

UNIT 4 WORLD GEOGRAPHY LESSON 1

Summary

- In this lesson, students will read "Wild Ways" (pp. 52-57) to learn how people use song, dance, and stories to pass their history and traditions on to younger generations.

Social Studies Background

A tradition is a way of acting or thinking that a group of people has practiced for a long time. People all over the world have traditions, some of which are more widely practiced than others.

Vanuatu is a Y-shaped group of more than 80 islands in the South Pacific Ocean. Ninety-four percent of the people who live on this island nation are Melanesians, an indigenous population that has lived here for more than 2,500 years. With no written language, elders pass on their traditions through stories, songs, and dances. They believe that one sacred event, the Rom Dance, can influence the harvest.

Not far away, Indonesian villagers hold their own celebration. Each September, at the beginning of the rice-planting season, dancers wear costumes made of banana leaves and masks decorated to look like animals. They carry long wooden sticks, which they strike on the ground as they dance. The ceremony, called *hudoq*, is held to please the soul of the rice paddy and thus ensure a bountiful harvest.

ENGAGE

Encourage students to flip through the article and turn and talk with a partner to discuss what they see. Invite students to ask questions or share what they already know about traditional celebrations.

EXPLORE

Instruct students to examine the photo and read the text on pages 52-53 of their Readers. Brainstorm ideas about how a mask could tell a story, what kind of story this mask might tell, and what type of special festival it might be a part of.

EXPLAIN

Point out to students that people all over the world celebrate their cultures in different ways. This article gives four examples. **Ask:** *Which of these celebrations are held in South Asia or Oceania?* (Rom Dance in Vanuatu and *hudoq* dance in Indonesia) Have students turn and talk as they compare and contrast these two celebrations. (Same: people dance in costumes, tell a story, hope for a good harvest; Different: different costumes and stories, different crops—yams vs. rice, *hudoq* is bigger) Encourage students to discuss reasons why people use celebrations like these to pass on their traditions. Challenge them to explain why that is particularly important in a culture like the one in Vanuatu where the people have no written language.

ELABORATE

Invite students to search National Geographic's site (www.nationalgeographic.com) in order to learn how other people in South Asia and Oceania celebrate their cultures and pass on traditions to younger generations.

EVALUATE

Have students complete the **Content Assessment** for this lesson. Encourage them to share and compare their results in small groups.

Name _____

Date _____

CONTENT ASSESSMENT: South Asia and Oceania, Lesson 1

Describe what happens during the Rom Dance and the *hudoq* dance.

Rom Dance	<i>hudoq</i> dance

What can traditions like these dances teach younger generations about the history and culture of their people?
