Concepts of Culture and Diffusion

The Buffalo was part of us, his flesh and blood being absorbed by us until it became our own flesh and blood. Our clothing, our tipis, everything we needed for life came from the buffalo's body. It was hard to say where the animals ended and the human began.

— John (Fire) Lame Deer, Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions, 1972

Essential Question: How do folk and popular cultures differ in the ways they help form a society's overall culture?

To the Lakota, and other indigenous people on North America's Great Plains, the bison was an essential part of their culture. The bison provided meat for nutrition, a hide for clothing and shelter, bones for tools, and fat for soap. The bison was also central to their religious beliefs. So, when European settlers hunted the bison nearly to extinction, Lakota culture suffered.

Culture is central to a society and to its continued existence. Geographers thus study culture as a way to understand similarities and differences among societies across the world, and in some cases, to help preserve these societies.

Analyzing Culture

All of a group's learned behaviors, actions, beliefs, and objects are a part of culture. It is a visible force seen in a group's actions, possessions, and influence on the landscape. For example, in a large city you can see people working in offices, factories, and stores, and living in high-rise apartments or suburban homes. You might observe them attending movies, concerts, or sports events.

Culture is also an invisible force guiding people through shared belief systems, customs, and traditions. All these elements, visible and invisible, make up the cultural traits that are the building blocks of a culture. A single cultural artifact, such as an automobile, may represent many different values, beliefs, and traditions. These interrelated traits make up a cultural complex.
CULTURAL COMPLEX OF THE AUTOMOBILE

The automobile provides much more than just transportation, as it reflects many values that are central to American culture.

One generation passes its culture to the next in many ways. Children learn in three basic ways:

- by imitation, as when a child learns a language by repeating sounds
- by informal instruction, as when a parent reminds a child to say "please"
- by formal instruction, as when a school teaches students history

Origins of Cultures

The area in which a unique culture or a specific trait develops is a culture hearth, also known as a cultural hearth. Classical Greece was a culture hearth for democracy more than 2,000 years ago. New York City was a culture hearth for rap music in the 1970s. Geographers study how cultures develop in hearths and diffuse to other places.

Geographers also study taboos, behaviors heavily discouraged by a culture. Many cultures have taboos against eating certain foods, such as pork or insects. What is taboo changes over time. In the United States, marriages between Protestants and Catholics were once taboo, but they are not widely opposed now.

Folk Cultures

The beliefs and practices of small, homogenous groups of people, often living in rural areas that are relatively isolated and slow to change, are known as folk cultures. Like all cultures, they demonstrate the diverse ways that people have adapted to a physical environment. For example, people learned to make shelters out of available resources, whether it was snow or mud bricks or wood. However, people used similar resources such as wood differently. In
Scandinavia, people used entire logs to build cabins. In the American Midwest, people processed trees into boards, built a frame, and attached the boards to it. Sometimes, people independently developed similar responses to similar environments. Long ago, Mongols in Central Asia and Plains Indians in North America, both living in flat, open land with extreme weather, developed similar types of housing: portable, round shelters made of frames and animals skins.

Many traits of folk culture continue today. Corn was first grown in Mexico around 10,000 years ago, and it is still grown there today.

**The Spread of Cultures**

Folk cultures provide a unique sense of place and belonging. These long-established culture hearths are very important to the inhabitants. Their shared cultural traits bring homogeneity to the culture, which gives the people a sense of place. This, in turn, also gives the inhabitants a tie to the area where they live and gives them a sense of ownership.

However, because people, goods, and ideas move throughout the world, cultures spread spatially, well beyond their hearths. Prior to the mid-20th century, kiwi were part of the food culture of people only from China to New Zealand. Today, kiwi have diffused throughout the world.

**The Spatial Dimensions of Culture**

Cultural regions are broad areas where groups share similar but not identical cultural traits. For example, geographer Wilbur Zilensky divided the United States into 12 major culture regions, yet people in these regions still consider themselves part of a larger American culture that shares a common heritage. Cultural regions are one of three types:

- **Formal regions**, such as states, are clearly defined by government or experts.
- **Functional regions**, such as the city of Miami and the communities around it, are based on interaction and are usually centered on a node or focus point.
- **Perceptual** (or vernacular) **regions** are based on how people think about particular places. The boundaries are often blurred. Zilensky’s 12 regions are this type. People might agree that the Midwest stretches from somewhere in Nebraska to somewhere in Ohio. But they might not agree on where in Ohio the Midwest ends and other regions, such as the East and Appalachia, begin.

**Cultural Landscapes**

The boundaries of a region reflect the human imprint on the environment. This is called the cultural landscape or the visible reflection of a culture, or the built environment. Some are described in the following chart.
CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Park</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Land set aside from development reflects the desire to preserve unique environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>Bilingual signs in French and English reflect the desire of French Canadians to retain their heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Gender-segregated schools reflect attitudes toward male and female roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Buildings</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>Massive skyscrapers reflect economic power and a desire to have businesses in a central, well-known location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An observant traveler can observe changes in the cultural landscape while driving along a highway. For example, travelers on Interstate 25 going from Wyoming to New Mexico see a definite change, both in toponyms (place names) and in the built environment. Names change from Anglo words to Spanish names. Wooden buildings are replaced by adobe buildings. Architectural styles shift from looking like ones in England to looking like ones in Spain.

CULTURAL CHANGE ALONG INTERSTATE 25

Buildings in Santa Fe, New Mexico, reflect a blend of the styles of Native American pueblos and Spanish missions.

Ethnic Enclaves

The neighborhood level of the cultural landscape might include ethnic enclaves, clusters of people of the same culture, but surrounded by people of a culture that is dominant in the region. Ethnic enclaves sometimes reflect the desire of people to remain apart from the larger society. Other times, they reflect a dominant culture's desire to segregate a minority culture. Inside these enclaves are often stores and religious institutions that are supported by the ethnic group, signs
in their traditional language, and architecture that reflects the group’s place of origin. These enclaves can provide a buffer against discrimination by the dominant culture.

