

Comparing World Religions **Grade 6**

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Purpose:

Provide a structure for students to research and share information about world religions.

Ohio Academic Content Standards:

Social Studies

People in Societies

- Grade 6-8 Benchmark A: Compare cultural practices, products and perspectives of past civilizations in order to understand commonality and diversity of cultures.
- Grade 6 Grade-Level Indicator 2: Compare world religions and belief systems focusing on geographic origins, founding leaders and teachings including:
 - a. Buddhism;
 - b. Christianity;
 - c. Judaism;
 - d. Hinduism;
 - e. Islam.

People in Societies

- Grade 6-8 Benchmark B: Analyze interactions between cultural groups and explain the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict.
- Grade 6, Grade-Level Indicator 3: Explain factors that foster conflict or cooperation among countries:
 - a. Language;
 - b. Religion;
 - c. Types of government;
 - d. Historic relationships;
 - e. Economic interests.

Essential Questions:

- How are religions and belief systems around the world similar?
- How do religions and belief systems around the world differ?
- How does religion affect conflict and cooperation between cultures?

Rationale:

Students will compare world religions to understand the commonality and diversity of world cultures.

Post-Assessment:

1. Assessment essay: Have students work in pairs to answer written assessment questions:

- What are some similarities and differences between religions and belief systems around the world?
- Why does religion sometimes foster cooperation and at other times conflict?
- How do you suggest people of different belief systems foster cooperation instead of conflict?

Scoring Guidelines:

Outstanding, 4 points:

Essay shows understanding of all of the following:

- Both similarities and differences between religions;
- How religion fosters both cooperation and conflict;
- Current religious tensions.

Very Good, 3 points:

Essay shows some understanding of all of the following:

- Both similarities and differences between religions;
- How religion fosters both cooperation and conflict;
- Current religious tensions.

Fair, 2 points:

Essay shows some understanding of at least one of the following:

- Both similarities and differences between religions;
- How religion fosters both cooperation and conflict;
- Current religious tensions.

Needs Improvement, 1 point:

Essay shows little understanding of the following:

- Both similarities and differences between religions;
- How religion fosters both cooperation and conflict;
- Current religious tensions.

Activities and Procedures:

Day One:

1. Break students into small working groups. Groups can be determined based on class size, with one or two groups assigned to study each religion. Assign each group one of the following religions:
 - Buddhism
 - Christianity
 - Judaism
 - Hinduism
 - Islam
 - Shintoism

Note: Religions studied can be varied based on teacher preference. This lesson can be taught as a comparative study of religions world-wide or within one region, i.e., Middle-Eastern religions or East Asian religions. Shintoism is not specifically listed in the standards for this lesson, but fits well with a study of East Asia.

2. Provide each student with a research chart and each group with chart paper to record their findings.
3. Distribute presentation assignment. Discuss requirements and rubric.
4. Begin group research. Provide groups with access to reference materials and non-fiction books on varied reading levels. If students will be utilizing web-based resources, pre-screen sites or provide careful oversight of internet use. Discuss possible bias and prejudice with students prior to searching the internet. Infohio.org provides access to Encyclopedia Britannica's Online School Edition free to Ohio's schools and students; this is a good resource for factual information.

Day Two:

5. As a whole group, discuss and define the terms *cooperation* and *conflict*.
6. In small groups, have students brainstorm and create a T-chart of reasons countries or cultures may cooperate and reasons conflict might arise between cultures.
7. Share and discuss student responses as a whole-class. Some questions for discussion include:
 - Do some factors appear on both lists? How come?
 - When we are talking about cultures and countries, do opposites attract?
 - When do countries work together?
 - Where does religion belong on this chart?
 - Does religion cause cooperation or conflict? Under what circumstances?
8. Have students work in their research groups to continue and complete their research.

Day Three:

9. Continue group research and presentation preparation.
10. Encourage groups to think about how they will share their information with the whole class. If needed, provide students with additional chart paper to create simple posters of their information.
11. Allow groups time to prepare their presentations. As groups are working, be sure to visit with each group and informally assess the accuracy of their information. Because this can be a sensitive topic, be sure that student presentations are free of bias or other inappropriate content.

