

Week 2 Agenda: U1 South Asia as Region

India and South Asia: From Area Studies to Ethnic Studies

This week we will primarily take a geographic approach to the study of South Asia, examining the physical environment and linguistic patterns as we attempt to establish our own sense of where we should consider the boundaries of the region to be.

All student work for the week will eventually be used in the unit assessment.

Optional Readings for Teachers or as Class Text

- Bose and Jalal Ch. 1 "South Asian History: An Introduction" (pgs. 1-7)
- DeVotta and Ganguly Ch. 2 "A Geographic Preface" by Douglas Hill (pgs. 23-52)
- Ludden Ch. 1 "Inventing Civilization" (pgs. 9-19)
- Mann Foreword "South Asia: A Geographical, Environmental, and Historiographical Introduction"
- Talbot "Introduction" (pgs. 1-12)
- Visweswaran Part II "The Study of South Asian Society and the emergence of Modern Forms of Social Classification" and "Notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture" by Bernard Cohn (pgs. 47-68)
- Wadley Ch. 1 "Introducing South Asia" (pgs. 3-17) & "Language in South Asia (pgs. 66-80)

LESSON #1: Intro to Area Studies

Optional Bell-Ringer: Which academic discipline do you expect this course to fit into – and why?

Purpose

- This course is interdisciplinary in its approach (as many, if not all, Social Studies classes are at the high school level), so we'll begin by making sure students have a sense of what that means. "Interdisciplinary" is so broad that there are a few organized fields of study that deliberately use it to describe themselves – though they themselves are pretty nebulous when it comes time to define exactly what that means! One of those fields is Area Studies. As we prepare to think about South Asia as a region, we'll use this opportunity to consider what it means to utilize an Area Studies approach.

Prep

- Preview the PPT (in the course files) to ensure the procedure makes sense to you and make any changes or additions you would like.
- If you'd prefer handouts/think it's hard for students to read the statements in the presentation, print out the two think-pair-share/small group discussion slides.
- References are provided at the end of the presentation – they are worth reading if you need background.

Procedure

Developed by Rachel Heilman (Issaquah High School) with support from the South Asia Center at the University of Washington with funding from the U.S. Department of Education National Resource Centers Program.

1. Decide how you'd like to facilitate whole-class brainstorming and think-pair-share/small group discussions.
2. Work your way through the PPT.

LESSON #2: Physical Geography

Optional Bell-Ringer: Sketch out the mental map you have of South Asia. How much detail are you able to include? Which sorts of things – places, physical features, etc. – did you label it with? What does the way you sketched the region tell you about how you see it?

Purpose

- The lessons in this unit are all designed to guide students as they evaluate the many approaches to describing South Asia as a region. The first step in that process will be examining the physical geography in order to consider which natural boundaries might tie the area together. Students should keep all of the maps they create in their notebook so that they can refer back to them for the unit assessment.

Prep

- Make individual copies of a blank/outline physical map that focuses on South Asia. For example: <https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/SCASIA.pdf>
- For instructions, you'll need to provide students with a list of items to label on the map – written or projected to the front of the classroom or as a handout.

Rivers

Indus River

Ganges River

Brahmaputra River

Irrawaddy River

Mountains

Himalaya Mountains

Arakan Mountains

Hindu Kush Mountains

Eastern and Western Ghats

Bodies of Water

Indian Ocean

Arabian Sea

Gulf of Bengal

Andaman Sea

Other Features

Deccan Plateau

Thar Desert

Palk Strait

- Students will need an atlas – digital or physical – available to label their maps.

Procedure

1. Students should label the listed items on their outline map of South Asia.
2. At the bottom of the map or on the back, students should respond to this prompt: If we want to use physical geography to think about South Asia as a region, where should the boundaries of the region be drawn? Explain your thinking.

LESSON #3: Indian Ocean and Tibetan Plateau Case Study (Part 1)

Optional Bell-Ringer: Imagine you were living in the Thar Desert a thousand years ago. What connections do you think you would have to the rest of the world?

Purpose

- In Lesson #4 we will be considering whether we really need to use political boundaries to think about the world's regions. To set that up, you'll use this lesson to combine some visuals with some evaluation of how the region we'll be studying has been connected to the rest of the world long before our modern era of globalization.

Prep

- Access PBS/BBC's *The Story of India*, Episode 3 "Spice Routes and Silk Roads" (although you can purchase the episode through Amazon and elsewhere, your school or public library system likely has it available as a streaming option)
- Students will need a blank sheet of paper or an outline map that includes Africa, the Middle East, Central, and South Asia (for example, <http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/ASIA.PDF>).

Procedure

1. Have students view the entire episode of "Spice Routes and Silk Roads" or, if you are limited by time, the segments from 1-7, 22-33, and 43-52.
2. As students watch the video, they should not be taking lots of notes – one of the goals is simply to get a sense of how the region looks. What they should be doing is making a concept map of connections between South Asia and other areas of the world on a blank sheet of paper or, if you gave them the outline map, they should be annotating the map to indicate connections. Precision is not the goal; rather we want students to see that although we are studying South Asia a region it has never developed in isolation from the rest of the world.

