

Weddings Around the World

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Purpose:
Students will become aware of the similarities and differences of weddings in China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

Suggested Time:
4 days

Materials Needed:
Internet access
Optional: Resources books such as *Facts about Korea* (Samhua Printing Co., 1997).
Costumes and props from the school drama department
Several yards of silk-like cloth to adorn the brides.

Procedure:

Initiation (Inquiry/Preview/Involvement): Ask students to have their parents describe to them their wedding in preparation for Day #1 of this unit.

Day #1

1. Ask students to describe their parents' wedding, or weddings they have seen themselves.
2. Have students identify features that are common to many American weddings. Make a list on the chalkboard or chart on paper (to be retained for later reference) as the students respond (ie, throwing the bouquet, rice, a wedding cake).
3. Brainstorm the significance of some of the listed features.

Developmental (Data Collection/Organization/Instruction/Invention):

4. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a country for which the group must research that nation's traditional wedding ceremonies. (Optional: Have available any pertinent resources for student use.)

Day #2

5. Students access the internet for information on their topics. An excellent web site is www.weddingsnet.cim.hk/tradition. Another helpful source is askasia.org (See examples from both sites following this lesson plan).

Day #3

6. Schedule a small group work day as each small group plans how to explain and then act out for the class a wedding that would be typical to their country.

Extension/Enrichment (Idea Articulation/Ownership/Experimentation):

Day #4

7. Students describe the typical wedding of their country to the class, and then re-enact one. Every small group member must have an active role in the presentation (bride, groom, parents of the couple, attendees, and friends witnessing and celebrating the wedding).

Assessment of Achievement (Performance-based/Cooperative/Continuous): Students will be assessed as to how well they articulate the wedding customs of their assigned country. Peers will evaluate each other's demonstrations with 4 points = a meaningful depiction of the ceremony; 3 points = a commendable depiction of the ceremony; 2 points = polish needed; 1 point = a substandard depiction of the ceremony; and 0 points = unsatisfactory or lacking.

In addition, within the small group, each member will evaluate each other's work on a four point scale on the following qualities: Contributes to the research, suggests appropriate ideas for the dramatization; listens to others, and is prepared for the presentation.

Key Questions: How are wedding ceremonies in China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan similar? How are they different? Why are they different? From where do you think these customs may have originated?

Alternatives: Students may make a written report, story, or poem about a traditional wedding in an Asian country.

References & Recommended Resources: www.weddingsnet.com.hk/tradition
www.askasia.org

Additional resources for teachers listed on following background page

Summary Information

Adaptable Levels: Grades 5 – 12

Related Themes: CCC/PPE

Values: Appreciation and respect of differences

Skills: Researching, Organizing, Play acting, and Comparing

Integration: Computer skills, English, and Drama

Background

In China the minimum legal age for marriage is 20 for women and 22 for men. Nearly a third of the couples in China co-habit without being legally married. The bride's parents often demand gifts and money for their daughter's betrothal. In rural areas it is customary for the newly married couple to move in with the husband's family. (Neft 244)

Japanese weddings were traditionally pre-arranged since it was thought elders were better able to select one's lifelong partner. One third of the weddings today are pre-arranged with matchmakers to help introduce the two people to each other. The matchmaker's skills are sought because of the young people's busy schedules. Weddings are performed in a Shinto style ceremony with the groom's family paying the cost. (Neft 345)

It is common for wealthy families in Korea to pay huge fees to professional matchmakers known as Madame Ttu (Madame Procureess). Families with lesser means often turn to amateur matchmakers to bring about a formal introduction of the young man and woman. Strong distinctions are made between "love marriages" and "match made". (Cohen 174-5)

On the average, men in Taiwan marry women ten to twenty years younger than themselves. A substantial number of Taiwanese men look to mainland China for brides believing women on the mainland are more servile. Such couples usually have an extremely short courtship resulting in what is known as an "instant marriage." (Ogden 209)

Cohen, Myron L. editor, *Asia in the Core Curriculum: Case Studies in the Social Sciences*. M.E. Sharpe: New York, 1992.

Neft, Naomi and Levine, Ann D. *Where Women Stand*. Random House: New York, 1998.

Ogden, Dr. Suzanne. *Global Studies: China*. Dushkin Publishing: Guilford, CT, 1993.

Other possible sources:

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. *Chinese Civilization and Society*. Macmillon Publishing: New York, 1981.

Pruitt, Ida. *A Daughter of Han*. Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA. 1995.