

Newspapers In Education and the University of Washington's Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies Asia and Global Outreach Centers present

EXPLORING ASIA: ASIAN CITIES — GROWTH AND CHANGE



The Henry M. Jackson
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ABOUT THE “EXPLORING ASIA: ASIAN CITIES: SERIES

“Exploring Asia: Asian Cities — Growth and Change” is a collaborative project between the Newspapers In Education program of The Seattle Times and the University of Washington’s Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies Asia and Global Studies outreach centers. The project consists of a five-article series, a teaching guide and a pre-series workshop for secondary teachers. Designed with high school readers in mind, each article in the online newspaper series focuses on the changing face of cities in Asia.

The five-part series begins with an overview of urbanization in Asia, followed by articles featuring India, Vietnam, China and Central Asia. This teaching guide provides a lesson plan for each article and activities to do with students before, during and after reading the featured weekly article. Together, the articles and accompanying lessons take students on an exploration of urbanization in several Asian countries, asking them to look at the issues from multiple perspectives and to explore the opportunities and challenges facing policymakers, the burgeoning number of city dwellers and other stakeholders. The points of view represented in the articles and guide materials represent a sampling of perspectives on these issues.

AUTHOR OF THE TEACHING GUIDE

The author of the teaching guide for “Exploring Asia: Asian Cities — Growth and Change” series is Tese Wintz Neighbor, who received a Master of Arts in China Regional Studies from the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. For the past 13 years, she has worked as the senior director of professional development for the Seattle World Affairs Council and has also taught intensive Asia seminars for the National Consortium for Teaching about Asia, regionally based at the University of Washington’s East Asia Resource Center. Neighbor is the author of numerous curricula on Asia, including “Journey Down the Yangtze: From Dragon’s Tail to Dragon’s Head” (1998, East Asia Resource Center,) “Teacher’s Guide to Treasures From a Lost Civilization: Ancient Chinese Art From Sichuan” (2001, Seattle Asian Art Museum,) “Understanding the World of Political Cartoons” (2003, Newspapers In Education,) “China Matters” (2008, World Affairs Council,) “Global Health: Asia in the 21st Century” (2009, Newspapers In Education,) “Exploring Asia: Islam in Asia” (2012, Newspapers In Education) and “Exploring Asia: Political Change in the 21st Century” (2013, Newspapers In Education.) She is also co-author of “Exploring Asia: Human Rights” (2011, Newspapers In Education.)

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LESSON ONE

EXPLORING ASIA: ASIAN CITIES — GROWTH AND CHANGE

Pair with “Urban and Megacity Asia” by Anand Yang, Job and Gertrude Tamaki Professor, Director, South Asia Center; Co-Director, Global Asia Institute, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington. (The article appears in *The Seattle Times* on April 30, 2014.)

INTRODUCTION

The lessons in this teaching guide, paired with five articles appearing in *The Seattle Times* Newspapers In Education series, introduce students to the rapid urbanization — and the consequent changes — in Asia today. The focus is on India, Vietnam, China and Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.) In this first lesson, students will begin to learn about the rise and formation of megacities in Asia. This broad overview provides a foundation as the students discuss various reading assignments over the next six weeks.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will build their geographic knowledge of Asia.
- Students will define “megacity” and identify the growing number of megacities around the world.
- Students will learn about the process of rapid urbanization and the rise of the Asian megacity.
- Students will begin to think about some of the benefits and costs of urban expansion.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the causes of rapid urban population growth in Asia today?
2. Why are a growing number of rural residents around the world moving to urban areas?
3. What are some of the challenges and opportunities facing megacities — and their dwellers — today?

MATERIALS

- The *Seattle Times* article “Urban and Megacity Asia”
- Computer/Internet access
- Projector

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. Assess students’ prior knowledge of Asia. Which countries are located in Asia? How many people live there? Do they live mostly in urban or rural areas? Project the map at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sino-Indian_Geography.png on the board and have one student point to the countries that will be discussed in this NIE series: India, Vietnam, China, Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.) Ask another student to point to a few of the major urban areas that will be discussed: Bangalore, Delhi (India;) Hanoi, Saigon (Vietnam;) Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou (China;) Astana (Kazakhstan) and Ashgabat (Turkmenistan.)