**Borders and Barriers**

Unless regions are defined by clear features, such as a mountain range, identifying cultural borders can be hard. Often a transition zone exists where cultures mix and people exhibit traits of both cultures. The border between the United States and Mexico clearly illustrates this pattern. People who live in border communities such as El Paso, Texas, are often fluent in both Spanish and English, and they have cultural ties to both Mexico and the United States.

**Realms**

Geographers also identify larger areas, culture realms, that include several regions. Cultures within a cultural realm have a few traits that they all share, such as language families, religious traditions, food preferences, architecture, or a shared history.

Globalization and Cultural Change

As a result of the Industrial Revolution, improvements in transportation and communication have shortened the time required for movement, trade, or other forms of interaction between two places. This development, known as space-time compression, has accelerated culture change around the world. In 1817, a freight shipment from Cincinnati needed 52 days to reach New York City. By 1850, because of canals and railroads, it took half that long. And by 1852, it took only seven days. Today, an airplane flight takes only a few hours, and digital information takes seconds or less.
Similar change has occurred on the global scale. People travel freely across the world in a matter of hours, and communication has advanced to a point where people share information instantaneously across the globe. The increased interaction has had a profound impact on cultures, spreading English across the world.

**Globalization** is the process of intensified interaction among peoples, governments, and companies of different countries around the globe. More specifically, globalization usually refers to the increased integration of the world economy since the 1970s.

**Globalization and Popular Culture**

When cultural traits such as clothing, music, movies, types of businesses, and the built landscape spread quickly over a large area and are adopted by various groups, they become part of **popular culture**. Elements of popular culture often begin in urban areas and diffuse quickly through the media, particularly the Internet. They can quickly be adopted globally. People around the world follow European soccer, Indian Bollywood movies, and Japanese animation known as *anime*. With people around the world wearing similar clothes, listening to similar music, and eating similar food, popular cultural traits often promote uniformity in beliefs, values, and the cultural landscape across many cultures.

The culture of the United States is intertwined with globalization. Through the influence of its corporations, Hollywood movies, and government, the United States exerts widespread influence in other countries. But other countries also shape American culture. For example, in 2014, the National Basketball Association included players from 30 countries or territories.

**Popular Culture Versus Folk Culture**

Popular culture emphasizes trying what is new rather than preserving what is traditional. Many people, especially those in the older generation or who follow a folk culture, openly resist the adoption of popular cultural traits. They do this by preserving traditional languages, religions, values, and foods. While they often slow down the adoption of popular culture, they seldom are successful in keeping their traditional cultures from changing, especially among the young people of their society.

One clash between popular and folk culture is occurring in Brazil. As the population expands to the interior of the rain forest, many indigenous folk cultures are having greater contact with outside groups. Remaining isolated by the forest is becoming increasingly difficult and many young people become exposed to popular culture and are beginning to integrate into the larger Brazilian society. As the young people leave their communities, they are more likely to accept popular culture at the expense of their indigenous cultural heritage, which threatens the very existence of their folk culture.
## Comparing Folk and Popular Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Folk Culture</th>
<th>Popular Culture</th>
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</table>
| **Society**   | • Rural and isolated location  
• Homogeneous and indigenous population  
• Most people speak an indigenous or ethnic local language  | • Urban and connected location  
• Diverse and multiethnic population  
• Many people speak a global language such as English or Arabic |
| **Social Structure** | • Emphasis on community and conformity  
• Families live close to each other  
• Well-defined gender roles | • Emphasis on individualism and making choices  
• Dispersed families  
• Weakly defined gender roles |
| **Diffusion** | • Relatively slow and limited  
• Primarily through relocation  
• Oral traditions and stories | • Relatively rapid and extensive  
• Often hierarchical  
• Social media and mass media |
| **Buildings and Housing** | • Materials produced locally, such as stone or grass  
• Built by community or owner  
• Similar style for community  
• Different between cultures | • Materials produced in distant factories, such as steel or glass  
• Built by a business  
• Variety of architectural styles  
• Similar between cities |
| **Food**      | • Locally produced  
• Choices limited by tradition  
• Prepared by the family or community | • Often imported  
• Wide range of choice  
• Purchased in restaurants |
| **Spatial Focus** | • Local and regional | • National and global |

### Geography of Gender

The geography of gender has become an increasingly important topic for geographers in recent decades. In folk cultures, people often have clearly defined gender-specific roles. Often women take care of the household while men work outside the house to earn money and serve as leaders in religion and politics. In popular culture, gender-specific roles are diminishing. Women have more access to economic resources, more opportunity to work outside the home, and more chances to serve as leaders.
The concept of gendered spaces or gendered landscapes clarifies the importance of cultural values on the distribution of power in societies. Throughout history, in many cultures, certain behaviors have been acceptable for only one gender, and often only in certain spaces. Often, men have operated more freely than women in public spaces, while certain private spaces have been reserved for women. These differences might appear in the etiquette of visiting someone’s home. The host might welcome men in the public areas on the main level, but feel comfortable only with women visiting the more private rooms on the upper level.

**Resistance to Globalization**

The spread of popular culture creates tensions around the world between globalization and local diversity. Followers of traditional cultures that define gender roles strictly resent the relatively greater gender equality often portrayed in Hollywood movies. Workers in the United States resist the transfer of their jobs to overseas locations. Speakers of endangered languages struggle to preserve their language in the face of the spread of English.

**Diffusion of Culture**

Culture hearths are the original sources of culture. Yet many cultures have spread far beyond their hearths. The spreading of information, ideas, behaviors, and other aspects of culture over wider areas is known as diffusion. The two major forms of cultural diffusion come through cultural exchanges both by migration and by more indirect means.

**Relocation Diffusion**

One main type of diffusion is relocation diffusion, the spread of a cultural trait by people who migrate and carry their cultural traits with them. A small-scale example is the spread of pizza, which Italian immigrants brought to the United States in the late 19th century. A larger-scale example is the spread of European culture around the world starting in the 1500s. At times, the areas where migrants settle continue a trait after it has lost its influence in its hearth. The people in the modern world who pronounce English most like Shakespeare live, not in England, but in Appalachia. Disco music evolved in the United States in the 1970s, but remained popular in Egypt long after it faded in the United States.

**Expansion Diffusion**

The spread of cultural traits through direct or indirect exchange without migration is called expansion diffusion. It occurs in many ways.

