

Sociocultural themes: Environment

Introduction

The numbers in square brackets refer to the categories in the Outline of Cultural Materials (OCM). Two digits with an asterisk refer to a broad category. A third digit refers to a more specific topic within the two-digit category.

In this module group

Here are the modules on sociocultural themes of environment:

- Questions on sociocultural themes: Geography [13*]
- Questions on sociocultural themes: Domestic animals [231]
- Questions on sociocultural themes: Wild animals [136]
- Questions on sociocultural themes: Plants [137]
- Questions on sociocultural themes: Food [25*,26*]
- Questions on sociocultural themes: Drink [27*]
- Questions on sociocultural themes: Agriculture [24*]

See also

- Keywords: Outline of Cultural Materials (OCM), culture learning

Questions on sociocultural themes: Geography [13*]

Questions

Here are some questions to investigate in connection with the theme of geography:

1. What is the physical environment in which your village, town, city, or neighborhood is located: altitude, general vegetation, water supply, distance from other towns or settlements?
2. What is the general climate? What seasons of the year are there?

3. What rivers, lakes, or other bodies of water are there?
4. What are the names of
 - bodies of water, mountains, plains, hills, other natural boundaries
 - seasons and points of the compass, and
 - celestial objects or phenomena: sun, moon, stars, and weather?
5. How has the environment influenced settlement patterns, where and how people make their homes and communities?
6. Who controls access to water, if anyone? Is there conflict over water rights?
7. Is irrigation practiced? What is the technology of irrigation, and who is in charge of it?

See also

Wild animals

Domestic animals

Sources

Some of this material is adapted from Purnell 1993.

Questions on sociocultural themes: Domestic animals [231]

Questions

Here are some questions to investigate in connection with the theme of domestic animals:

1. What animals are kept as pets? How are they treated? Are they given names?
2. What animals are kept as domestic animals, but not considered pets? Are animals used for food, work, or for religious ceremonies?
3. Are wild animals ever tamed and kept as pets?
4. Are certain animals considered status symbols?
5. Who takes care of the animals?
6. Are there special names for the body parts of certain animals (hoof, withers, or fetlock)?

7. Are there different names for groups of different animals (flock, herd, or pack)?

See also

- Keywords: animals

Wild animals

Sources

Some of this material is adapted from Purnell 1993.

Questions on sociocultural themes: Wild animals [136]

Questions

Here are some questions to investigate in connection with the theme of wild animals:

1. What animals are found in the wild in the area? Which ones are hunted for food or sport?
2. What characteristics are different animals thought to have (foxes are sly or lions are brave)?
3. Are animals hunted or trapped for sale? Are they hunted alive or sold for their fur or for other parts of their bodies? Who hunts them? Is the meat shared?
4. Are certain animals considered to have religious significance?
5. Do certain animals figure in oral literature or jokes?
6. Are there special names for the body parts of certain animals (paw, claw, or fang)?
7. Are there different names for groups of different animals (flock, herd, or pack)?

See also

- Keywords: animals

Domestic animals

Sources

Some of these questions are adapted from Purnell 1993.

Questions on sociocultural themes: Plants [137]

Questions

Here are some questions to investigate in connection with the theme of plants:

1. What trees and plants are indigenous to the area? What are they called?
2. How do people classify different kinds of plants?
3. What plants are gathered for food, for decorative purposes, for medicinal purposes, or for ceremonial purposes?

See also

See the following for an activity related to this theme:

- Keywords: plants

The Join in the Work activity

Sources

Some of these questions are adapted from Purnell 1993.

Questions on sociocultural themes: Food [25*,26*]

Questions

Here are some questions to investigate in connection with the theme of food:

1. What food is eaten? Does there seem to be a staple food?
2. What are the names of
 - basic (uncooked) foods
 - cooked foods
 - cooking utensils and receptacles
 - ways to cook or prepare food
 - parts of the kitchen, and

- seasonings and spices?
3. How is food prepared? What sorts of seasonings are used?
 4. Which foods are gathered, grown in family gardens, or bought at the shop or market?
 5. Are there restaurants or places to buy prepared food? What is the cost of meals bought relative to income? How often do people eat out?
 6. Where do people eat and at what time do they eat? How many meals are eaten a day? Do men and women eat together? Do children get the same food as adults? Do they eat with adults?
 7. What utensils are used at meals? What are they called?
 8. How are people called to come to eat?
 9. What are the rules for interaction while eating? Do people converse while they eat? What topics do people discuss? What sounds are considered polite when eating (smacking lips, belching)? Are there rules about which hand to eat with or where to put hands?
 10. Do people drink during a meal or do they drink afterwards? What do they drink with each food?
 11. Are there formulaic phrases for beginning a meal or for ending a meal?
 12. How do you politely offer more food, accept food, or decline food?
 13. What foods are used for special occasions, and when (in the ceremonial calendar) are they eaten? Why? Is there a story connected with the tradition (such as cherry pie on Washington's birthday in the USA)? What else is special about ceremonial eating and feasts?
 14. How have food types and eating habits changed in recent memory? If you cannot ask about this yet, observe the households of elderly, middle aged, and younger people.

See also

See the following for related activities:

- Keywords: food , restaurants
- The Eating Out activity
- The Shopping Trip activity

Sources

Some of these questions are adapted from Purnell 1993.

Questions on sociocultural themes: Drink [27*]

Questions

Here are some questions to investigate in connection with the theme of drink:

1. What water sources exist? Is there concern for purity of water?
2. What beverages do people drink? What are they called? What are the ingredients?
3. Do people drink alcoholic beverages and if so, what kind? Are drinks made locally or do people buy them? What is the price relative to their average income?
4. Are there special places to buy or consume drinks? Who drinks together? When and where do they drink?
5. Are there certain things to drink on special occasions (such as champagne at weddings or on New Year's Eve)?
6. Is alcoholism considered a problem in the community? Is being drunk sanctioned?

See also

See the following for related information:

- Keywords: drink

Food

Sources

Adapted from Purnell 1993

Questions on sociocultural themes: Agriculture [24*]

Questions

Here are some questions to investigate in connection with the theme of agriculture:

1. What plants are cultivated for food? How are the fields prepared? When are crops planted? Who plants crops? When are crops harvested? Who harvests them? How are crops stored?

- Tip:** Make a calendar showing the events in the agricultural cycle of the year. Note when fields are prepared, planted, weeded, and harvested for different important crops. Note any religious ceremony that goes with agricultural cycle events.
2. What tools are used for agriculture? What are the names and parts of the tools?
 3. Do people plant the same crops on the same land every year? Do they plant more than one crop a year? If not, how often is the same land used?
 4. What crops are grown for sale? Do they have major cash crops? Who profits from cash crops?

See also

See the following for related information:

- Keywords: agriculture

Flora (plants)

Food

Sources

Some of these questions are adapted from Purnell 1993.