NOTE: If basic background information would be helpful, view these websites to build students’ knowledge:

BBC Country Profile. Full profiles provide an instant guide to history, politics and economic background of countries and territories, as well as background on key institutions. They also include audio and video clips from BBC archives. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm

Asia Society: Countries and History: Country Profiles. This site provides an alphabetical listing of all countries in Asia. Each country’s page includes a map, which can be expanded to show all of Asia or zoomed in to focus within the country. Basic data is provided for each country. <http://asiasociety.org/countries/country-profiles>

2. Next, ask students to define “megacity.” (A megacity in this unit is defined as a metropolitan area with more than 10 million people.) Ask students to identify cities around the world with more than 10 million people. You can give them a hint: there are currently 27. Ask one student to record this brainstorming list on the board. Compare their list with this up-to-date list: <http://l-lists.com/en/lists/2mzkgs.html> (this site includes one photo of each city that you may want to project on the board.)

During and after reading

1. Explain to students that this article is about mass migration and urban development taking place in Asia today. Ask students to highlight demographic, economic, political and other information that is new to them.
2. Next, ask students to form small groups and discuss the following: What is the author’s main point? What are some of the facts that he discusses? What have they heard recently in the news and/or learned in school that corresponds with his article? What do they want to learn more about?
3. Share with students that for first time in human history, more of the world’s populations now live in cities rather than in rural areas. Taking into account Anand Yang’s article, ask each student to discuss three reasons why Asians living in rural areas might want to move to larger metropolitan areas. Ask each student to discuss three reasons why rural Washingtonians might want to move to the greater Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metropolitan area (population 3.5 million.) How do their reasons compare?

ASSESSMENT

As discussed, there are many causes for the growth of megacities. Share with students the following background information on Dhaka, the capital of the south Asian nation of Bangladesh and one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. Share with students this quote from a PBS news report: “Bangladeshis who once lived and farmed in rural areas are finding themselves without a way of making a living, since floods and other natural disasters have made their land unfit for farming. For many, the only hope is to move their families into the city to find work and live in sprawling slums with others in similar positions. Even though conditions in the slums are unsanitary and crowded, many slum-dwellers see life in the city as a stepping stone to a better future.” Project this eight-minute PBS News Report on a large screen: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/daily_videos/megacities-of-today-and-tomorrow/. As they watch this film, ask them to jot down some of the main points. After the film, ask them to share these points. How would they describe this news report to someone who hasn’t seen it? Ask them to recall a quote or story that stands out.

Next, divide the class into 10 small groups. Assign two groups each to one of the following five films from a GlobalPost series entitled “Rise of the Megacities,” which focuses on Dhaka:

- “Dhaka: The Fastest-Growing Megacity in the World” (7:29)
<http://globalpost.com/dispatch/asia/100831/bangladesh-megacities-part-one>
- “The Dreams of Dhaka’s Garment Girls” (3:44)
<http://globalpost.com/dispatch/asia/100831/bangladesh-megacities-part-two-garment-girl>
- “Disaster Drives Mass Migration to Dhaka” (3:58)
<http://globalpost.com/dispatch/asia/100831/bangladesh-megacities-part-three-migrant>
- “Interview: Looking on the bright side of Earth’s growing slums”
<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/asia/100831/bangladesh-megacities-part-four-interview-stewart-brand>
- “Who Can Solve a Problem Like Dhaka?” (4:27)
<http://globalpost.com/dispatch/asia/100831/bangladesh-megacities-part-five-development>

Ask each group to write a quiz based on the film they viewed. They should come up with at least 10 questions. These could be short-answer, matching, true-or-false, graph or photo analysis questions or a combination of one or more question formats. Encourage them to be creative. For example, they could use maps, graphs and photos as part of their quiz. Ask them to hand in two quizzes: one without the answers and one with the answers. Finally, ask both groups that watched the same film to exchange and take one another’s quizzes. Leave time for them to grade the quiz and discuss the correct answers.

LESSON TWO

EXPLORING ASIA: ASIAN CITIES —GROWTH AND CHANGE

Pair with “Growth and People in Bangalore, India” by Anu Taranath, senior lecturer, Department of English, University of Washington. (The article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 7, 2014.)

INTRODUCTION

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to the development and growth in Bangalore, India’s third most populous city. Dr. Taranath encourages readers to think about the opportunities and challenges that affect how people “live, work, play and, even, what they eat and drink.” Through the eyes of a new urban resident, students will observe the complicated realities facing her and her family. This lesson encourages students to explore the impact of urbanization at all levels through different lenses.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about Bangalore, one of the fastest-growing cities in India.
- Students will consider how development and growth impact the lives of the people.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. How have development and growth physically transformed Bangalore?
2. What opportunities and challenges do Bangalore residents face today?
3. Are there ways to globalize and develop economically and still include all segments of society?