Contagious diffusion occurs when a cultural trait spreads continuously outward from its hearth through contact among people. For example, the hearth for blues music is the southern United States. As musicians outside the
hearth heard the music, they began to play it themselves. Blues slowly spread northward and eventually reached major cities such as Saint Louis, Chicago, and New York.

Hierarchical diffusion is the spread of culture outward from the most interconnected places or from centers of wealth and importance. Cultural traits spread first from one important person, city, or powerful class to another important person, city, or social class. Eventually the trait could be shared with other people, smaller cities, social classes, or less developed countries. Unlike contagious diffusion, hierarchical diffusion may skip some places while moving on to others. Most popular culture, such as music, fashion, and fads, follows the hierarchical diffusion path.

Cell phone technology demonstrates how hierarchical diffusion works. When cellular phones first appeared on the market in the 1980s, they were expensive and were most commonly owned by wealthy people in large cities in more developed countries. As cell phone networks grew and cell phones became mass-produced, they eventually spread to a wider market. Today, cell phones have diffused throughout the world.

At times, a trait diffuses from a lower class to a higher class, in a process called reverse hierarchical diffusion. For example, in the United States in the 1940s through the 1960s, people commonly considered tattoos to be a symbol of low social status. Tattoos were associated with three types of places: seaport towns (among dockworkers and sailors), military bases, and prisons. Since the 1970s, the custom of getting tattoos has diffused throughout many segments of society and geographic areas.

Some reverse hierarchical diffusion goes from small, rural communities to larger urban areas. Walmart stores diffused from rural Arkansas to nearly every city in the United States.

Stimulus diffusion occurs when people in a culture adopt an underlying idea or process from another culture, but modify it because they reject one trait of it. For example, Hindus in India adopted the practice of eating fast food, but they rejected eating beef because doing so would violate their Hindu beliefs. So, they adapted the custom by making vegetarian and other nonbeef types of burgers. Five centuries ago, Europeans adopted the use of lightweight, beautifully decorated porcelain dishes that they obtained from China, but they rejected the high cost of importing the dishes. So, when people in Germany found deposits of the right type of clay to make their own porcelain, they modified the process of obtaining porcelain by making it in Europe.

Contact Between Cultures

Diffusion describes the ways cultures spread. As they spread, they come into contact with other cultures. The interaction of cultures is one of the driving forces in human history, and it can have several types of results.
Acculturation

Often, an ethnic or immigrant group moving to a new area adopts the values and practices of the larger group that has received them, while still maintaining major elements of their own culture. This is called acculturation. For example, in the 1880s, the Syndergaard family migrated from Denmark to the United States, settling in a Danish enclave in Iowa. The mother and father gave most of their ten children common Danish names, such as Inger and Niels. They commonly ate Danish foods, including spherical pancakes called abelskiver. Within three generations, their descendants still ate abelskivver, but they had names common in U.S. culture, such as Susan, Jim, and Dave.

Assimilation

Unlike acculturation, assimilation happens when an ethnic group can no longer be distinguished from the receiving group. This often occurs as ethnic groups become more affluent and leave their ethnic areas. Complete assimilation rarely happens though. Often, the one trait that is retained the longest is religion. For example, the grandchildren of immigrants from India might no longer speak Hindi or other Indian languages or eat traditional Indian cuisine daily, but they might still practice their Hindu faith. Often, the third and fourth generations of an ethnic group display a resurgence in ethnic pride by organizing festivals, learning the ethnic language, and revitalizing ethnic neighborhoods.

Multiculturalism

Without full assimilation, most receiving societies such as the United States are characterized by multiculturalism, the coexistence of several cultures in one society, with the ideal of all cultures being valued and worthy of study. A major idea of multiculturalism is that the interaction of cultures enriches the lives of all.

However, coexistence of cultures can also bring conflicts, as people and groups with different values, beliefs, and customs often clash. Minority groups often face prejudice and discrimination. Refugees fleeing the civil war that began in Syria in 2011 who hoped to settle in the United States often faced opposition from Americans who feared that some refugees would be terrorists.

Nativism

In some cases, the conflict between two cultures becomes harsh. Nativist, or anti-immigrant, attitudes may form among the cultural majority, sometimes bringing violence or government actions against the immigrant or minority group. Often, nativist attitudes are directed toward one particular group, such as opposition in the United States to Roman Catholic immigrants in the 1800s and early 1900s. Other times, nativism reflects a general dislike of people from other countries, or xenophobia.
GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES: THE DIFFUSION OF DEADLY DISEASES

Many people study deadly diseases. Doctors might focus on how to treat patients. Economists might focus on how a disease affects the demand for medicines. Geographers focus on spatial distribution, including how a disease diffuses across space, outward from its hearth.

The 1918 Influenza Epidemic

The influenza outbreak of 1918–1919, immediately after the end of World War I, was an example of contagious diffusion. The outbreak was devastating, killing three times as many people as World War I had. The source of the outbreak is not clear. It might have been located in Kansas, Great Britain, or France. Some scholars believe laborers from China who were traveling across Canada to Europe to work on the war front carried it with them.

In the United States, American cities on the East Coast quickly emerged as hubs of diffusion. Troops returning home after the war either carried the virus, or contracted it in the port. Then, as they traveled home by train, they spread the disease throughout the country.

Recent Epidemics


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<th>KEY TERMS</th>
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<td>culture</td>
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<td>cultural trait</td>
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<td>cultural complex</td>
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<td>folk culture</td>
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<td>culture hearth</td>
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<td>cultural region</td>
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<td>formal region</td>
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<td>functional region</td>
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<td>perceptual region</td>
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<td>cultural landscape</td>
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<td>ethnic enclave</td>
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<td>culture realm</td>
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<td>globalization</td>
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<td>space-time compression</td>
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<td>popular culture</td>
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<td>diffusion</td>
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<td>relocation diffusion</td>
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<td>expansion diffusion</td>
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<td>contagious diffusion</td>
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<td>hierarchical diffusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>reverse hierarchical diffusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>stimulus diffusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>acculturation</td>
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<tr>
<td>assimilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiculturalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>nativist</td>
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<tr>
<td>sense of place</td>
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<td>taboos</td>
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</table>
Language and Culture

In 1979, [schools on the Navajo reservation had about] 80 percent of students speaking Navajo – ten years later, 5 percent. There’s just too much English influence to really be effective in keeping our language. [If the Navajo language is lost] we will not be a unique people. We will have no culture; we will have no prayers.

