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World Cultures Resource Book



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What is a Culture?

Culture. You see this word all the time but what *is* a culture? A culture is the way that people from different places live. A culture is what people eat, wear and do for fun each day. A culture is what people celebrate, what they believe in and how they share their stories through art, music and dance.

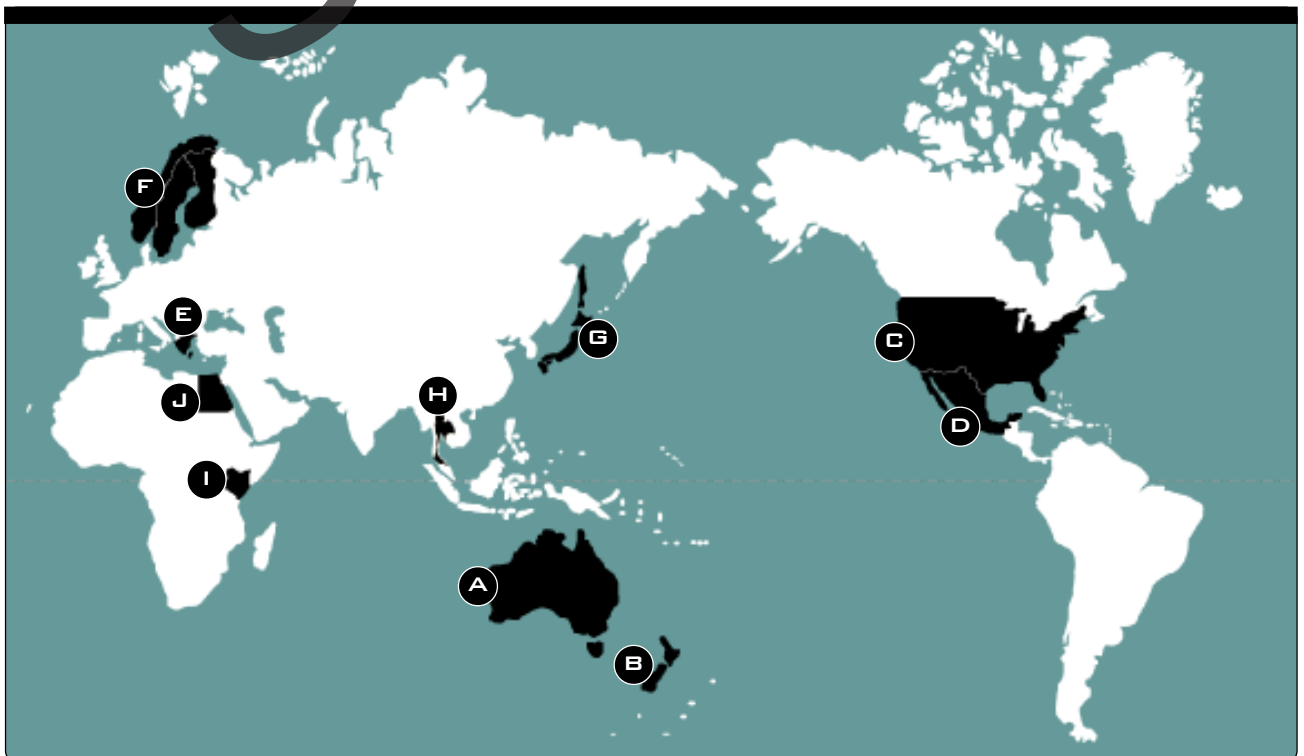
In this book, you will read about life in different cultures from far and wide.

On the map below, you can see that you will be learning about cultures from countries in many different parts of the

world. You might have relatives from some of these countries, or perhaps you have even been there yourself.

Have fun exploring the cultures of the world – don't forget your passport!

A. Australia	Aboriginal
B. New Zealand	Māori
C. USA	Native American (Indians)
D. Mexico	Mayan; Mexican
E. Greece	Ancient Greek
F. Scandinavia	Vikings
G. Japan	Japanese
H. Thailand	Thai
I. Kenya	Maasai warriors
J. Egypt	Ancient Egyptian





Why Are Cultures So Different?

Thousands of years ago, it was very hard to visit or see other parts of the world. There were no planes or big ships to travel on, and no television or Internet to learn about other cultures. People relied on their environment to stay alive. They passed on stories to their children and taught them how to survive. Many cultures did not know how other people lived so there were lots of differences.