MATERIALS

- The *Seattle Times* article “Growth and People in Bangalore, India”
- Computer/Internet access
- Projector

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. Assess students’ prior knowledge of Bangalore. Where is it located? (South Central India) What is the population? (8.5 million) Why is it called “Garden City?” (large parks, open spaces, tree-lined avenues, tropical weather) Why is it often called the “Silicon Valley of India?” (India’s top exporter of information technology; ninth preferred entrepreneurial location in the world.)
2. Next, ask students to envision the urban landscape of Bangalore as described by Dr. Taranath: (a) one-story homes torn down to construct glass and steel high-rises; (b) city limits expanded into farmland; (c) ancient trees uprooted for more paved roads and freeways. Ask them to draw this with a pencil on paper. Ask them to team up with another classmate and compare their sketches. Next, share a staggering fact with them: there are more than 850 slums in Bangalore. How does this impact their sketch?

During and after reading

1. Discuss the author's opening lines: "Development' and 'growth' are often imagined as categorically good things for both people and economies. ... Development and growth provide opportunities for some but can also exacerbate existing social stratifications and make life more difficult for others." Then, ask students to reread the article and circle the opportunities and underline the challenges that a burgeoning population in Bangalore face today. After everyone is finished reading, ask one student to compile these circled opportunities into one list on the board and ask another student to compile the underlined challenges into an adjacent list. Discuss other possible opportunities and/or challenges as more and more people move into Bangalore. Add these to the two lists.
2. Ask each student to find a photo of Bangalore that illustrates rapid growth and development. In small groups, compare the photos. Is this what they envisioned in the earlier exercise when they sketched the urban landscape of Bangalore? Do new opportunities or challenges come to mind (other than those already listed on the board) after observing these photos? If so, add these to the lists on the board.
3. In preparation for their final assessment exercise, ask students to recall Muniyamma's story. If they were in Muniyamma's shoes, how would they respond to the author's questions: "What is your dream for yourself and family? What is your next step? What might be your five-year plan and what obstacles do you foresee?"

ASSESSMENT

Ask each student to imagine themselves as one of the new migrants like Muniyamma in search of a job in Bangalore (or another large city in south Asia like Delhi or Mumbai in India or Dhaka in Bangladesh.) Students can choose where they work and live. Perhaps they live in a new high rise and work in technology, education, research, aerospace, telecommunications, defense or film. Or they may be one of Bangalore's slum dwellers and work as a street vendor, bicycle rickshaw driver, trash hauler or rag picker. Or perhaps they live in modest housing and work as a cook, servant or a hotel staff member. Encourage them to search both Western and non-Western sources (see the list below) for articles about one of India's new urbanites. Ask them to write a 700-word blog in the first person and "voice" of the person they have chosen. Ask them to describe (1) their day-to-day lives (including their living and working conditions); (2) how their lives are different from their parents' generation; (3) their hopes and fears (and conclude by zeroing in on one positive change in their life and one new obstacle.) After they have finished their blogs, they may want to post them on a (physical) blog wall in the classroom or, if time permits, read them in class or in small groups. Encourage them to be creative; a few may enjoy designing a political cartoon that corresponds with their blog entry.

Indian English edition newspapers:

- The Times of India
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/international-home>
- The Economic Times
<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com>
- Deccan Herald
<http://deccanherald.com>

LESSON THREE

EXPLORING ASIA: ASIAN CITIES —GROWTH AND CHANGE

Pair with “The Rickshaw Trade in Colonial Vietnam” by H. Hazel Hahn, associate professor of history, Seattle University. (The article appears in The Seattle Times on May 14, 2014.)

INTRODUCTION

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to the history of the rickshaw in colonial Vietnam. The rickshaw was imported into Hanoi from Japan in the 1880s. It became the most popular means of transportation during the colonial period from 1910 to 1935. According to Professor Hahn, there were varied opinions among the public about the roles of rickshaws in society.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the history of rickshaws.
- Students will consider why the rickshaw was a source of political and ideological debate.
- Students will explore the lives of rickshaw pullers in the past and the lives of present-day pedicab or tuk-tuk drivers.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What is the history of the rickshaw?
2. Why did the rickshaw provoke “much anxiety among Vietnamese journalists and intellectuals?”
3. What is the role of rickshaws in society today as compared to the past?