— Marilyn Begay, 5th grade teacher, The Navajo Language Immersion School, Navajo Nation reservation, Arizona

**Essential Question:** What do the spread of and changes in languages tell about the cultures of the world?

The Navajo, a Native American group of the United States Southwest, face many of the same problems as indigenous people across the world—the loss of their native language and culture in the context of globalization. Currently there are approximately 7,000 languages that people speak around the world; but by the end of the century, about half of those languages will be gone. Most of the languages are spoken by small, isolated groups. As these groups become integrated into the larger society, the people often learn the language of the majority. The traditional language falls into disuse and becomes extinct. Since language is the key element in communication, with this loss of the language comes a loss of a central part of a group’s history and cultural identity.

**Relationships Among Languages**

As the Navajo example illustrates, language is essential to a group’s culture. It creates a sense of place and a cultural landscape. The Navajo experience shows that today’s communication technologies are reshaping cultures and bringing drastic change to, and even destroying, age-old practices and languages.

Yet language, like all elements of culture, has long been changing. The earliest languages spread from their culture hearths and faced a multitude of local, international, and global forces, including conquest, colonialism, imperialism, and trade, up to the globalization and widespread instant communication of the present day.
Origins of Language

Currently, linguists, scientists who study languages, think that humans first began communicating through spoken sounds as recently as tens of thousands of years ago, or as long as a few hundred thousand years ago. They are not sure how language diffused. Was it through the dispersion of people, who carried language with them as they dispersed across the planet? Or was it through transmission, as people learned language from their neighbors? Or was it through conquest, with one people imposing language on others?

Language Families

Linguists also are not sure whether all languages descended from one original language. They do believe that nearly all of the languages spoken today can be grouped into about 15 families of languages. The relationship among these language families is often shown on a language tree because it suggests how several languages are related to each other, as well as how one language grows out of another.

The distribution of languages reflects human migrations. The migration of Huns from central Asia to central Europe around 1,500 years ago explains why the languages most like Hungarian are found nearly 3,000 miles east of it.

Indo-European Languages

One of the 15 major language families is the Indo-European language family, a large group of languages that might all have descended from a language spoken around 6,000 years ago. Nearly half of the world’s population speaks one of the languages of the Indo-European language family. This family includes about 2.8 billion native speakers of between 400 and 500 languages.

EXAMPLES OF INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

![Diagram of Indo-European language family]

English evolved out of a combination of a Latin language (French) and a Germanic language (Anglo-Frisian) beginning about 1,000 years ago.
Within Indo-European, one of the branches is Latin. The history of Latin shows how difficult the study of language is: languages constantly evolve as people move away from the languages’ cultural hearths, because of contact with other languages or isolation from other languages.

Two thousand years ago, when the Roman Empire dominated much of what is today Europe, people in the empire spoke Latin. However, as the empire dissolved starting in the 5th century, transportation became more dangerous and trade declined. As a result, Latin speakers became geographically isolated from each other. The unifying language of Latin diverged into distinct regional languages, known as Romance languages. Most of these later vanished, but Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, and Romansch survived and grew. The historical connection among these languages is evident in their similar words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATIN WORDS RELATED TO WORDS IN OTHER LANGUAGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin (meaning in English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romansch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that English words such as father and mother are similar to Latin words, but words such as bread and wolf are not. This suggests that English is not a direct descendant of Latin—it evolved from a Germanic language—but it has been heavily influenced by Romance languages such as French.

Accents and Dialects

Languages can be further divided into smaller categories by other traits. One is by accent, how words sound when pronounced. Accents often reflect social class or geographic region. The boundaries between variations in pronunciations or word usage are called isoglosses.

Variations in accent, grammar, usage, and spelling create dialects, or regional variations of a language. Variations between dialects are large enough that most speakers notice them, but small enough that speakers can understand each other easily. Often, the dialect spoken by the most influential group in a country is considered the standard, and others are modifications of it. “Hello, everyone” is standard. “Hi, y’all” and “Hi, yous guys” are dialectical variations. Dialects often include distinct adages, or sayings that attempt to express a truth about life, such as “The early bird gets the worm.” The following chart shows differences between two dialects of English: American and British.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>American English</th>
<th>British English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>• Elevator</td>
<td>• Lift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apartment</td>
<td>• Flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parking lot</td>
<td>• Car park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trunk (of a car)</td>
<td>• Boot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gas (for a car)</td>
<td>• Petrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>• Lieutenant (loo-TEN-uhnt)</td>
<td>• Lieutenant (lef-TEN-uhnt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Schedule (SKED-juhl)</td>
<td>• Schedule (SCHEDZH-uhl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>• Motor</td>
<td>• Métro</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Color</td>
<td>• Colour</td>
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<td>• Tire</td>
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<td>• Center</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Theater</td>
<td>• Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Phrases</td>
<td>• &quot;I'm tired.&quot;</td>
<td>• &quot;I'm knackered.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• &quot;I'll call you.&quot;</td>
<td>• &quot;I'll ring you.&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Within dialects are subdialects. For example, in the United States, a native of Texas is likely to speak a different dialect than a native of New York City.

Often, dialects are the legacy of differences in the past, but they can also be a first step in the evolution of a new language. Just as the Romance languages emerged as regional variations of Latin, new languages are developing today. For example, if the differences between British English and American English increased so much that speakers could not easily communicate with each other, the two would be classified as different languages instead of dialects of one.

**Diffusion of Languages**

Languages often spread through diffusion—the spread of culture over wide areas through migration as well as by more indirect means. The major globalized languages of the world—English, French, Spanish, and Arabic—spread from their hearths largely because of conquest and colonialism. In the case of Arabic, its use as a standard religious language in Islam contributed to its success.

