

East Asian National Culture Identities As Expressed in Hip Hop Culture

By Gary M Powell

Introduction to the Lesson: Students will explore and report on the national cultures of East Asian nations found in expressions of hip hop culture. Can today's hip hop of popular global music, graffiti and dance provide clues as to the particular cultural identities of Japan, Vietnam, China or Korea? Or, is hip hop simply a global amalgamation devoid of national expression? After gathering evidence of national identities, students will gather to share and interrogate examples of how East Asian cultures individuate through the popular experience of hip hop.

Grade Level: 9-12

Time: 3-4 class periods

Objectives:

Research hip hop expression of national cultures.

Evaluate how hip hop expressivity provides evidence of national origin, identity, history, ethnicity, and experience.

Interrogate evidence brought forward by peers in respectful and insightful discussion.

Examine similarities and differences between East Asian and Western hip hop expressions.

For an assessment, students can showcase their learning through a written page, their own written lyrics or mini-mural that differentiates at least 2 East Asian national cultures with at least three examples of evidence for each nation.

Standards:

Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

SS.Geog4.a.h Explain how and why place based identities can shape events at various scales (e.g., neighborhood, national, regional identity). Explain how and why people view places and regions differently as a function of their ideology, race, ethnicity, language, gender, age, religion, politics, social class, and economic status.

SS.Inq1.a.h Frame researchable, complex, and open-ended questions, integrating multiple social studies strands that call for investigation.

SS.Inq2.a.h Explore evidence discovered through personal research through a variety of disciplinary lenses (e.g., economics, history, political science) and multiple perspectives (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income) with a variety of sources including primary and secondary sources.

SS.Inq3.a.h Develop a defensible claim to provide focus for an inquiry that is based upon the analysis of sources.

SS.Inq3.c.h Analyze the extent to which evidence supports or does not support a claim, and if it does not, modify the claim appropriately.

Lesson:

Hook:

1. Ask students for their favorite hip hop songs.

2. Teacher asks, “What particularly “American” examples can you identify in your favorite songs? For example, do you detect any Individuality? High Tech? Wealth/Materialism? Orientation toward Freedom? Diversity? Gun Culture? Hollywood References? Anything else? What strikes you as especially American?”
3. Gather examples.


Deepening Inquiry:

4. Inquire with students what East Asian nations might sound like in their lyrics, or look like in their hip hop dance or graffiti styles. Ask them if they’ve ever wondered whether or not national differences rise to the surface in their expressions of hip hop culture.

Task:

5. Assign nations to individuals or teams.
6. Provide some research tips.
7. Go over the chart and the example.
8. Find at least 4 examples of your nation’s hip hop culture, especially where it shows a unique feature of its cultural identity.
9. After finding 4-6 examples, highlight 2-3 of the best pieces of evidence you found that you’d like to share with the class. Consider how you’ll share them clearly, with your best voice and explanation.
10. Finally, choose ONE of your MOST INTRIGUING pieces of evidence. Find background information so you can give a bit of depth about it. For example, how does the example showcase the national culture? How strong is your example and why? Help your classmates understand its meaning, history, or socio-economic background. This should show in your chart as your most researched example.

Nation:

Link sources here	Examples Lyrics (or graffiti or dance photo) example	Title of song, band, artist, etc	Your Evaluation	Strength of Evidence: Possibility: 1-4 Probability: 5-8 Slam Dunk = 9-10
https://www.youtube.com/shorts/8m63VaWmWB0		Hip hop at Shibuya Yoyogi Park Tokyo @travelformile4054	The tranquil Yoyogi park in Tokyo comes alive with new hip hop acts in its lush surroundings. Could this be a link to Japan’s Shinto beliefs, a deep valuing of the spirit of the natural world? “The main beliefs of Shinto are the importance of purity, harmony, respect for nature, family respect, and subordination of the individual before the group.” (World History Encyclopedia)	4

