



GUÍA DOCENTE

A Practical Approach to the English-Speaking Cultures

Degree in Primary Teacher Training Foreign Language (English) Specialization Universidad de Alcalá C.U. Cardenal Cisneros

> Academic Year 2025/26 4th Course – 1st Term



STUDY GUIDE

Subject:	A Practical Approach to the English-Speaking Cultures
Code:	510044
Degree:	Degree in Primary Teacher Training Foreign Language (English) Specialization
Department:	Teaching Specific Sciences
Character:	Optional
ECTS Credits:	6
Year and term:	4 th Year, 1 st Term
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Language:	English

1. PRESENTATION

Culture has been defined as the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends on human beings' capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. The concept of culture has evolved throughout time and, today, it is an umbrella term that refers to different realities for different people. In any case, the clothing, the food, the values, the laws, the beliefs, the music and the dance, the material traits, the language, the art, the medicine, the common history, the kinship system, the stories, the folklore, the cinema, or the economic system of a group of people are part of their culture. Hence, not only States have their own national culture but also regions within countries, counties, ethnic, religious or age groups, as well as families, have their own culture. What is more, culture is constantly changing the same as people and places change constantly.

Therefore, to understand a foreign culture learners must be able to develop **intercultural competence**, an ability that consists in effectively functioning and achieving success in their own culture and the newly acquired foreign one. Byram (1997) defined this competence as the ability to communicate and interact effectively in own and others' culture and proposed a model of **Intercultural Communicative Competence** (**ICC**) composed of five interdependent principles: a) attitudes, b) knowledge, c) skills of discovery and interaction, d) interpretation and relationship skills, and e) critical cultural awareness.

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In the Spanish curriculum for Primary Education, the English language subject includes the knowledge of several cultural aspects of some English-Speaking countries. Therefore, students in the Degree of Primary Teacher Training should be previously acquainted with them. Moreover, this subject is concerned with the teaching of English through cross-curricular topics and bilingualism. Thus, it becomes necessary to understand the immense variety of cultures among the English-Speaking countries.

Therefore, students enrolled in this subject will make a try at what Spanish society demands from Primary teachers, namely, to teach English language and to integrate Culture as part of the English language curriculum. This is the reason why this subject aims at a) working on the students' communicative and thinking skills in an integrated way, as the **CLIL**¹ approach promotes, b) providing students with a general knowledge of and a practical approach to the most relevant cultural aspects of the most relevant English-Speaking countries, and c) developing the students' Intercultural Communicative Competence.

When completing any academic task, we remind students of the importance of **consulting** with the lecturer regarding the permitted use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. If this is not expressly stated in the Study Guide or in particular instructions for a specific activity or practice, it is understood that AI should not be used under any circumstances. We remind students that the improper use of these technologies, such as generating papers without express authorization, may constitute academic fraud. Therefore, we strongly recommend reviewing the university's regulations regarding the use of AI, always acting responsibly and transparently in the learning process, and consulting with the faculty any questions you may have.

Regarding the level of English, students will be asked to work at a B2+ Level (Common European Framework of Reference)² and are expected to reach closer to a C1 throughout the course.

Prerequisites and Recommendations

It is required for students to:

- Have a minimum B2+ level.
- Be officially enrolled in the subject.
- Have an active and participative attitude throughout the course.
- Be committed to improving their level of English using all the possibilities offered both inside and outside the classroom.
- Work effectively both individually and in groups.

2. COMPETENCES

¹ CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning.

² The Common European Framework of Reference will be referred to as CEFR from now onwards. More information about the required competences for each level can be found here: http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/levels.html

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According to the current legislation, at the end of this study programme, students will be able to acquire the following:

Cross-Curricular Competences:

- 1. Promover el respeto a los derechos fundamentales y de igualdad entre hombres y mujeres. (CCC1³)
- 2. Promover el respeto y promoción de los Derechos humanos y los principios de accesibilidad universal y diseño para todos de conformidad con lo dispuesto en la disposición final décima de la Ley 51/2003, de 2 de diciembre, de Igualdad de oportunidades, no discriminación y accesibilidad universal de las personas con discapacidad. (CCC2)
- 3. Promover los valores propios de una cultura de paz y de valores democráticos. (CCC3)
- 4. Adquirir y comprender los conocimientos necesarios de las distintas áreas de estudio que conforman el título de tal forma que capaciten para la profesión de Maestro en Educación Primaria (CCC4).
- 5. Saber aplicar esos conocimientos al trabajo de una forma profesional, demostrando el dominio de las competencias mediante la elaboración y defensa de argumentos y resolución de problemas en dichas áreas de estudio (CCC5).
- 6. Ser capaces de recoger e interpretar datos relevantes de las distintas áreas de estudio y de emitir juicios que incluyan una reflexión sobre temas relevantes de índole socioeducativa, científica y ética. (CCC6)
- 7. Ser capaces de transmitir información, ideas, problemas y soluciones al personal especializado y vinculado con su formación, así como a personas cuya vinculación sea indirecta. (CCC7)
- 8. Adquirir las habilidades de aprendizaje necesarias para ampliar sus estudios con autonomía (CCC8).