Some languages never diffuse widely. Mandarin Chinese, though the second most commonly spoken language in the world, did not. Though China was the most powerful and innovative country in the world for much of the past 2,000 years, and its merchants settled in various parts of Asia and Oceania, China never established colonies outside of Asia. As a result, Chinese speakers have always been concentrated in China.
English as a Lingua Franca

Unlike Chinese, English has a wide spatial distribution. English is the most widely used language in the world, with nearly 1.5 billion speakers. Native speakers are concentrated in lands colonized by Great Britain such as the United States, Canada, South Africa, India, and Australia.

However, most speakers of English do not use it as their primary language. Rather, they use it as a lingua franca, a common language used by people who do not share the same native language. For example, Nigerians commonly speak one of 500 indigenous languages at home, but they learn English to communicate with everyone who does not speak their language. Globalization and new technology explain why English is a common lingua franca:

- Multinational corporations based in the United States and Great Britain made English the common language for international business.
- Scientists and other scholars, airline pilots throughout the world, and many journalists began to use English to communicate across the globe.
- English evolved as the lingua franca of the Internet and is widely used in social media.
- Television shows and movies are often in English and they are shown around the world.

The wide use of English has made communication among people around the world easier. However, it has also sparked resentment in some who feel that the intrusion of American language and culture dilutes their own unique linguistic and cultural practices.

Other Lingua Francas

Other major lingua francas are Arabic, Spanish, French, Swahili, and Russian. Each has a wide distribution and is often learned as a second language.

Creating New Words and Languages

Many new words begin as slang, informal usage by a segment of the population. For example, the word brunch was slang before it became standard.

Pidgin Languages

When speakers of two different languages have extensive contact with each other—often because of trade—they sometimes develop a pidgin language, a simplified mixture of two languages that has fewer grammar rules and a smaller vocabulary, but is not the native language of either group. In Papua New Guinea, the pidgin combines English and Papuan languages.

Creole Languages

Over time, two or more separate languages can mix and develop a more formal structure and vocabulary so that they are no longer a pidgin language. They
create a new combined language known as a **creole language**. Afrikaans is a creole language spoken in South Africa that combines Dutch with several European and African languages.

On the islands of the Caribbean, creole languages are common. Africans captured and brought to enslavement in the Americas between the 1500s and the 1800s were unable to transplant their languages. Stolen from their communities, they were forced onto ships with captives from various regions in Africa. With no common language among the groups of captives, communication was difficult. Because of this linguistic isolation, most lost their languages after a generation in the Americas. Yet they were able to create creole languages by combining parts of their African languages with the European colonizers’ languages of English, Spanish, French, or Portuguese.

The most widely used creole language in the Americas is found in Haiti. Haitian Creole is derived mostly from French with influences from numerous languages of West Africa. It has become an official language of Haiti and a source of national pride and cultural identity.

The United States included a smaller percentage of enslaved Africans than did many Caribbean islands, so it had fewer creole languages. One exception is the **Gullah or Geechee** language of South Carolina and Georgia, in places where enslaved Africans once made up about three-quarters of the population.

**Swahili in East Africa**

Another example of language mixing occurred in East Africa. As early as the 8th century, trade between Arab-speaking merchants and Bantu-speaking residents resulted in the development of **Swahili**. Swahili is still spoken by some groups in Africa and is an official language of four African nations: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Language Policies and the Cultural Landscape**

Language is important to a group’s cultural identity. Because a culture occupies a certain spatial area, its language becomes intertwined with that place and its landscape. For example, native Hawaiians, whose economy relies on fishing, have five dozen words for fishing nets. In addition, signs in some places create a cultural landscape as they reflect the people’s linguistic heritage and tie them to that place—from the single-language signs in France to bilingual signs in places such as Belgium or Quebec.
**Toponyms**

Toponyms, the names of places, reflect culture. For example, in 657 B.C.E., the Greeks founded a colony that they named Byzantium, probably after a leader named Byzas. After the city fell under Roman control, the Romans renamed it Constantinople, after one of their emperors. When the Turks seized the city in 1453, they started to call it Istanbul, which means “to the city.”

**Official Languages**

While the United States does not have an official language, one designated by law to be the language of government, some countries do. These countries can be grouped into three categories:

- Some countries are **homogeneous**, or made up largely of ethnically similar people, such as in Iceland, Japan, or Slovenia.
- Some countries use language to discourage people from maintaining a traditional culture. English colonizers did this in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales to promote quick assimilation.
- Some countries include several large ethnic groups. These countries want to honor all groups equally. For example, Zimbabwe is home to several large ethnic groups, so it has 16 official languages. People use English as a lingua franca to make communication easier.

**Examples of Official Languages in Africa**
GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES: SPANISH AT VARIOUS SCALES

What defines the region of the United States where Spanish is widely spoken? Geographers answer this question using various tools, such as census data, surveys, and the cultural landscape. They have found that the Spanish-speaking region changes depending on the level of analysis.

Spanish at the Country and State Levels

At the global level, the answer is the entire country. The United States includes more than 41 million people who grew up speaking primarily Spanish, and another 11 million people who are bilingual. On a cartogram showing the total number of Spanish-speakers in a country, the United States would be the second largest country in the world; only Mexico would be larger.

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<thead>
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<th>ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SPEAKERS AMONG U.S. HISPANICS</th>
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Source: Based on analysis by the Pew Research Center of data from the 2014 American Community Survey and the 2000 Census (IPUMS).
At the state level, the answer is slightly more complex. States vary, generally according to history and relative location. The states with the highest percentages of Spanish-speaking Americans were all once colonies of Spain and are located relatively close to Latin America: California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida.

**Spanish at the Lower Levels**

At the county level, the issue becomes even more complex. Large cities throughout the country have large populations of residents who speak Spanish as either a first or second language. The Chicago metropolitan area has more Spanish speakers than the entire populations of either New Mexico or Arizona. In addition, scattered counties around the country, from southern Idaho to eastern North Carolina, each have at least 7 percent of their population who speak Spanish.

New technology might make possible the mapping of language regions on an individual level. Analyzing Twitter or other social media could allow geographers to create an ever-changing map of where people are speaking any particular language at any particular moment.

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<th>KEY TERMS</th>
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<td>linguist</td>
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Religious and Ethnic Landscapes

Cultural values are, in themselves, neutral as well as universal, and so much depends on how individuals or ethnic groups use them. Values are influenced by so many factors such as geography, climate, religion, the economy and technology.

