

3 Culture, diffusion, language and religion – Part 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English	Write it 3 times (English)		
Culture	_____	_____	_____
Cultural traits	_____	_____	_____
cultural landscape	_____	_____	_____
Folk culture	_____	_____	_____
Popular culture	_____	_____	_____
Diffusion	_____	_____	_____
hearth	_____	_____	_____
Relocation diffusion	_____	_____	_____
Expansion diffusion	_____	_____	_____
Contagious	_____	_____	_____
Hierarchical	_____	_____	_____
Stimulus	_____	_____	_____
language family	_____	_____	_____
dialects	_____	_____	_____

English**Write it 3 times** (English)

lingua franca

pidgin

creole

Toponyms

Universalising religions

Ethnic religions

Recall

You know that people in different places eat differently, speak differently and worship differently – and that some of those differences are spreading while others are disappearing.

This sheet gives you the vocabulary for describing culture as a spatial thing.

New ideas**■ 1 Culture and the landscape**

Culture is the shared practices, beliefs and material objects of a group. **Cultural traits** are the individual elements – a food, a greeting, a building style.

The **cultural landscape** is the visible imprint of human activity on a place: field patterns, house styles, religious buildings, signs and their languages. Reading a landscape for what it reveals about the people who made it is the core skill of this unit.

■ 2 Folk and popular culture

Folk culture is practised by a small, often rural, homogeneous group; it changes slowly, spreads by relocation, and produces distinctive local landscapes.

Popular culture is practised by large, heterogeneous groups; it changes quickly, spreads through media, and produces uniform landscapes – the same shopfronts in every city.

Popular culture erodes local distinctiveness, which is why **cultural landscape homogenisation** is a standard exam theme. The counter-process is **cultural appropriation** debates and deliberate revival of folk practice.

■ 3 How things diffuse

Diffusion is the spread of a trait from its **hearth**. There are two families.

Relocation diffusion: people physically carry the trait to a new place – a migrant community brings its language and cuisine.

Expansion diffusion spreads outward while remaining strong at the source, and has three forms. **Contagious** spreads to everyone nearby, like a viral video. **Hierarchical** jumps between important nodes first – a fashion appears in major cities before reaching small towns. **Stimulus** spreads the underlying IDEA while the form changes – a fast-food chain selling a vegetarian burger where beef is not eaten.

■ 4 Language

A **language family** branches into **branches**, then **groups**, then individual languages and **dialects**. Indo-European is the largest family; Sino-Tibetan the second.

A **lingua franca** is a language adopted for communication between speakers of different first languages. A **pidgin** is a simplified contact language; when children grow up speaking it as a first language it becomes a **creole**.

Toponyms – place names – are evidence of who settled a place and when.

■ 5 Religion

Universalising religions seek converts and spread by both expansion and relocation diffusion – Christianity, Islam, Buddhism. **Ethnic religions** are tied to a people and a place, spread mainly by relocation, and rarely seek converts – Hinduism, Judaism, Shinto.

The distinction predicts the map: universalising religions are widely dispersed, ethnic ones concentrated in a homeland.

Practice

Try these in order. The methods are all above.

3.1 Define the cultural landscape. [2]

3.2 Give two differences between folk culture and popular culture. [2]

3.3 Name the type of expansion diffusion in which a trend appears in large cities before small towns. [1]

3.4 Explain the difference between a pidgin and a creole. [2]

3.5 Explain why universalising religions are more widely dispersed than ethnic religions. [3]
