



Field Study of an Ethnic Market

Grade Level: 9-12

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Rationale: The purpose of this assignment is to increase students' awareness of the role ethnic markets play in an immigrant community, to compare that role to the role played by chain grocery stores, and to practice some important research methods in human geography, including field observation and informal interviews. This lesson can be used as part of a World Regional Geography class unit on the cultural geography of North America, a unit on whichever particular region the particular ethnicity emigrated from, or as part of a Human Geography course unit on culture and/or immigration. It can also be used for teacher training as a model for conducting a field assignment with their own students.

Time Frame: 2 class periods – 1 pre-trip and 1 post-trip; trip and preparing report can be completed outside of class time.

Learning Outcomes: Students will examine the characteristics of an ethnic market and explore the connections the market has with the neighborhood and community. Students will then compare the characteristics and connections from the ethnic market with those found at generic large chain grocery store.

TEKS Objective(s):

- 16(A) describe distinctive cultural patterns and landscapes associated with different places in Texas, the United States, and other regions of the world and how these patterns influenced the processes of innovation and diffusion;
- (B) describe elements of culture, including language, religion, beliefs and customs, institutions, and technologies;
- (C) explain ways various groups of people perceive the characteristics of their own and other cultures, places, and regions differently;

- 22(A) design and draw appropriate graphics such as maps, diagrams, tables, and graphs to communicate geographic features, distributions, and relationships;
- (B) generate summaries, generalizations, and thesis statements supported by evidence;
- (C) use geographic terminology correctly;
- (D) use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation;

National Geography Standards:

Geography Standard 3: How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on earth's surface.

Geography Standard 10: The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of earth's cultural mosaics.

Geography Standard 18: How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Materials:

Student Handout

Notebooks or paper

Pen or pencil

Camera (optional)

Note: If you are conducting this activity as a class, you will need to select a market and arrange for transportation. This activity can also be done by individuals or partners outside of class time.

Strategies: This lesson focuses on observing and collecting data during a field exercise, organizing that data, and presenting the findings. It utilizes the inquiry model of learning.

Procedures :

Asking Geographic Questions:

Begin the class by introducing the primary question:

What role do markets play in a community?

Give the group a few minutes to discuss what they know about this question. Then, proceed to discuss some of the following secondary questions?

- Why do you shop at a particular market?
- What characteristics mean the most to you when choosing a market?
- If you moved to a foreign country, what characteristics would mean the most to you in a market?
- Would that be different or similar to the characteristics you would look for in a market at home?
- Do you think the role an ethnic market plays in a community is similar or different than the role a chain grocery store plays in a community?

The Lesson:

Background: As a group, list elements of culture the group is familiar with. Discuss that culture extends far below the superficial cultural structures which tend to be more obvious. Culture influences many “hidden” elements of our everyday life – so much so that we often take those cultural attitudes and perceptions as universal. Such elements include the selection of items



available at a market, their packaging, and their arrangement. Particular items appeal to one culture's sense of taste (both aesthetic taste and actual flavor), but not to another. By closely observing another culture's patterns of everyday life, we begin to develop a deeper understanding of the differences and similarities between other cultures and our own.

Acquiring Geographic Information:

Take the group to a nearby ethnic market or have them go on their own. They will complete the observation activity on site, following the directions given on their student handout. You may also elect to take them to a large chain grocery store to facilitate a comparison between the two.

Organizing Geographic Information:

Once students have finished their field observations, they are to organize their notes, pictures, sketch maps and other information as directed on their handout.

Analyzing Geographic Information:

Once their field notes are organized, students will analyze their notes and observations for patterns within the market and explain the processes that affect them.

Answering Geographic Questions:

Students will prepare a critical analysis comparing the two types of markets. The analysis can be a paper, a power point, or a film.

As a class, discuss students' findings. If students have prepared a film or power point, these can be shown to the class. Otherwise, students can prepare a brief summary of their report to present to the class. Do the two types of market play similar roles within their communities or are they different? Explain.

Evaluation/ Assessment: A grading rubric for the paper/film/power point follows.