Days Four and Five:

12. Distribute note-taking charts to each student- enough that they can record information on each religion to be presented. These graphic organizers can be photocopied double-sided to save paper.
13. Allow each group to present while the remainder of the class records information on their note-taking charts. If multiple groups have researched the same religion, ask each group to present just a portion of their research. Allow time after each presentation for students to ask questions. Be sure all of the necessary information has been clearly presented and is accurate.

Note: There are many options for differentiated instruction at this point in the lesson; including providing students with partially completed graphic organizers ahead of time or modeling note-taking using an overhead projector and transparency.

14. As a reflection, discuss the similarities and differences students see between the religions studied. Lead a whole group discussion to create a class T-chart of the similarities and differences. Discussion questions may include:
- What beliefs do most of these religions have in common?
 - Which religions originated in similar regions of the world?
 - What aspects or characteristics are most different?

Homework/Extension Option: Have students read and summarize two current events articles/items 1) showing religion fostering cooperation 2) showing religion causing conflict.

Day Six:

15. If assigned, have students share the current events stories they have brought in. Discuss how religion contributes to cooperation and conflict in differing circumstances, with an emphasis on ways people can foster cooperation between differing cultures and belief systems.
16. Assign students to complete the assessment essay. Have students work in pairs to answer the written assessment questions:
- What are some similarities and differences between religions and belief systems around the world?
 - Why does religion sometimes foster cooperation and at other times conflict?
 - How do you suggest people of different belief systems foster cooperation instead of conflict?

Grade Adaptation:

- Increase the amount of information required in presentations. Information can include historical examples of how each religion spread to different regions.
- Assessment responses can be written individually rather than in pairs.
- Current events can include background research on the incidents to be discussed.

Extensions:

- Have students create a thematic map showing the spread/diffusion of the religion they have studied and/or religions studied by other groups.
- Have students create a thematic map illustrating the current religions practiced in a world region or worldwide.
- Have students monitor international news for two weeks to record examples of religion fostering cooperation and conflict.

Comparing World Religions Presentation Assignment

Directions:

1. Work with your group to research information on the religion you have been assigned. Each group member should complete their own research chart.
2. Decide how your group will share your information with the class.
3. Share your expertise with the class! Go slowly and speak clearly so the other students can take notes.

Use the following checklist to keep track of your work.

Our group has:

- Assigned a task/role to each group member.
- Completed research on each topic.
- Double-checked our information for accuracy.
- Planned how we will share our information.
- Practiced speaking clearly and slowly.

**Comparing World Religions
Presentation Rubric**

	1	2	3	4
Required Information	Presentation includes no required information and does not use appropriate vocabulary.	Presentation includes little required information and does not use appropriate vocabulary.	Presentation includes most required information and some appropriate vocabulary.	Presentation includes all required information and appropriate vocabulary.
Accuracy of Information	Presentation lacks details and background information.	Presentation includes few details and background information.	Presentation includes some details and background information.	Presentation includes accurate and relevant details and background information.
Comprehension	Group members show no understanding of the topic and are unable to answer questions.	Group members show little understanding of the topic and are able to answer few questions.	Group members show general understanding of the topic and are able to answer most questions.	All group members show an excellent understanding of the topic and are able to answer questions.
Presentation	Information is presented is difficult to understand, with mostly inappropriate speaking voices or body language.	Information is presented is difficult to understand, with some inappropriate speaking voices or body language.	Information is presented in a clear manner, with mostly appropriate speaking voices and body language.	Information is presented in a very clear and easy to understand manner, with appropriate speaking voices and body language.
Group Participation	Presentation shows no evidence of contribution of all group members; few group members are fully prepared.	Presentation shows little evidence of contribution of all group members; few group members are fully prepared.	Presentation shows some evidence of contribution of all group members; most group members are fully prepared.	Presentation shows evidence of equal contribution of all group members; each group member is fully prepared.

Religion: _____

Location and Dates of Origin	Primary Deities	Primary Beliefs	Rituals and Celebrations
Current Geographic Distribution	Sects or Groups	Sacred Texts	Important Dates/Holidays
Current Statistics:		Historic Events:	