Objective: Students will be able to:

- Understand the concept of culture.
- Define and identify aspects of culture.
- Recognize the differences between cultures.
- Use photograph analysis and reasoning to identify influences on a culture.

Time Required: One class period

Materials Needed:
- Cultural Images of Baseball (included)
- 5 copies of the Cultural Geography worksheets (included)
- Computer with Internet access (optional)
- Encyclopedia

Vocabulary:

**Culture** - The shared beliefs, social practices, and material traits within a group of people

**Cultural Geography** - The study of cultural aspects of various places and spaces
Applicable Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Additional Relevant National Learning Standards:
(Based on Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)

**Geography. Standard 2.** Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment

**Geography. Standard 4.** Understands the physical and human characteristics of place

**Geography. Standard 5.** Understands the concept of regions

**Geography. Standard 6.** Understands that culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions

**Geography. Standard 10.** Understands the nature and complexity of Earth’s cultural mosaics
1. Most people are familiar with the "location" part of geography and think about geography as the study of maps. But geography also means the study of the cultures of the people who inhabit Earth. Introduce this lesson by explaining that students will be exploring the cultural features of different Major League teams and ballparks across the country.

2. Write the following vocabulary words on the board and discuss them with the class:
   - **Culture** - the shared beliefs, social practices, and material traits within a group of people
   - **Cultural Geography** - the study of cultural aspects of various places and spaces

3. Now list the following categories on the board:
   - History
   - Food
   - Clothing
   - Arts
   - Language
   - Resources
   - Sports

4. Have the students brainstorm examples of cultural aspects that fit into those categories. Examples include:
   - History - a place's founding, its naming, major events such as battles, immigration, etc.
   - Food - distinct food items and food-eating customs
   - Clothing - preferred forms of dress, often related to an area's climate
   - Arts - distinct styles of art, music, and architecture
   - Language - languages spoken by residents as well as unique slang terms
   - Resources - industries or services for which a place is known
   - Sports - organized or informal sports played in a particular area
5. Review the cultural examples given by students, and review the definition of **cultural geography**. Explain that cultural features can be very similar or very different from one location to another.

6. Introduce the activity by explaining that students will be looking more closely at the cultural geography of baseball in America. Baseball is a sport that is part of American culture. The game is played all over the United States (and all over the world too!). Although the rules of the game are the same, each team celebrates the culture of its home town in unique ways.
1. Divide the class into four small groups, and ask each group to pretend that they are going to attend a baseball game in one of the following cities:
   - Phoenix, Arizona
   - Boston, Massachusetts
   - San Diego, California
   - New York City, New York

2. Have students use the Internet or an encyclopedia (or another similar research source you may have) to research each city's culture. Students should look for at least one example of each of the cultural aspects you listed on the board earlier.

3. Give students an appropriate amount of time to conduct their research and to take notes.

4. Allow each group to share their findings with their classmates.

5. Once each group has had time to share, begin a discussion about how the cultural aspects of each city might be seen at a ballpark. Will there be signs in languages other than English? Will there be unique foods sold? Will there be ballpark traditions that are distinctive to that city?

6. Give each group the photographs that pertain to baseball in their assigned city, and a Cultural Geography worksheet.

7. On their worksheets, students will answer the following questions:
   - What do you see?
   - What aspects of the city's culture do you recognize?
   - Is this different from your culture? If so, how?

8. Come back together as a class. Review the photographs one city at a time, allowing each group to share their observations.
Conclusion:

To conclude this lesson, review the concept of cultural geography. Ask students what aspects of your local culture are unique? Is your local culture represented through a sports team (high school, college, professional, etc.)? If so, how?

To check for understanding, have each student write a letter to a pretend pen-pal who lives in another country. Ask them to imagine that their pretend pen-pals have never seen a baseball game before. In their letters, students should describe what it is like to attend a baseball game in America. They should be as descriptive as possible. How do fans dress? What are common ballpark foods? What music is played?
Phoenix, Arizona

1 http://images.pictureshunt.com/pics/a/arizona_diamondbacks_mascot-9265.jpg
2 http://www.youthnoise.com/uservideo/new/5193.jpg
Boston, Massachusetts

4 http://www.delish.com/cm/delish/images/aO/boston-red-sox-fenway-frank-xl.jpg
New York City, New York

5 http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_lgxYKVOgMHk/S92aMVX7SxI/AAAAAAAAeI4/SArS_GYCZc/s1600/image001.jpg
6 http://assets.nydailynews.com/img/2008/04/21/alg_home-run-apple.jpg
San Diego, California


The Cultural Geography of Baseball
Worksheet

Group Names
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

1. What do you see?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. What aspects of culture do you recognize?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. Is this different from your culture? If so, how?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________