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**UNIT ON CULTURE AND GLOBALIZATION**

**Introduction**

In this unit, students will read sections from the Culture Issue Brief about the complexities of cultural globalization. They will learn how globalization affects cultures around the world and what some of the responses have been. After suggesting some preliminary discussions and activities which will help students understand the central issues of cultural globalization, the lesson focuses on an actual case study which serves to highlight the main points of the topic and engage students in critical thinking.

**Student Objectives**

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of terms related to the study of globalization.
2. Identify effects of cultural globalization.
3. Evaluate the international penetration of American goods as a means of measuring globalization.
4. Analyze an international trade dispute surrounding global cultural concerns.

**Materials**

1. The following suggested items: Nike shoes, baseball hat of US professional sports team, CD of a major U.S. music group, video starring famous Hollywood actor, Barbie Doll, *Time* magazine, blue jeans with US label, Coke can, Kellogg's Corn Flakes, pack of Lucky Strikes cigarettes, wrappers from Burger King, Snapple bottle
2. Copies of Handout 1, "Introductory Discussion Questions"
3. Copies of Handout 2, "Discussion Questions for Activity 1"
4. Copies of Handout 3, "Discussion Questions for Canadian Magazines Case Study"
5. Copies of Handout 4, "Key Facts in the Canadian Magazines Case Study"

**Time Required**

2-3 classes

**Procedure**

**Introductory Discussion**

1. Have students read the "Introduction" to the Culture Issue Brief. This can be done as homework or in-class, and either on the computer or in print, depending on student access to computers. Alternatively, students can read this material following the activity.

2. Share with the class all or some of the items suggested in the above “Materials” section (either bring the items to class or write them on the board). Be sure to include at least one of the last three items as these are all produced by foreign-owned companies—Lucky Strikes cigarettes are made by London-based British American Tobacco, Burger King is owned by Britain’s Diageo, and Snapple is owned by Britain’s Cadbury Schweppes.
3. Pass out copies of Handout 1. Lead a discussion of the questions in Handout 1, which are designed to allow variety and flexibility in student answers. Students should make a case for why they answered a certain way.
4. As a final question, ask the students if they think all of these products are American. Point out the three items made by foreign-owned companies, and ask students if they can think of any other goods and services prevalent in the U.S. that are made by foreign-owned companies. Examples may include Jeep (Germany’s DaimlerChrysler), Holiday Inn (Britain’s Six Continents), Amoco gas stations (Britain’s BP), Taster’s Choice coffee (Nestle SA of Switzerland).

### Activity 1

1. Have students read the Culture Issue Brief’s sections on “Globalization vs. Local Cultures” and “The Dominance of the American Market.” This can be done as homework or in-class, and either on the computer or in print, depending on student access to computers. Alternatively, students can read this material following the activity.
2. Explain to the class that globalization does more than simply increase the availability of foreign-made consumer products. It also increases international trade in cultural products and services, such as movies, music, and publications. Thus, one of the criticisms of globalization is that exposure to foreign cultural goods frequently brings about changes in local cultures, values, and traditions. Concern centers in particular on the influence of U.S. companies. Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students and ask them to answer the discussion questions on Handout 2, having a student record the group’s answers. After groups are given ample time to discuss these questions, ask each group to choose a spokesperson to report its findings to the rest of the class.

### Discussion of Culture and Trade Disputes

1. Have students read the section of the Culture Issue Brief entitled, “Culture and Trade Disputes.” This can be done as homework or in class, and either on-line or in print, depending on student access to computers.
2. Ask students if they have seen any foreign films. Did they like them? How did they differ from American movies? How were the plot, characters, setting, effects, and themes different?

3. Pose the following question to the class: How can movies impact (in both negative and positive ways) the people of another country? Some positive effects may consist of a better understanding of human rights and democratic ideals, and some negative effects may include the emphasis on material goods and physical looks. Some students may choose to address the impact that foreign movies have on Americans. Positive effects may consist of a better understanding of foreign culture such as religion, familial structure, or nature of community in foreign countries. Foreign movies also may lead to a misunderstanding of foreign culture and stereotyping.

## Activity 2

1. As a way for students to recognize and comprehend how concern over the effects of cultural globalization plays out in the international arena, the following group activity will focus on picking apart the complicated and varied issues involved in the Canadian magazine dispute of the 1990s. Explain to the class that the Canadian magazine dispute is particularly good in illustrating the cultural concerns of globalization as well as its complex political and economic impacts.
2. Review with the class the basic facts of the case study, as shown on Handout 3
3. Next, ask students to try to determine some of the central issues involved in the case and why it became a dispute that had to be settled by an international organization. Distribute Copies of Handout 4 to help them focus on the key points of the case.
4. Divide the class into five groups and assign the groups one of the following sides:
  1. American magazine producers
  2. Canadian magazine producers
  3. U.S. government
  4. Canadian government
  5. Canadian consumers

Each group must decide on its position based on the central issues and facts of the case, using a student to record all decisions.

