

RATIONALE
ANTHROPOLOGY, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY
A LOOK AT INDIA & ITS CULTURE

India is the second most populous nation in the world. Its people and history are full of rich culture and tradition. India is home to over one billion individuals. Nearly 1 in 7 people living on our planet today are of Southern Asian descent. With these staggering statistics we must be aware and conscious of India's relationship to us as Americans. We must teach our children the importance of learning about other countries through multicultural instruction so they grow up to be accepting and literate members of society. The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that all students be able to compare and contrasts selected world cultures during fourth grade (8.4.3.C). It also asks that students be able to identify the human characteristics of places and regions by using criteria based on culture, population, settlement, and economic and political activity (7.3.4.A). A unit on the culture, history, and geography of India will uphold and deliver these standards at their fullest intent.

This unit will benefit students in many ways through a diverse mix of content areas. Students will gain an understanding of India's historical, economical, political, and geographical characteristics while developing a keen knowledge of the Indian culture through a comprehensive association with all major subjects. These studies and structured activities will allow students to compare their own life to that of a child living in present day India and recognize the similar, reciprocal relationships they share with people from around the world.

The ideas of social studies will be accurately conveyed through the expression of anthropology, history, and geography. Because of the comprehensiveness of the topic, our unit will touch base on other fields of social studies education including economics, government, and sociology. The lessons taught during this integrated unit will be anchored around the development of a realistic connection to India.

The fields of social studies will help students develop an appreciation for multicultural learning. Anthropology will be the overriding theme of this particular unit. Language, holidays, religions, arts, food, and daily life will be examined to discover a deeper appreciation of the Indian culture. We will study important historical Indian figures and recognize their contributions to the modern day societies of India and the United States. Geography will be applied to look at India in terms of its location and physical features. The other fields of social studies will be utilized to gather knowledge about India's natural resources, government, major industries, and national symbols.

Language arts will be one of the greatest contributing factors in making this unit a success. Students will be expected to read, understand, and respond to essential pieces of Indian literature (1.2.4.E). We will learn about traditional Indian folktales and compare them to similar American versions. Students will be asked to use appropriate internet resources to find current events that are affecting India (3.4.4.A). Students are expected to differentiate between essential and unessential material and eliminate biased news articles (1.2.4.C).

During our unit we will take an in-depth look at the population of India. Using computation and estimation we will compare India to other world nations, by investigating

information about living space and overcrowding (2.2). Measurement will be employed to track the distance between our school and India (2.3).

Arts and Humanities will be integrated into our unit in order to establish a richer meaning of culture. We will relate different components of art to India and see how culture impacts these art forms (9.2.3. E) (9.2.3.G). Students will listen and comment on music of India, explore Indian instruments, and learn to do traditional dances.

Our culminating activity for this unit will be “An Evening in India.” Students will use their family and consumer science skills to prepare Indian foods to share with the class (10.3.6.F). The evening will include Indian music and the performance of our dances. Finally, we will use technology to connect with students in India and take a virtual tour of the capital city (3.4.4.E).

Learning about our world and instilling a sense of interest in multicultural studies in young students is an integral part of preparing our children for their future. As one of the most populous nations on our planet India provides a great point of exploration for the elementary curriculum. As a child I loved to learn about people from other countries and I always found direct comparisons and relationships to be of particular interest. I hope that using these connections to incorporate all subject areas into one integrated unit will create a lasting impression on the child that remains with them for a lifetime.

In the future I would like to create units related to other major world nations. After the completion of these units, students would be on the right track to becoming culturally literate members of society. At the end of 4th grade we could have a “World Day” where we encourage our students to pick their favorite nation (not yet studied) and ask them to research and share their information with the class. The possibilities are endless!