LESSON #4: Indian Ocean and Tibetan Plateau Case Study (Part 2)

Optional Bell-Ringer: If you want to study a part of the world, but you don't want to use the political boundaries countries draw on maps – what could you use to define regions?

Purpose

- Although we will be using the region of South Asia and political boundaries to think about the content of this class, Area Studies doesn't exclusively use that approach. What about regions determined more explicitly by the environment? The Tibetan Plateau or the Indian Ocean could just have easily been used to organize an Area Studies course like this one!

Prep

- Access the map on the second page of "Major Rivers of the Tibetan Plateau" by Stewart Gordon in the Winter 2010 edition of *Education About Asia* (In the course files or at <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/major-asian-rivers-of-the-plateau-of-tibet-the-basics.pdf>)

- Access the “Seasonal Winds of the Indian Ocean” map provided by the Perry Castaneda Library Map Collection (In the course files or at https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/islands_oceans_poles/dhow_76.jpg)
- Students will need a blank sheet of paper to write on.
- Decide how you would like to facilitate discussions: whole class, small group, think-pair-share, or only individual/written responses.

Procedure

1. Students should head their blank sheet of paper with the title “Response Log.”
2. Project the map from “Major Rivers of the Tibetan Plateau.” Brainstorm as a class: How will people’s lives be different depending on where along the river they live?
3. Have students discuss what people living at the Syr Darya likely have in common with people living at the source of the Brahmaputra. Will their lives have more in common with each other than with those of people living further down the various rivers?
4. Students should summarize their thoughts about the discussion on their response log.
5. Project the “Seasonal Winds of the Indian Ocean” map. Students should silently consider the map for 30 seconds.
6. Have students discuss what they notice about the map – what conclusions can they draw about the way Indian Ocean trade shapes people’s lives?
7. Students should summarize their thoughts about the discussion on their response log.
8. Have students respond to the following prompt: “We will be studying South Asia by declaring particular countries part of the region. How do you think your learning would be different if we conceptualized the region as based around the Indian Ocean or the Tibetan Plateau?”

LESSON #5: Linguistic Geography

Optional Bell-Ringer: Should countries have an official language? What is the purpose of having an official state language?

Purpose

- We are continuing to consider where the boundaries should be drawn for South Asia as a region. So far students have thought through physical/environmental features. Now we will turn their attention to several aspects of culture (which has often been one of the primary ways regions are constructed by human geographers). Linguistic boundaries in South Asia are quite complex. This lesson will provide an opportunity to look for patterns that may help students to conceptualize South Asia as a region.

Prep

- Access the “Language Families in South Asia” map posted at the University at Buffalo (<https://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~dryer/map.sasia.gif>)
- Access the “Map of South Asian Languages” posted in Emory University’s Scholar Blog (<https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/woodruff/files/2021/03/map-of-south-asian-languages.png>)

- Have the article “Multilingualism in India” by Jessica Chandras available for students as a handout or digitally (<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/multilingualism-in-india/>)
- Provide individual copies of the Linguistic Geography handout (below) to students.

Procedure

1. Project the “Language Families in South Asia” map. Have students analyze the map individually, in pairs, or in small groups and record their response on the Linguistic Geography handout.
2. Have students read “Multilingualism in India” (<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/multilingualism-in-india/>) and complete the Linguistic Geography handout.

Linguistic Geography Handout

Name _____

"Language Families in South Asia" Map Analysis

How many different language families do you see represented?

Why do you think this particular linguistic pattern developed? Explain your thinking.

Do you think we can use language to define South Asia as a region? Why or why not?

"Map of South Asian Languages" Map Analysis

Consider the various scripts that accompany the individual languages. Does this map support the conclusions you drew using the first map? Explain your thinking.

"Multilingualism in India" Close Reading

Turn this handout over and divide the blank space into 2 parts.

Label the halves:

Important Facts	Support for South Asia as Region

As you read, fill out your chart.

Important facts will be things you should know in order to understand the role of language in shaping Indian culture and society.

The article is an informational text; the author is not trying to support a position related to how we conceptualize the region. As you read, consider how you can use what you are learning to **develop your own thinking** on the subject.

Relevant Washington State Standards

SSS1.9-12.5 Explain the challenge and opportunities of addressing problems over place and time using disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses.

SSS2.9-12.3 Determine the kinds of sources and relevant information that are helpful, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

SSS3.9-12.5 Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past and its relationship to the present.

G1.9-10.1 Define the characteristics of each of the major world regions.

G1.9-10.4 Explain relationships between the locations of places and regions, and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics, using maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations.

G1.11-12.4 Analyze information from geographic tools, including computer-based mapping systems, to draw conclusions about an issue or event. G1.11-12.5 Evaluate the complexities of regions and the challenges involved in defining those regions.

G2.9-10.1 Analyze human interaction with the environment across the world in the past or present.

G2.11-12.6 Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

G3.9-10.1 Define how the geography of expansion and encounter have shaped global politics and economics in history. G3.9-10.2 Analyze the reciprocal nature of how historical events and the spatial diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices have influenced migration patterns and the distribution of human population.

G3.11-12.4 Evaluate how changes in the environmental and cultural characteristics of a place or region influence spatial patterns of trade and land use.

H1.11-12.1 Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

H3.11-12.6 Evaluate the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.