDP per sector: agriculture 31 per cent, industry 26 per cent, services 43 per cent. (2009.)
Currency:	Afghani.
No. Years in School:	Males: 11 years. Females: 4 years (2004).

Quick Facts:

- The name 'Afghanistan' comes from the Sanskrit word *Upaganasthan* which means 'land of the allied tribes'.
- A group calling itself the Taliban which consists of Islamic scholars seized control of Kabul in 1996. It imposed strict laws on the citizens including cutting off the hands of thieves and making women cover themselves from head to foot in public. Women were not allowed to work outside the home or attend school.
- Afghanistan supplies approximately 93 per cent of the world's heroin.
- Afghans celebrate their Independence Day each year on August 19th.
- In the past there has been enough food to provide for the people of Afghanistan, however severe drought as well as continuous fighting, political instability and deteriorating infrastructure have led the country to rely heavily on food aid.

Suggested Classroom Activities

- Ask your students to research the traditional clothing of Afghanistan. How does the clothing suit the climate and the environment? Are there special meanings for some of the items of clothing? How do the clothes change over the different regions of Afghanistan?
- For one week ask students to collect news items about Afghanistan. Display the news articles on a notice board and discuss them. Afghanistan's political state is changing all the time.
- Run a kite flying festival at your school. Ask your students to research the various types of kites flown in Afghanistan and the sport of kite fighting.
- Ask your students to investigate the sport of buzkashi. Debate whether buzkashi should be banned in Afghanistan.

For Further Information

www.worldbank.org Under 'Countries' and 'Afghanistan' you will find details about current projects being run in Afghanistan as well as useful statistics.

www.cia.gov Click on 'World Fact Book' and select 'Afghanistan' from the drop down menu to find a gold mine of up-to-date information.

Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Journey to Change the World...One Child at a Time by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin. Young Readers Edition, Puffin Book, 2009. Teacher Support Materials can be found on www.penniesforpeace.org.

Walk in my Shoes by Alwyn Evans. Penguin, 2004. Teachers' Notes on **www.penguin.com.au**

Inside Afghanistan: The American who stayed behind after 9/11 and his mission of mercy to a war-torn people by John Weaver, W Publishing Group, 2002.

AFGHANISTAN'S LOCATION

Where is Afghanistan?

▶ Mark on the world map below where you think Afghanistan is.



What does the term 'landlocked' mean?

▶ Label the countries that surround Afghanistan.

Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China



▶ Use your atlas or the Internet to check the location of Afghanistan and surrounding countries.



THINK BIG! Afghanistan is a landlocked country. Think of the advantages and disadvantages of being landlocked both for the country and its people. Complete the table below. The first idea has been done for you.

AFGHANISTAN	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Exporting goods	<i>Has goods that are not found anywhere else in the world.</i>	<i>Must pass through other countries, making it expensive to export.</i>
Importing goods		
Defence of country		
When natural disasters strike		

LETHAL LANDMINES

Unfortunately a terrible legacy of the many years of war and conflict in Afghanistan is the number of unexploded landmines still left in the country. Today, this legacy greatly affects Afghans going about their everyday lives.

Children and farmers are at danger when they play in the yard, collect water or plough their fields. Approximately 80 Afghans are killed or maimed each month by landmines.



- ▶ **Help to keep Afghans safe and their culture alive by designing a sign which can be displayed in unsafe areas in Afghanistan to warn children and farmers of the dangers of unexploded landmines. Use pictures or graphics, not words.**

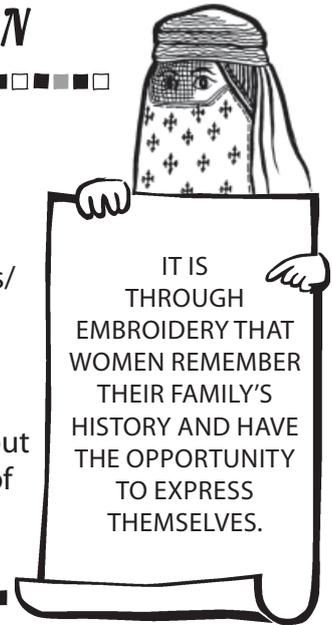
- ▶ **Choose one of the mine clearing organisations listed below and write four key facts about its work.**
 - United Nations Mine Action Centre
 - Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
 - International Campaign to Ban Landmines
 - HALO Trust

Name of organisation: _____

◆ **THINK BIG!**

Discuss with your class how you would overcome the problem of landmines if you were an Afghani farmer or child.

THE ARTS OF AFGHANISTAN



Influenced by ancient traditions and the country's position as a crossroad for ethnic groups, Afghanistan's art and craft is a unique mix of colour, pattern and symbolism. Even the most domestic items are decorated with elaborate embroidery.

It is a tradition in Afghanistan that embroidery is done by the women and girls. Fabrics are decorated with gold and silver coloured threads made from wool or silk. Everyday

items such as bedspreads, hats and bags are decorated as well as special occasion wear. The style is influenced by the region and the individual, as each person uses his/her own imagination to create a unique pattern.

During the many years of war the tradition of embroidery was lost but recently there has been a revival of the craft.