	1	2	3	4	5
Verbal description of ethnic market	Description is vague or largely absent.	Attempt at a description is made, but is very brief. Few details are given.	Description of market is good – 1 to 2 paragraphs. Contains some details on layout of the store.	Solid description of the market – more than 2 paragraphs. Layout of the store is included. Attempts to use some descriptive language.	Very vivid description of the market – multiple paragraphs with descriptive language. Layout is described in detail.
Cultural Elements	Cultural elements are not present or are inaccurate	A few cultural elements are presented, but they are not described well or at all.	Several cultural elements are presented and are described.	Most of the cultural elements on the student handout are presented and are described well.	All of the cultural elements on the student handout are included – some additional ones may be present. All are described thoroughly.
Analysis	No Analysis is given	Some attempt at analysis is given, but it is very superficial or inaccurate.	The cultural elements presented are analyzed. Analysis is accurate, but needs more depth.	A good analysis of the cultural elements is provided. Evidence of some understanding of cultural processes is apparent.	All of the cultural elements are thoroughly analyzed, displaying a thorough understanding of cultural processes.
Visuals	No visuals are present	Sketch map of store layout is provided, but lacks detail and sophistication. It appears to be vague and cursorily done.	Sketch map of store layout is provided and is detailed and accurate.	Sketch map of store layout is well done, neat and accurate. Map of store location is included.	Sketch map, map of store location and other visuals are provided. Visuals are all clear, accurate and enhance the presentation.
Spelling, Grammar and Presentation	Written work is difficult to read; oral presentation is difficult to understand or is not present.	Written work contains many errors. Oral presentation is understandable, but contains errors.	Written work contains few errors. Oral presentation is clear.	Written and oral presentations contain almost no errors and are very clear	All work is free from errors and highly engaging.

Field Study of an Ethnic Market Student Handout

Asking Geographic Questions:

What role do ethnic markets play in a community?

Acquiring Geographic Information:

Begin by taking notes as you arrive at the market. Pay attention to signage and decorations outside the market, flyers/notices/posters in the windows, the architecture, and nearby shops. Take good notes and/or pictures as you go. Once inside the market, begin taking notes on:

- the types of products you see,
- the kinds of people shopping,
- the kinds of food that are available – as well as the types that are NOT available,
- the people who work there,
- the layout of the store – draw a sketch map
- package decorations: their colors, characters or images on them, what information is included, etc.

If people do not look too busy, you can stop and ask them a few questions about why they shop at that particular market.

Organizing and Analyzing Geographic Information:

Use the chart on the back to help organize your thoughts after you finish your observation. (You may use another graphic organizer of your choice, or use another sheet of paper if you do not have room to write.) Once you have finished, review your answers and see if you can explain the processes responsible for the cultural elements you found.

Answering Geographic Questions: Once you have completed your observation, you will prepare a written report (2 to 3 pages), or a short power point (or film) describing the store in great detail – create a verbal image of the place (if you are making a film, this will be in the dialogue). Include visuals – sketch map of store layout, map its location in the community, photos or other sketches. Then, you need to describe the cultural elements you observed and explain the processes which may be responsible for them. Focus on:

- product packaging – what does this tell you about marketing strategies in this culture?
- layout of the store – what is the store trying to focus your attention on?
- flyers/signs/posters – what other services does this market provide to the community?
- products – how do the products differ from those in a chain market? What does this tell you about this culture?
- people – do the people shopping and working here belong to this ethnicity or culture, or does this store appeal to a broader variety of people? Do you see evidence that this store tries to appeal to recent immigrants (international phone cards, services which send money overseas, travel agencies)?
- Other details you decide should be included.

Observation Chart

<p>1. In what ways is the store organized differently from a chain grocery store?</p>	
<p>2. Are food items categorized in a way that makes sense to you? Is it easy for you to find the things you are looking for?</p>	
<p>3. Are the food items packaged in a way that seems attractive to you? What differences do you notice in how products are presented?</p>	
<p>4. Did you find items that you are not familiar with? Why do you think they are there?</p>	
<p>5. Did you not find items you are used to seeing in a chain grocery store? Why do you think they are not here?</p>	
<p>6. Based upon your observations, who is the “typical” shopper?</p>	
<p>7. To what extent does the type of food and product selection tell you about the culture this store attempts to appeal to?</p>	
<p>8. Are there any other elements about this store that are different than a chain grocery store?</p>	
<p>9. Are these differences the result of cultural influences or other factors?</p>	
<p>10. Looking at the posters and flyers, does this market provide other services to the community – information about ethnic festivals, ads for international calling cards, services which send money overseas, travel agencies</p>	