

The Culture of Sustainability

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This unit is meant to provide students with current and relevant examples of how the content they are learning within the classroom connects to their daily lives. The unit is designed to build on the in-depth information Advanced Placement Human Geography students need to understand within the course's unit on culture, as related to sustainable practices. It is extremely difficult to create one concrete definition of the term 'sustainability' because our ideas about the practices that are sustainable versus unsustainable depend so much on our cultures. Different cultural groups place value in different things, meaning that a practice that protects a resource that one culture values, may contradict what another group in a different physical location deems important. In recent years, what we consider to be sustainable beliefs and practices have become integrated in American popular culture and can be seen in nearly every part of our lives. This unit explores the fact that although it sometimes seems like it to us, the concept of sustainability is not new and can be tied to folk cultures around the globe. It then transitions into what sustainability looks like in the twenty-first century in America, where we were inundated with social pressure to abandon our drinking straws and make consumer choices to buy products that are recycled. Students will have an opportunity to create their own definition of sustainability and evaluate how sustainable our practices really are. This unit addresses the 9-12 grade benchmark for Delaware Geography Standard Three.