—F. Sionil Jose, Filipino novelist

Essential Question: How do religious and ethnic groups both reflect and influence the geography of places at different scales?

Religion is intertwined with all other aspects of history and geography because, compared to other aspects of culture, it is relatively resistant to decay over time and distance. For example, descendants of immigrants often adopt a new language but continue to practice the faith of their ancestors. Developing strong mental maps of the origins, diffusion, and distribution of major religions and their divisions is one of the most valuable ways to understand culture.

Religion, Ethnicity, and Nationality

Religion is often closely linked to ethnicity, or membership in a group of people who share characteristics such as ancestry, language, customs, history, and common experiences. Most geographers distinguish between nationality, which describes people’s connection to a particular country, and ethnicity, which is based upon group cultural traits. For example, Russian Jews make up a different ethnicity than Russians in general. Geographers often study ethnic groups as minorities within a greater population. To do so, they focus on mapping and analysis, as they trace the movement of ethnic groups and investigate their spatial dimensions and cultural landscapes.

Spatial Dimensions of Religious and Ethnic Groups

To analyze religious and ethnic groups, geographers try to define, locate, and study them. Religion and ethnicity are easier to define than is the process of examining each group’s space, place, identity, and movement. One way to see the relationship among all of these aspects of culture is to focus on historical
connections. Geographers start by mapping a **culture hearth**, the source, or origin, where a religion or ethnicity began, and then track its movement and predict its future direction.

**Cultural Variation by Place and Region**

Patterns and landscapes of religious and ethnic groups vary by place and region at various scales. For example, at the regional level, Baptists are the most common religious group in the southeastern United States. Zooming in to the state level, the same is true for most states, including South Carolina. However, at the county level, many individual counties in South Carolina have more Methodists or Lutherans than any other group. And at the census tract level, the state appears even more diverse.

The degree of adherence to tradition varies within each religion. Every religion includes followers who practice **fundamentalism**, an attempt to follow a literal interpretation of a religious faith. Fundamentalists believe that people should live traditional lifestyles similar to those prescribed in the faith’s holy writings. In some traditions, this means that women are likely to leave school at a young age, to live in an arranged marriage, and to avoid working outside the home. Fundamentalists are more likely than others in their faith to enforce strict standards of dress and personal behavior, often through laws.

The strength of fundamentalism often diminishes with greater distance from the religious hearth. For example, the hearth of Islam is the Arabian Peninsula, and that is where fundamentalism has long been strongest. Fundamentalism is less prevalent in Muslim-majority countries farther from the hearth, such as Malaysia and Indonesia. One way to measure fundamentalism in Islam is by the role of **sharia**, the Islamic legal framework for a country. Sharia is strongest in countries of the Arabian Peninsula such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Some fundamentalist countries, such as Iran, are **theocracies**, countries whose governments are run by religious leaders through the use of religious laws. Fundamentalists often clash, sometimes violently, with those who wish to follow religious traditions more loosely or to live a more secular lifestyle.

**Regional Patterns in U.S. Religion**

The distribution of ethnic and religious groups in the United States reflects historical patterns. Congregationalists are still strong in New England, where their English ancestors settled in the 1600s. Baptists and Methodists are most common in the Southeast, where these denominations were spread by traveling preachers in the 1800s. Lutherans live mostly in the Midwest, where their German or Scandinavian forbears who immigrated in the late 1800s could find good farmland. Many Mormons live in or near Utah, where Mormons settled in the mid-1800s after religious persecution drove them out of Missouri and Illinois. Roman Catholics are most common in urban areas in the Northeast and throughout the Southwest. Jews, Muslims, and Hindus live most often in urban areas, the traditional home to immigrants.
Globalization and Religion

Advances in communication, such as printing, television, and the Internet, have had contradictory effects on the distinctive traits of many religious communities. In 1850, a farmer in western Ireland lived in a community where nearly everyone was Roman Catholic and so had little contact with other traditions. Today, no one is isolated. Exposure to other ideas can erode traditions. However, if that Irish farmer immigrated to the United States, he was nearly cut off from the community of his birth. Today, an Irish immigrant can keep in close touch with friends and family.

And sometimes people respond to globalization with neolocalism, the process of re-embracing the uniqueness and authenticity of a place. For example, a neighborhood in a large city might hold a festival to honor the religion, cuisine, and history of the migrants who settled the community.

Religious Patterns and Distributions

Religions, like other elements of culture, diffuse outward from their hearths in various ways. The spread of religious settlements, both locally and globally, contributes to the sense of place and of belonging for each religious group and greatly shapes the cultural landscape. Geographers analyze maps, charts, and other data to understand the growth, decline, movement, and cultural landscapes of the world’s religions. They have traced the geographic patterns of each major world religion, including the religion’s hearth, or place of origin, the geographic spread of the religion, and practices that can influence both the culture and the cultural landscape.

![Largest Religion by Country](image)

Judaism is the largest religion in Israel. In China, most people identify no religious affiliation.
Two Major Eastern Religions

Several belief systems have developed in Asia. Of these, two developed in India and have diffused to other places from there.

Hinduism Hinduism includes the worship of many deities, so some people consider it polytheistic, which means having many gods. However, Hindus consider all deities as manifestations of one god, so it can be considered monotheistic, which means having one god. Hindus believe in karma, the idea that behaviors have consequences in the present life or a future life, and in dharma, which means the righteous path. For part of its history, Hinduism worked closely with a caste system, a rigid class structure, that shaped Indian society.

Buddhism Buddhism grew out of the teachings of a prince named Siddhartha who lived about 600 years B.C.E. Accepting many beliefs of Hinduism, Siddhartha (who became known as the Buddha, or “enlightened one”) advised followers to escape the cycle of suffering through “right” views, hopes, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, and mindful meditation.

Three Major Middle Eastern Religions

Three major religions trace their history to Abraham. He was a religious leader who lived in the Middle East around 1800 B.C.E.