MATERIALS

- The Seattle Times article “The Rickshaw Trade in Colonial Vietnam”
- Computer/Internet access
- Projector

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. Assess students’ prior knowledge of the rickshaw. What is it? Who invented it? When? Where? When and where were trishaws (pedal rickshaws or pedicabs) introduced? Where on the planet do we find motorized rickshaws (jeepney/tuk-tuks) today?
2. Next (in order to provide answers to these questions), project the “Evolution of the Rickshaw PHP” <http://ecocabs.org/museum/evolution.php> on the board and have a different student read each caption to the class. Ask students to take notes about the role of rickshaws in society.
3. Where else in the world can you find motorized rickshaws? Project this image on the screen http://jpaerospace.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Ed_Mittchel_MET.jpg and ask students, where in the world is this? (the moon!) Students who are interested can look up more information on the lunar rickshaw also known as the mobile equipment transport or MET.

During and after reading

1. Explain to students that The Seattle Times article discusses rickshaws in colonial Vietnam. As students read the article, ask them to highlight the author's main points. What role did rickshaws play in colonial Vietnam?
2. Hahn writes, "The rickshaw came to be symbolic of broader social problems and stirred controversies that were debated in the press and channeled into political ideologies." Ask students to divide into groups and discuss Hahn's statement. Why were rickshaws a source of political and ideological debate? Students who are interested in this topic might want to read "Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s" by David Strand. On page 21, he writes, "Sixty thousand men took as many as a half million fares a day in a city of slightly more than one million. Sociologist Li Jinghan estimated that one out of six males in the city between the ages of 16 and 50 was a puller. Rickshaw men and their dependents made up almost 20 percent of Beijing's population." A fictional account of an impoverished young rickshaw puller in 1920s Beijing is Lao She's "Rickshaw Boy." Considered a classic of 10th-century Chinese literature, "Rickshaw Boy" was made into a feature film in 1982. It can be rented or viewed online at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=FKNEwChlecY>. Students might be interested to know that when Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China in 1949, most rickshaws were abolished "because they were considered a symbol of oppression of the working class."

ASSESSMENT

Ask students to pair up. In this assignment, each pair will pretend they are a rickshaw puller (or the rickshaw,) a cycle rickshaw driver (or the cycle rickshaw,) or a tuk-tuk driver (or the tuk-tuk) and give a five-minute presentation. They can present a poster, short video, PowerPoint presentation, written essay, interview (live or film,) news item (article, blog or film) or a diary entry from one time and place. The time and place could be late 19th-century Japan; early or late 20th-century Vietnam, China, Singapore or Indian subcontinent; 21st-century Beijing, Bangkok, Seattle or the moon. Challenge students to be creative. Perspectives are endless:

- One of 60,000 men toiling for pennies a day in 1920 Beijing
- One of millions of impoverished Chinese peasants who left their homeland to work as rickshaw pullers in Singapore and other growing urban areas
- One of 10,000 tuk-tuk drivers in the crowded, smoggy streets of Bangkok today
- One of the bicycle rickshaw cyclers for tourists today in old Beijing or along Seattle's waterfront
- One of the soon-to-be unemployed bicycle rickshaw cyclers in Asia due to the rapid growth of megacities and the consequent changing traffic patterns

For inspiration, project this short trailer to the documentary called "Pedal Soldier of India" that looks at the 100-year history of urbanization through the eyes of a rickshaw cyler in India: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=S1MQaLMTO-I>

Note: Students will not have a difficult time finding historical and present-day online print resources on rickshaws. There are also numerous documentaries that can be found online; here are a few:

Collection of historic videos (1945-2011)

<http://ecocabs.org/museum/videos.php#!prettyPhoto>

Documentary film: "Men of Burden — Pedaling Towards a Horizon"

<https://archive.org/details/MenOfBurden>

This film, set in southeast India, "explores some of the ethical dimensions of man pulling man against the background of increasingly menacing effects of motorized transport and pollution. ... While India's big cities are racing toward globalization and technology, these men, against all odds, remain appreciative of their modest lives by believing in the power of now."

LESSON FOUR

EXPLORING ASIA: ASIAN CITIES —GROWTH AND CHANGE

Pair with “Migration and Urbanization in China” by Kam Wing Chan, professor of geography, University of Washington (The article appears in The Seattle Times on May 21, 2014.)