5. Once each group has settled on a position, assign groups to present their sides to the rest of the class. After all sides have presented, allow each side to raise a counterpoint to any of the aforementioned points and provide each group an opportunity to respond. The final result of this activity should be a resolution to the dispute. At the end, ask the class if it is possible for all groups to be satisfied by the final resolution. If the resolution favored Canada, what can the United States do? If the ruling favored the US, what can Canada do?
6. Finally, describe the final outcome of the dispute: the WTO decided that the tax was indeed discriminatory and unfair to foreign producers and ruled in favor of the US. Canada, as a consequence, took additional measures to protect the Canadian magazine

industry and counter-measures were contemplated by the United States. At one point, the United States threatened to impose retaliatory measures against Canadian steel, textiles and apparel, wood products, and plastics. Eventually, the Canadian government chose to settle the matter and removed most of its barriers to split-run magazines.

### Conclusion

Use the following discussion questions from the Culture Issue Brief in assessing the students. The teacher can have students answer the questions in essay form or give them as an in-class essay test.

1. To what extent do you think the U.S.-Canadian magazine dispute was motivated by genuine desires to protect Canadian culture? To what extent do you think the government of Canada was pressured to seek to protect its market because of the financial interests of the Canadian magazine industry? Given that Canadian magazines constitute only 11 percent of magazine sales in Canada, how important is this matter to Canadian culture?
2. If Canadians seem to prefer buying American magazines, why should they not be allowed to “vote” with their purchasing habits? Is it fair to levy extra taxes against foreign magazines – which has the effect of forcing Canadian purchasers of foreign magazines to subsidize local publications?

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**Handout 1**

*Introductory Discussion Questions*

Questions on Random Items

1. What are the common features of these products?
2. Which of these products are commonly available in other countries (think about the type of product and not the brand name)?
3. Which products are uncommon in other countries and why do you think so?
4. Are any of these products necessities?
5. What might a citizen of France use instead of these products? A villager in India? A resident of Russia?
6. What factors might affect how these individuals view these products? How does this compare with your view of these products? If you think the views are similar, why might this be so? If not, why not?

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**Handout 2**

*Discussion Questions for Activity 1*

1. Which American products/corporations have spread to other countries around the world? What is it about American products/corporations that have caused them to spread (as opposed to other products/corporations)?
2. What positive and negative impacts do these products/corporations have? How could they alter local cultures?
3. Why is the American market is so dominant?
4. What role do other countries play in cultural globalization? How do other countries contribute to American culture?
5. Do you feel uncomfortable or threatened by foreign products? Why or why not? Do you think other Americans are? Why or why not?

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**Handout 3**

*Key Facts in the Canadian Magazines Case Study*

- The Canadian government believed that domestic production of magazines was linked to national identity.
- The Canadian government placed restrictions on foreign magazines and in 1965 prohibited the importation of “split-run.”
- In Canada any magazine that was printed outside of Canada and imported into the country was considered foreign; thus, tariffs or prohibitions could easily be enforced at the border.
- However, advances in technology and trade agreements (in short, globalization) have altered the way the government can deal with foreign magazines.
- In 1993 Time Warner started to produce a split-run version of *Sports Illustrated*. New technology allowed Time Warner to produce the magazine in the US and then transmit the contents electronically to a Canadian printer via satellite.
- The old determination of whether a magazine was foreign or domestic was based on where it was printed. Now, *SI Canada* was managed by Time-Canada (a division of Time Warner), printed and distributed in Canada, and even had Canadian content. With domestic status, *SI Canada*, under Canadian law, could offer tax deductions to Canadian advertisers which could draw those advertisers away from Canadian magazines.
- Canadian publishers and the Canadian government feared many Canadian magazines would be forced out of business.
- In 1995 the Canadian government tried to protect Canadian magazines by imposing a tax on all advertising revenue for what it considered to be split-run publications; to avoid the new tax a magazine would have to contain at least 80% Canadian content.
- American magazine producers accused the Canadian government of discriminatory practices, which violated one of the core principles of the WTO.
- The US government decided to institute a WTO dispute settlement case against the tax.

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**Handout 4**

*Discussion Questions for Canadian Magazines Case Study*

1. In an age of globalization, what does it mean to say that a publication is “domestic” or “foreign/split-run?” What kind of criteria would you establish to distinguish between the two? Can these be applied to other things, such as music? What constitutes “domestic/local?” If the singer is a Canadian citizen? If the song is recorded in a studio in Ottawa rather than in Los Angeles? What if the writer of the lyrics and music is a US citizen but the singer is Canadian?
2. What does it mean to “protect local culture?” Is it fair to disadvantage consumers who want access to “foreign” cultural products? After all, no one is forcing Canadians to buy “foreign” products—they do so out of choice. Why should one group be disadvantaged for the sake of another? And who gets to make the decisions as to which groups are hurt and which benefit from such policies?
3. What if the shoe were on the other foot? Would it be fair for the US to restrict access to Canadian cultural products (for example, banning Celine Dion concerts) or to subsidize U.S. performers (for example, giving grants to Britney Spears)? How would Canadians react? Indeed, many Canadian performers have used access to the United States to make it big—Celine Dion, Bare Naked Ladies, Neil Young, Bryan Adams, Paul Schaffer.