Judaism Judaism was among the first monotheistic faiths. Jews believe that the writing known as the Torah expresses divine will. It is supplemented by other writings as well as unwritten laws and customs. For the past 2,000 years, most Jews lived in Europe and North Africa. Always a small minority, they often suffered persecution. In the late 1800s, Jews in search of religious liberty began efforts to establish a homeland in the Middle East and began migrating to the United States. During World War II, the systematic murder of six million Jews by Nazi Germany, an event known as the Holocaust, strengthened the movement to create a predominantly Jewish state in the Middle East. In 1948, the country of Israel was formed. Jews from around the world migrated there.

Christianity Christianity began when followers of a Jewish teacher, Jesus (c. 4 B.C.E. to c. 30 C.E.), evolved into their own religion based on the belief that Jesus was the son of God and the savior of humans. He emphasized the importance of faith, love, and peace. Christianity spread outward from the Middle East to become the dominant religion in Europe, and then to America and other parts of the world.

Islam Islam is the religion followed by Muslims. Muslims believe that Allah (the Arabic word for God) revealed his teachings to humans through a series of prophets. The last of these was Muhammad, who lived in what is now Saudi Arabia in the sixth and seventh centuries C.E. Muslims believe that Allah communicated his teachings to Muhammad, who shared them with people in the book of holy writings known as the Koran.
Ethnic and Universal Religions

Ethnic religions are belief traditions that emphasize strong cultural characteristics among their followers. In most cases, members of an ethnic religion are born or adopted into it. Members have a shared historical experience or struggle that creates strong bonds. Ethnic religions rarely recruit new followers actively. Rather, they spread as a result of relocation diffusion. Hinduism and Judaism are the world’s two most widespread ethnic religions. The Jewish Diaspora and global migration of Hindus from India are examples of such relocation diffusion.

In contrast to an ethnic religion, a universal religion actively seeks converts to its faith regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. Universalizing religions have spread far from their original hearths because existing members
feel a mandate to spread their beliefs to others. To carry out this mandate, members of universalizing religions often serve as missionaries who both perform charitable works and convert non-believers.

The two largest universalizing religions, Christianity and Islam, also spread from their hearths through conquest and colonization. Christianity, which was found mostly in Europe in the fifteenth century, added millions of followers when Christian missionaries accompanied the European explorers and conquerors to the Western Hemisphere, southern Africa, and Australia. As Europeans expanded their empires, they converted people to Christianity, sometimes violently. Islam spread in much the same way, through the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia.

In many faith traditions, followers feel called to go on a pilgrimage, a religious journey taken by a person to a sacred place of his or her religion. Each year, over 20 million Hindus journey to the Ganges River, millions of Muslims travel to Mecca (a pilgrimage known as a hajj), and many Muslims, Jews, and Christians visit Jerusalem’s many holy sites.

Influences of Colonialism, Imperialism, and Trade

Colonialism, imperialism, and trade have played a powerful role in spreading religion and culture. Historians often divide European colonialism into two separate waves. From the 1500s to about 1800, Europeans colonized the Americas and South Asia. Then, during the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, European powers colonized most of Africa and Southwest Asia.

The European colonizers imposed their cultural traits on the local populations. For example, before European colonization, most religions practiced by the native people of Africa and North America were forms of animism, the belief that non-living objects, such as rivers or mountains, have a spirit. Europeans forced many of their colonial subjects to adopt the Christian faith of their colonizers. The Spanish and French spread Roman Catholicism throughout Latin America, North America, and Quebec. The English, Belgians, and Dutch spread forms of Protestantism in their colonies.

Today, few formal colonies remain in the world, but the practices left behind by the European powers are present in their former colonies. The afternoon break for tea, a British tradition, is still practiced in Kenya and India. The Christianity that was brought by the European colonizers is widespread in many former colonies.

Religion’s Impact on Laws and Customs

Since religious traditions predate current governments, they are often the source for many present-day laws and punishments by the government. Some religions have strict systems of laws that have been adopted fully by some governments. An example of this is sharia, or Islamic law, which is based entirely on the teachings of Islam and has been adopted by some fundamentalist religious groups, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, as the law of the land.
While no highly industrialized countries have fully adopted religious laws, their legal codes often show clear influence of religion. In the United States, many communities have blue laws, laws that restrict certain activities, such as the sale of alcohol, on Sundays. In Colorado and some other states, all car dealerships must be closed on Sundays as well.

In most countries, religious beliefs are more influential as guides to personal behavior than as state-sponsored laws. For example, many faiths include guidelines on the choices people make about what clothes they wear and how they cut their hair. Most faiths include some food taboos, prohibitions against eating and drinking certain items. For example, many Hindus do not eat beef, and many Jews and Muslims do not eat pork.

Religion is also the source of many daily, weekly, or annual practices for adherents:

- Many Muslims pray five times a day, and many Buddhists and Hindus engage in daily meditation.
- Most religions have weekly religious services for worship or instruction. For example, Muslims usually gather on Fridays, Jews on Friday evenings or Saturday mornings, and Christians on Sundays.
- Many people celebrate important religious holy days, such as Holi, a festival of light, for Hindus, and Vesak, which commemorates the birth of Buddha.

In addition, many days that people now commonly treat as secularized holidays have their roots in religious practices. Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, and Mardi Gras all originated as Christian holy days.

**Religion and the Landscape**

Like all human activities, religion influences the organization and use of space. This appears in both how people think about natural features and what people build.

**The Physical Landscape**

Many specific places and natural features have religious significance. Some sites are sacred spaces where deities dwell: followers of Shinto view certain mountains and rocks as the homes of spirits. Other sites are not sacred but are important for what occurred at them: Mt. Sinai is honored by Jews, Christians, and Muslims because they believe it is where God handed the Ten Commandments to Moses. Some entire cities, such as Jerusalem (Israel), Mecca (Saudi Arabia), and Lhasa (Tibet), have special religious meanings.

**The Cultural Landscape**

Sacred physical features are important, but rare. More commonly, people express their beliefs through the cultural landscapes that they create:
• Memorial spaces to the dead, such as cemeteries, are traditionally located close to worship spaces.
• Restaurants and food markets often cater to particular religious groups by offering religiously approved food.
• Signs often are written in the language and sometimes the alphabet that reflects the ethnic heritage of the group.

The most obvious example of the cultural landscape shaped by religion is in architecture. Each major faith provides examples of this.