INTRODUCTION

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to China’s rapid and massive rural-urban population shift. Professor Chan explores China’s 220 million “floating population” and a growing two-tiered, rural-urban divide. Students learn about the hukou, or urban household registration system (instituted during Mao’s time) — and new challenges facing a growing urban underclass.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will expand their knowledge about the largest human migration in history and examine the causes of China’s rapid urbanization.
- Students will explore the opportunities and challenges facing “China’s floating population.”
- Students will examine migrant challenges through multiple perspectives.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. Why is China in the midst of the fastest and largest human migration in history?
2. What are some of the common and unique challenges that China’s new migrants face as they look for a better life in the cities?
3. What might be the hopes and dreams of individual Chinese as they leave home and take off searching for jobs in the city?

MATERIALS

- The Seattle Times article “Migration and Urbanization in China”
- Computer/Internet access
- Projector
- Large map of China

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. China is in the news every day. Ask students to reflect on what they have heard about the dynamics and trends of China’s rapid urbanization. Share the following fact: China is undergoing the fastest and largest internal human migration in history. Why? Where are they going? What might be some ramifications with regard to this dramatic shift? Dr. Kam Wing Chan (the author of the accompanying article in The Seattle Times) has been studying China’s internal migration for many years. Share this three-minute video based on some of Dr. Chan’s research. Ask students to record at least three statistics that they find interesting; you may want to play the video twice. Ask students to share and discuss the information that they recorded. If time allows, discuss this statistic from the video: “Every year there are tens of thousands of cases of rural unrest.” What might be causes for this dissent?
<http://economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2012/02/china>
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=KNXg-kYk-LU>
2. Next, ask students to divide into small groups of three or four. Ask each group to brainstorm for a few minutes what might be some “push-pull factors” contributing to the historical rise of rural Chinese moving into the cities. Ask each group to write down five possible push factors and five possible pull factors.

- Share with students that the video they just watched and the article they will be reading describe a “voluntary” migration-taking place within China today. How do they define migration? Do they think of internal or external migration? Forced, reluctant or voluntary? Ask each student to think of at least one example of forced, reluctant or voluntary migration. Ask one student to compile these three lists on the board.

Forced Migration (African slave trade, Native Americans’ forced migration after the Indian Removal Act of 1830, Three Gorges Dam displacement of 1.5 million people)

Reluctant Migration (numerous examples caused by political revolutions, social upheavals, wars, natural disasters, and socioeconomic conditions)

Voluntary Migration (numerous examples based on life changes such as marriage or retirement, politics, employment opportunities and changing individual desires)

Alert students that there are other ways to define types of migration. For example, a National Geographic student guide on migration lists the following types: internal migration, external migration, emigration, immigration, population transfer, impelled migration, step migration, chain migration, return migration and seasonal migration. For more information see: <http://nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/09/g68/migrationguidestudent.pdf>.

During and after reading

- As students read the article in The Seattle Times on migration and urbanization in China, ask them to highlight the main points. Dr. Chan concludes with this quote: “There are many myths behind the perception and sustainability of China’s recent economic rise. Urbanization remains one of the biggest.” From what they have gleaned from their reading, what “myths” is he referring to?
- Success stories abound highlighting the growing urban middle class. Yet with China’s great economic successes come enormous challenges. In his article, Dr. Chan includes a graph that shows the widening gap between the total population living in cities without a hukou and those who possess urban rights. If this trend continues, he writes, “the colossal underclass will definitely spell troubles for the country in years to come.” What do you think he means by this?

ASSESSMENT

Who are these hundreds of millions of rural migrants? In Anu Taranath’s article on India’s third most populated city, we “meet” Muniyamma, one of Bangalore’s new residents. Ask students to put a “face” on someone from China’s floating population. Challenge each student to find at least one report highlighting an individual migrant’s life in a Chinese city. Ask students to record as much information as possible on a 3x5 note card: photo, name, age, former rural home, new residence including city, province, reason for migrating, who they left behind, new opportunities and challenges. Post a large map of China on the wall. Ask each student to give a short introduction to his or her person, pointing out the migrant’s rural hometown and new urban home on the map. If there is room, students may want to post their note cards near or on the map. Encourage students to explore both Western and Chinese sources. Western sources include China Digital Times, China File, China Dialogue, The New York Times: China, The Economist: China and Al-Jazeera English. Chinese sources include China Daily, Caixin, Global Times and Xinhuanet News Agency. Here are a few background articles:

“China’s Urban Dilemma”

<https://www.chinafile.com/chinas-urban-dilemma>

“China’s Hukou System Puts Migrant Workers at Severe Economic Disadvantage”

<http://pri.org/stories/2013-05-01/chinas-hukou-system-puts-migrant-workers-severe-economic-disadvantage>

“Chinese Migrants Struggle to Find Urban Dream”

<https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/6426-Chinese-migrants-struggle-to-find-urban-dream>

“Booming China, Migrant Misery”

http://nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2010/sep/14/booming-china-migrant-misery/?utm_source=chinafile&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=none

“Living Underground”

<https://www.chinafile.com/living-underground>

“China Past Due: Hukou Economic Apartheid” (audio)

<http://pri.org/stories/2013-04-30/china-past-due-hukou-economic-apartheid>

Conclude this exercise by sharing this four-minute film that “puts a face” on a migrant worker and shows the humanity we all share. Steven, a barbecue street vendor, discusses his life as a migrant worker in Shanghai, his views on independence and freedom and “an ideal China:” <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/01/02/videoone-billion-stories/>

LESSON FIVE

Pair with “Extreme Architecture, Wealth and Public Space in Central Asia’s Capital Cities” by University of Washington alumnus Nathaniel Trumbull, director of the Maritime Studies Program at Avery Point, University of Connecticut (The article appears in *The Seattle Times* on May 21, 2014.)

INTRODUCTION

The article paired with this lesson introduces students to Central Asia and, more specifically, the use and symbolism of architecture and public space in the capitals of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. As the author notes: the cityscapes of Ashgabat and Astana are largely unknown in the West. Students explore how the monuments, buildings, and public squares in these capital cities reflect politics and culture.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will expand their knowledge of Ashgabat and Astana, the capitals of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.
- Students will consider how public architecture reflects politics.
- Students will consider and share how public spaces affect their lives.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did the late ruler of Turkmenistan build a personality cult?
2. What is the design of Kazakhstan’s new capital trying to show?
3. What are examples of public architecture reflecting politics and/or culture in major cities throughout world? Are there examples of this in the United States?
4. How do you use public spaces?

MATERIALS

- The *Seattle Times* article “Extreme Architecture, Wealth and Public Space in Central Asia’s Capital Cities”
- Computer/Internet access
- Projector

ACTIVITIES

Before reading

1. Assess students’ prior knowledge of Central Asia. Where in the world is Central Asia? Can they list the countries in Central Asia? Can they list any cities in Central Asia? The two wealthiest capital cities in Central Asia are Astana and Ashgabat — of what countries are they the capitals? Project a map of Central Asia on the wall in order for students to locate Astana, capital of Kazakhstan, and Ashgabat, capital of Turkmenistan. While looking at the locations on the map, ask students to share what they imagine the cityscape and the surrounding landscape to look like. Record these ideas and thoughts on the board.
2. Explain to students that The *Seattle Times* article about Central Asia focuses on the architecture of the public spaces in Ashgabat and Astana. Share with students this quote from the article: “The public spaces of these two cities have become the playgrounds of their leaders. With the assistance of some of the world’s star architects, they now arguably contain some of the world’s most lurid architecture. Residents and visitors alike can only gaze in amazement.” After hearing this quote, how do they picture the cityscapes now? What might they add to their original board list?
3. Next, discuss what might be some of the reasons for the leadership to build extravagant public buildings and spaces in these two capital cities. Can the students think of other capital cities in Asia or around the world where rulers have left their imprint? Can they name some famous monuments and/or buildings that reflect a personality and/or doctrine? (Save these examples for the final assessment.)