Now, you can jump on a plane and be in another country in a matter of hours, or switch on the television and learn all about a different culture. In this book, you will discover many of the differences between cultures, but you will also see how some things are the same, no matter where you live.

In this book, you will learn about:

- The different foods that people eat
- Celebrations in different cultures
- How cultures use their environment to build homes
- What people wear in different cultures
- Stories told in other cultures
- Art, games and entertainment in other cultures
- How we know about cultures from thousands of years ago





Types of Culture

People belong to a culture for many different reasons. Below are some of the different types of culture that you might learn about.

INDIGENOUS CULTURE

The very first people to live in a country or an area are called **indigenous** or **native** people. Before large ships or planes were built, it was hard to explore new areas so the indigenous culture often survived for many years without changing the way that they lived.

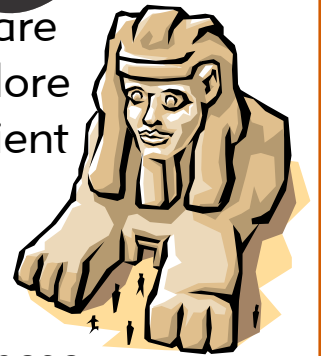
Indigenous cultures knew how to live in harmony with their environment, without wasting or destroying anything. Indigenous cultures studied in this book include Aboriginal Australians, New Zealand Māori, Native Americans and Maasai tribes from Africa.



Ancient civilisations

Ancient civilisations existed between 5000 and 2000 years ago. Many new things were used and invented in ancient times and people started to learn a lot more about the world around them.

Archaeologists are people who explore the ruins of ancient buildings and study the *artefacts* that they find from these ancient civilisations. By looking closely at the things left behind, we can discover what life was like thousands of years ago! You can read about the ancient civilisations of the Greeks, the Egyptians and the Mayans in this book.



RUIN =
A very old building or area which has started to disintegrate.

ARTEFACT =
A tool or an object that was used by humans many years ago.



Types of Culture

Traditional culture

As the world became more **populated** (more people were being born), people set off to explore new lands, and before long, there were cultures of people in almost every part of the world.

Nowadays, the world is divided up into many countries and each country has a unique culture. In this book, you will learn about traditional food and clothing in Japan, traditional celebrations in Mexico and traditional puppetry in Indonesia.

SUBCULTURE

If you walk down a busy city street, you will probably see many **subcultures**.

Subcultures are groups of people that live in the same country or area but have different beliefs and habits.


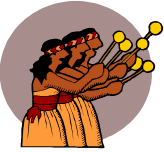

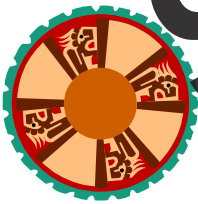


You might see a **surfing subculture** that loves the beach, a subculture of **business workers** talking on their mobile phones and a **music subculture** of people lining up to buy tickets for their favourite band.



Image courtesy Microsoft Design Gallery



Cultures at a Glance

CULTURE	LANGUAGE	RELIGION	FOODS	ARTEFACTS
AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL 	Hundreds of different languages	Creation or <i>Dreaming</i> stories of spirit ancestors	Native nuts, berries, fish, kangaroo, lizards, snakes	Boomerang, woomera, spears, shields, digging stick, rock paintings
MÄORI (New Zealand) 	Mäori language	Legends of creation by gods – Sky Father and Earth Mother	Native birds, vegetables, <i>Hangi</i> – cooking in a hole in the ground	Woven flax mats and baskets, greenstone carvings, wooden carvings
NATIVE AMERICAN (Indians) 	Different languages in each tribe or group	Varies from tribe to tribe – most believe in spirits or gods	Foods varied depending on environment. Included fish, berries, vegetables, buffalo	Jewellery, weaving, baskets, totem poles, Kachina dolls, beaded belts, buffalo hide items
MAYAN 	Mayan language and hieroglyphic written language	Believed in many gods – gods of nature, gods of the sun and stars, calendar gods	Corn (maize) cacao (chocolate bean), chilli peppers, beans and squash	Carvings, painting, pottery
MEXICAN 	Mainly Spanish	Mainly Roman Catholic	Corn, tortillas, beans, chilli, burritos, enchiladas, tacos, nachos, beef and chicken	Piñata, sombrero hat, poncho
ANCIENT GREEK 	Ancient Greek dialects	Mythology – stories of gods including Zeus, Athena, Apollo and Aphrodite	Olives, flat bread, grapes, wine, lamb, fish and other seafood	Statues, sculpture, pottery, coins