**Christianity** Christian churches often feature a tall steeple topped by a cross. Churches also demonstrate how the origin of the architectural style was often influenced by the environment, such as the climate and the available building materials. The hearths of that faith are more likely to resemble the original architecture. Christian churches closer to the eastern Mediterranean tend to have dome-shaped roofs that reflect the traditional style of architecture popular with the Romans, while churches in northern Europe have steep-pitched roofs designed for snow to slide off in the winter, because the build-up of snow on a flatter roof can cause the roof to cave in. Cultural influences similarly shape the preferred and available materials to build such structures.

One similarity among Christians is in treatment of the deceased. In most parts of the world, Christians bury the dead in cemeteries. However, cemeteries vary greatly. Most are underground, but in New Orleans, where the water table is very high, they are above ground.

**Hinduism** Hindu temples often have elaborately carved exteriors. Thousands of shrines and temples dot the landscape in India. Sacred sites, such as the Ganges River, provide pilgrims a place to bathe for the purpose
of purification. Many Hindu shrines and temples are located near rivers and streams for this very purpose.

Hindus practice cremation of the dead as an act of purification as well—although a shortage of wood has made cremation very expensive. The ashes of the deceased are often spread in the Ganges River. As the population of India has increased, so has the amount of ashes in the river, which has raised concerns about pollution.

**Buddhism** The practice of Buddhism differs widely from place to place, from ethnic group to ethnic group. However, most Buddhists emphasize meditating and living in harmony with nature. These features of Buddhism are represented in stupas, structures built to symbolize five aspects of nature—earth, water, fire, air, and space—where people can meditate. Among Buddhists, the decision to cremate or to bury the dead is a personal choice.

**Judaism** Jews worship in synagogues or temples. Once concentrated in the Middle East, Jews spread throughout the world because of exile or persecution, or though voluntary migration. This scattering is known as the Diaspora (a diaspora occurs when one group of people is dispersed to various locations). Temples vary in size based on the number of Jews in an area. Burial of the dead customarily occurs before sundown on the day following the death.

**Islam** In places where Islam is widely practiced, the mosque is the most prominent structure on the landscape and is usually located in the center of town. Mosques have domes surrounded by a few minarets (Arabic for beacon) from which daily prayer is called. Burial of the dead is to be done as soon as possible, and burials are in cemeteries.

**Shinto** Shinto, whose cultural hearth is Japan, emphasizes honoring one’s ancestors and the relationship between people and nature. One common landscape feature of Shinto shrines is an impressive gateway, or torii (see below), to mark the transition from the outside world to a sacred space.
How Religion and Ethnicity Shape Space

The first group to establish cultural and religious customs in a space is known as the charter group. Native Americans were the original charter group in the Americas. Their influence appears in many places, such as in place names from Mt. Denali in Alaska to Miami, Florida. Often, charter groups show their heritage. For example, English settlements in colonial America resembled the settlements they migrated away from in England, and names such as Plymouth and Jamestown reflect this heritage.

**Ethnic Symbolic Landscapes**

Ethnic groups that arrive after the charter group may choose to bypass the particular location and establish their space with their own customs. In urban areas, these enclaves become ethnic neighborhoods.

In rural areas, ethnic concentrations form ethnic islands. Their cultural imprints revolve around housing types and agricultural dwellings that reflect their heritage. Because ethnic islands are in rural areas and have less interaction with other groups than do groups in cities, they maintain a strong and long-lasting sense of cohesion. Today, Germanic ethnic islands of people who fled religious persecution in the past continue to exist in the United States (the Pennsylvania Dutch and the Amish), Canada (Mennonites in Alberta), and in scattered locations in the Balkan region of southeastern Europe.

**Urban Ethnic Neighborhoods**

Ethnic neighborhoods in urban settings are often occupied by migrants who settle in a charter group’s former space. The charter group has already shaped much of the landscape, but new arrivals create their own influence as well. Dozens of cities around the world—Melbourne, Australia; Gachsareh, Iran; Liverpool, England; San Francisco—have neighborhoods known as “Chinatown.” Often, the name lives on even if the new arrivals have moved out or assimilated, and the neighborhood primarily caters to tourists.

**New Cultural Influences**

Ethnic groups move in and out of neighborhoods and create new cultural imprints on the landscape in a process geographers call sequent occupancy. In Chicago, the Pilsen neighborhood is heavily Hispanic today, but its name recalls its history as a home for German and Czech immigrants. In New York City, the neighborhood of Harlem has been home to many ethnic groups: Jews from Eastern Europe starting in the late 1800s, African Americans from the southern United States starting in the 1910s, and Puerto Ricans starting in the late 20th century. As result of sequent occupancy, Harlem’s cultural landscape includes former Jewish synagogues, public spaces named for African American leaders such as Marcus Garvey Park, and street names honoring Puerto Rican leaders such as Luis Muñoz Marin Boulevard.
GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES: MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Muslims have been living in the Americas since the days of Columbus. Geographers have studied the patterns in the diffusion of Muslims in the Americas, including the reasons behind their involuntary or voluntary migrations and where they they have been concentrated.

Muslims Among Enslaved Africans
The first concentration of Muslims was in what is now the southeastern United States. Maybe 15 percent of the enslaved Africans brought to the Americas were followers of Islam.

Migrants to Industrial Cities
Then, between 1890 and 1917, a new wave of Muslim immigrants entered the United States. Most came from Bosnia, Turkey, Syria, and other lands in the Middle East. Pulled by the lure of industrial jobs, most settled in the growing cities of the North and Midwest. However, some of the first mosques were founded in small communities in Iowa, Maine, and North Dakota.

Industrial cities in the 1920s and 1930s also attracted millions of African Americans from the rural South. Some African Americans joined a distinctive movement within Islam, known as the Black Muslims. They were concentrated in New York, Detroit, and Chicago. Today, about one-quarter of American Muslims are African Americans.

Diverse Immigrants
In recent decades, Muslim immigrants have come from around the world. While many come from the Middle East and South Asia, others migrate from Nigeria, Indonesia, and other countries. Again, the primary places of settlement have been large urban areas, but increasingly in suburban communities, such as Dearborn, Michigan. Today, Muslims constitute about 1 percent of the total population.

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