During and after reading

- As students read the article in *The Seattle Times*, ask them to highlight author Nathaniel Trumbull's main points. Ask students to divide into groups to discuss this article. First, they should share what they have highlighted. Next, ask them to discuss the following two quotes from the article: (1) Trumbull, writing about the cityscapes of Central Asia's two wealthiest cities, focuses on public architecture and public space: "It is peculiar that both cities' public spaces, even those most expensively designed and constructed, are largely empty during the day and evening. Residents appear even to shun visiting some of the most central public spaces." Ask one student in each group to record possible reasons why residents might avoid these places. (2) Discuss Trumbull's conclusion: "Personality cults, the use of public spaces to reinforce authority, and well-rehearsed use of public space were all standard features of the Soviet regime. The newly orchestrated public spaces of the conspicuous wealth of Ashgabat and Astana are variations on this theme." Do students agree? Disagree? Why?
- Assess students' knowledge of Saparmurat Niyazov. Ask students if they know about this man who ruled Turkmenistan until he died in 2007. For his BBC profile and historical timeline, see <http://bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16094646>. Here is an excerpt from this site that you might share: "The late leader styled himself Turkmenbashi, or Father of the Turkmen, and made himself the centre of an omnipresent personality cult... Turkmen were even expected to take spiritual guidance from his book *Ruhnama*, a collection of thoughts on Turkmen culture and history." Niyazov even changed the names of the month in honor of members of his family — his images are everywhere from a gold statue that rotates to always face the sun to vodka bottles and the national airlines. Ask students to divide up into small groups of two or three and find images online of the public monuments or squares honoring him or family members and share with the class. Ask each group to choose one building and/or public square that interests them to share with the whole class. Why did they choose this building? What kind of effect would a building like that have on the shape of public space in a city? In the student's town?
- Assess students' knowledge of Nursultan Nazarbayev and Astana, Kazakhstan's new capital built by presidential decree in the "middle of nowhere." While Nazarbayev is a powerful autocrat like the late Niyazov of Turkmenistan, his claim to fame is not establishing a personality cult but in building the world's newest capital city to reflect his vision. Here is an excerpt from a BBC travel report to share: <http://www.bbc.com/travel/feature/20110311-new-horizons-kazakhstans-new-capital-astana>

"The decision to make Astana the capital was taken in July 1994, and the move began three years later. As Peter the Great built St. Petersburg on a swamp and Philip II of Spain turned a dusty village into Madrid, so Nursultan Nazarbayev, the president of Kazakhstan, decreed that a rundown steppe town bang in the middle of nowhere should be transformed into the nation's capital... Suddenly, tens of thousands of government employees had to move north as various ministries transferred sections of their operation to the city over a period of two years. No capital has ever been relocated in such a short time."

Astana's architectural style can best be described as idiosyncratic. The variety is a dizzying mix of clashing shapes and colors yet is oddly suited to a nation made up of 100 ethnic groups following at least 30 different religions.

Ask students to divide up into small groups of two or three to find images of these or other public monuments that illustrate Nazarbayev's themes. Ask each group to choose one building and/or public square that interests them to project and discuss in class. Why did they choose this building?
- Ask each group to discuss the following: What are examples of public architecture reflecting politics and/or culture in major cities throughout the world? Are there examples of this in the United States? In the Puget Sound area? In their neighborhood or school?

ASSESSMENT

Prepare students for their final assignment. Divide them into small groups of two or three and ask each team to create a PowerPoint presentation or poster showing examples of monuments, public squares or government buildings and how they reflect a cult of personality and/or government doctrine and/or cultural heritage. Assign each group a capital city located in Asia: Beijing, New Delhi, Hanoi, Bangkok, Astana, Ashgabat, Manila, Tokyo, Seoul, etc. Then ask each group to complete the following:

- Research the history, politics and culture of the city.
- Choose a theme and then find at least five examples of public architecture that reflect that theme.
- Share these five examples of architecture in a five- to 10-minute class presentation that includes factual details (location, architect, purpose and symbolism, date of construction) as well as public reaction and the group's reflection.

EXTENSION

Students who are intrigued with this topic — and especially Saparmurat Niyazov, who made himself the center of a personality cult — may enjoy reading this in-depth (18-page) chapter from *The Cult of Personality in Monumental Art and Architecture: The Case of Post-Soviet Turkmenistan*: <http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publicntn/acta/25/sir.pdf>

LESSON SIX

EXPLORING ASIA: ASIAN CITIES — GROWTH AND CHANGE

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY

This is a post-series activity.

INTRODUCTION

In this final lesson, students expand their knowledge of the rapid growth of urbanization in Asia and reflect on the importance of sustainable development. They explore new online resources and set up opportunities to share their knowledge throughout their school and community.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will discuss the implications of rapid urbanization and the importance of sustainable development.
- Students will explore “annual” migrations that take place around the world.
- Students will expand their own knowledge and help build class and/or community awareness regarding rapid urbanization and migration issues.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. What is sustainable development? What role do domestic and international nongovernmental organizations play in Asian megacities with regard to sustainable development?
2. What are examples of annual mass migrations?
3. What are some current and accessible documentaries and/or books describing the opportunities and challenges of urban migrants today?