► **Reread the passage above and answer the following questions:**

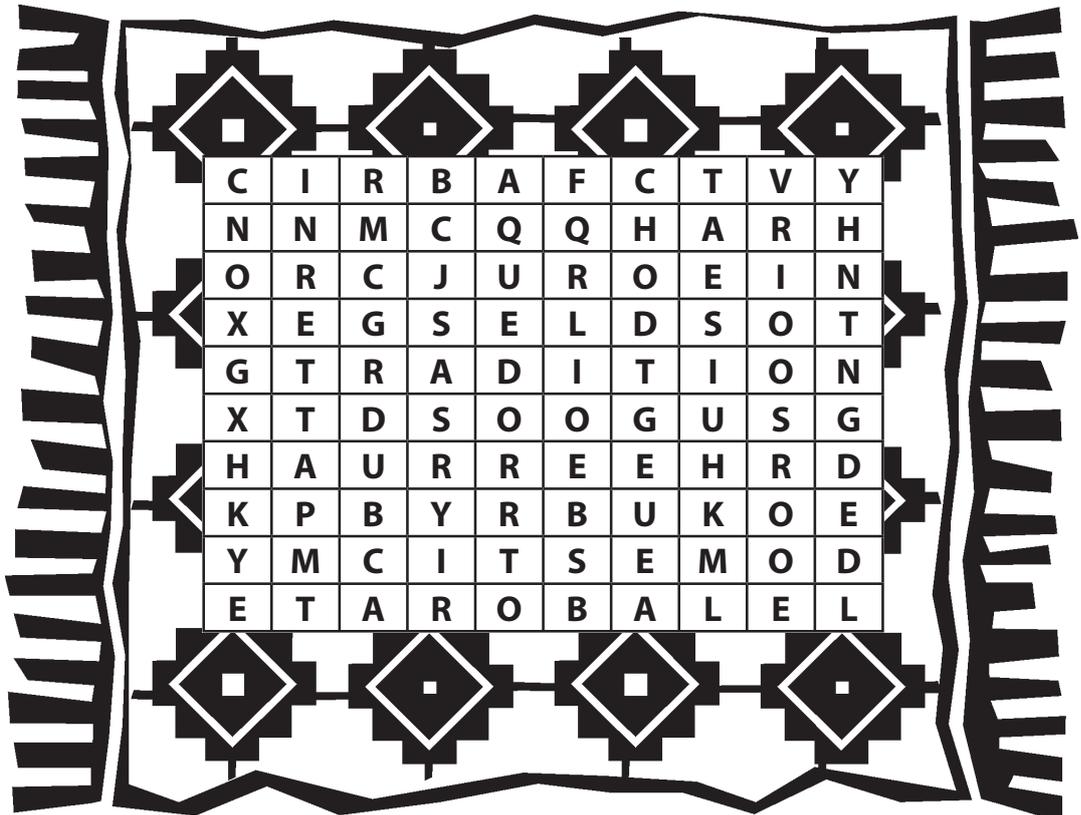
1. Describe what is meant by 'domestic items'. _____

2. Why is embroidery important to the culture of Afghanistan?

3. What is meant by 'special occasion wear'?

► **Can you find the following words in the Word Search?**

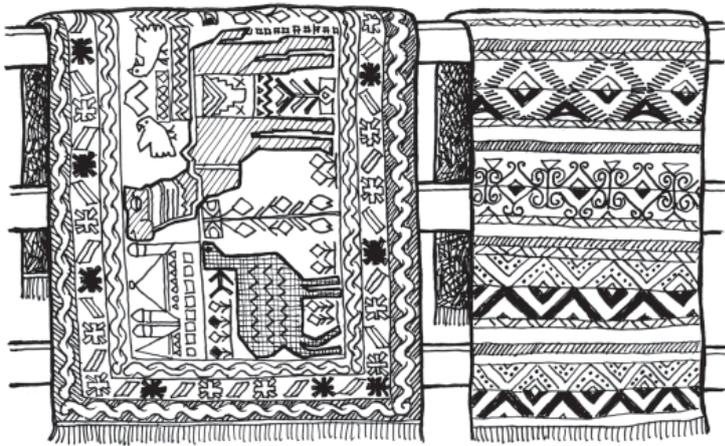
- Culture
- Domestic
- Elaborate
- Embroidery
- Thread
- Fabric
- History
- Pattern
- Region
- Tradition



AFGHAN RUGS

The weaving of rugs and carpets continues to be a tradition in Afghanistan. Although patterns have changed slightly over the years, many rugs still reflect patterns and colours that are centuries old. Only the experts can recognise Afghan rugs and their tribal origins as there are many types around.

Of particular interest is how the rugs are made. The materials that are used for creating Afghan rugs are what people have at their immediate disposal. Many of the tribes have sheep so wool is a big ingredient. Goat and camel hair are also used. Modern Afghan rugs depict scenes of everyday life in the village and decorative prayer rugs are used in times of prayer.



THE COLOURS OF AFGHAN RUGS ARE RICH AND ARE CREATED FROM NATURE:

- **Reds** are created from the roots of madder plants.
- **Purples** are created from the excretions of a particular insect.
- **Yellows** are created from saffron or wild chamomile.
- **Greens** are created from walnuts and olive leaves.

◆ DESIGN A RUG

Step 1 Think about the natural ingredients available to you at home or school. Write down the colours that you could create from these ingredients in the table.

Natural Ingredient	Colour

Step 2 Make a list of some interesting things that you do during a day at school.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Step 3 Design a rug depicting your day at school using the colours from the table.

Use repeated patterns and rich colours. Use a separate piece of paper.