MATERIALS

- Computer/Internet access
- Books for a book club

ACTIVITIES

Choose from a variety of activities listed below to help extend students’ study of migration and urbanization in Asia and around the world:

1. Throughout these past weeks, this series has discussed the rural-urban migration and the consequent development of huge metropolitan areas. Ask students to discuss the meaning of sustainable development. See this World Bank Develop Education Resource Site for teachers and students: <http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/english/sd.html>. Then ask them to pair up and choose a region or city in Asia where there has been rapid urbanization. Ask them to do a report on the local and global implications of this rapid urbanization. Ask them to put together a list of concrete examples of how this region is successfully (or unsuccessfully) dealing with sustainable development. For an excellent and extensive, five-lesson (283-page) unit on this topic focusing on China and environmental sustainability, see SPICE’s recently published “Sustainable Development and Modern China” (2013.) Another extensive 114-page report that focuses on China is China Dialogue’s “Reimagining China’s Cities: Towards a Sustainable Urbanization.” It can be downloaded here: <https://www.chinafile.com/reimagining-chinas-cities>.

2. Students have looked at the challenges and opportunities facing migrant populations as well as local and national governments. What roles can and do nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) play with regard to urban sustainable development? Ask students to form small groups of three or four. Each group should choose a country in Asia and find examples of domestic and international NGOs that are working on making these cities more livable and sustainable. For examples, these might be NGOs focusing on air pollution, water scarcity, urban squalor, health issues, etc.
3. Lesson Four explored the largest migration in human history. Students may be interested in learning about the world's largest "annual" migration. Every year, as China celebrates the Spring Festival (New Year,) hundreds of millions of Chinese migrant workers return to their rural homes. Show the 87-minute documentary film "Last Train Home" (or clips of it,) which has English subtitles. Chinese-Canadian filmmaker Lixin Fan follows one couple that travels back to their home village to visit their children they have left behind. "Emotionally engaging and starkly beautiful, *Last Train Home's* intimate observation of one fractured family sheds light on the human cost of China's ascendance as an economic superpower." See the PBS website for numerous educational resources related to this film: <http://pbs.org/pov/lasttrainhome/promote.php>. Teachers can download a 25-page discussion guide here: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/lasttrainhome/discussion-guide.php>.
4. Ask students to list other annual massive migrations. They may enjoy perusing this photo gallery site documenting 10 massive migrations that take place around the world: http://pbs.org/pov/lasttrainhome/photo_gallery_ten-human-migrations.php#.UtAelmRDt6o. These migrations range from the Hajj, in which almost two million Muslims travel to Mecca, to the FIFA World Cup, when hundreds of thousands travel to view the biggest single-event sporting competition in the world.
5. Have students organize a book club or documentary club. Ask each student to come to class with an idea for a book or documentary with an urbanization, industrialization or urban migration theme. Encourage them to talk to the school or city librarian for ideas. This book or documentary club could take one of many forms:
 - a. The whole class could read one book or watch one documentary; one or two students could lead the book or documentary discussion with prepared questions focusing on the theme of urban growth and change.
 - b. Several small groups could read different books and/or watch different documentaries, with the discussions led by one or two students in each group; later, each group could give a small report about their book or film.
 - c. Students could organize a book or documentary club that includes family and friends. Appropriate books or documentaries might include the following:

Book: "Chinese Characters: Profiles of Fast-Changing Lives in a Fast-Changing Land"

Book: "Eating Bitterness: Stories from the Front Lines of China's Great Urban Migration"

Book: "Factory Girls"

Documentary: "The Last Train Home"

Documentary: "Manufactured Landscapes"

Documentary: "China Blue"

Note: These examples are all China-related, but students could easily put together a public gathering focusing on another country in Asia.
6. This unit has explored the increasing rural-urban migration happening all across Asia. Students may be interested in looking at their own family history of migration (internal and/or external.) Encourage them to research their own family history by asking their parents (and grandparents) to recount the moves (and the types of migration) that they have made throughout their lives. Remind them of the National Geographic Student Guide that discusses internal migration, external migration, emigration, immigration, population transfer, impelled migration, step migration, chain migration, return migration and seasonal migration. For more information see: <http://nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/09/g68/migrationguidestudent.pdf>.

Continue learning and teaching about Asia with "Exploring Asia," a project of the Asia and Global Studies outreach centers in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies.

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