Degree Own Competences

- 1. Diseñar, planificar y evaluar procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje, tanto individualmente como en colaboración con otros docentes y profesionales del centro (DC2⁴).
- 2. Abordar con eficacia situaciones de aprendizaje de lenguas en contextos multiculturales y plurilingües. Fomentar la lectura y el comentario crítico de textos de los diversos dominios científicos y culturales contenidos en el currículo escolar (DC3).
- 3. Diseñar y regular espacios de aprendizaje en contextos de diversidad y que atiendan a la igualdad de género, a la equidad y al respeto a los derechos humanos que conformen los valores de la formación ciudadana. (DC4)
- 4. Mantener una relación crítica y autónoma respecto de los saberes, los valores y las instituciones sociales públicas y privadas. (DC8)

³ CCC stands for Cross-Curricular Competence. The number corresponds to the order in which this information appears in the official documents describing the Degree Programme.

⁴ DC stands for Degree Competence.





- 5. Reflexionar sobre las prácticas de aula para innovar y mejorar la labor docente. Adquirir hábitos y destrezas para el aprendizaje autónomo y cooperativo y promoverlo entre los estudiantes. (DC10)
- Conocer y aplicar en las aulas las tecnologías de la información y de la comunicación. Discernir selectivamente la información audiovisual que contribuya a los aprendizajes, a la formación cívica y a la riqueza cultural. (DC11)

Specific Competences Related to the English Specialization:

- 1. Acquire good communicative competence (introduction to C1 CEFR) (SC1⁵).
- 2. Have extensive training in the field of Foreign Language teaching at Primary Education level, considering both theoretical and practical implications (SC2).
- 3. Develop classroom research and reflection on the teaching-learning process in the Foreign Language classroom (SC3).
- 4. Be able to use the knowledge and procedures which truly contribute to autonomy in relation to professional practices and lifelong training (SC4).

3. CONTENTS

- 1. Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence
 - 1.1. National and Social Identities. Archetypes and Stereotypes. The Cultural Iceberg.
 - 1.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence.
- 2. British Culture and National Cultures within the United Kingdom
 - 2.1. Britishness. An overview on British culture.
 - 2.2. National and local cultures in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland
- 3. Cultures within the United States of America
 - 3.1. An American Way-of-Life.
 - 3.2. Many Cultures within the USA: Ethnic, Regional, Religious, Economic, Social, & Gender Cultural Varieties.
- 4. One Island, Two Countries: Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Irishness and Irish culture around the World.
- 5. Cultures in Other English-Speaking Countries.
 - 5.1. The Commonwealth and their Wide Variety of Cultures.
 - 5.2. The English language around the World.

Units	Total of ECTS credits and hours
Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence	1 ECTS (25 h)
Cultures within the United Kingdom	1.5 ECTS (37.5 h)
Cultures within the United States of America	1.5 ECTS (37.5 h)

⁵ SC stands for Specific Competence related to the English Specialization.





Ireland and the Republic of Ireland	1 ECTS (25 h)	
Cultures in Other English-Speaking Countries	1 ECTS (25 h)	

4. TEACHING-LEARNING METHODOLOGY - FORMATIVE ACTIVITIES

The teaching-learning methodology will be active and dynamic, having as its main aim to create a communicative atmosphere and to involve students actively in high-order thinking processes. Thus, students will be improving their competence in the English language as well as reflecting on this progress, enabling them to transfer their learning experience to their teaching practice. Lessons will be structured throughout the term in three different ways:

- Whole-group sessions will be carried out by using activities such as communicationbased work (pair or group discussions), information searching, question answering based on different texts, and others, all aimed at consolidating the theoretical contents, and applying them to a practical context. Debates and oral presentations may also be carried out during this time. The work here will mainly be done individually and in small- to medium-sized groups.
- 2. Practical lessons will consist of activities such as problem solving, analysis of documents or other materials, practical workshops, discussion and analysis of activities, debates, research projects, oral defence of written assignments, and oral activities, such as presentations or micro-teaching simulations. During these sessions the work will be done individually, in pairs and small- to medium-sized groups.
- 3. **Seminars** are aimed at ensuring a more personalised attention to students and will consist in meetings with the lecturer to have guidance for group-working in research projects or oral presentations. The work will be done in the groupings previously fixed.

Apart from the above detailed 50 hours of lesson attendance, students must also complete 100 hours of independent work at home, which can include finishing activities from class, preparing oral presentations, reading articles, doing some research, organising information, and revising the subject contents. Independent work can include two types of grouping and a wide variety of activities such as the following:

- **Group work**: designing teaching-learning activities, preparing oral presentations in group, or designing appropriate tools to carry out a task.
- Individual work: self-study, finishing activities from class, writing or reading articles or other texts, revising the subject contents, self-training in the development of the student's listening skills by using audio-visual and multi-media materials in English, designing slideshows, or completing rubrics reflecting on the whole process.

Finally, they could also attend **tutorial hours** to have their doubts answered by the lecturer.



4.1. ECTS Distribution

Total number of hours (6 ECTS): 150		
Number of hours of classroom attendance: 50	30 hours of whole-group lessons	
	15 hours of practical lessons	
	3 hours of seminars	
	2 hours of assessment tasks	
Number of hours of independent learning: 100	100 hours	

4.2. Methodological strategies, materials and didactic resources

Methodological strategies will be based on the **CLIL approach**, thus working on the 4 Cs: Cognition, Communication, Content, and Culture. Activities will be student-centred and based on cooperative and collaborative learning. Students are expected to **develop critical awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence**. They are also expected to use and **improve their communicative skills in the English language**, and to be able to promote them when working with Primary schoolchildren in the English classroom. The analysis and evaluation of didactic materials and oral presentations will be complemented with selfassessment and peer assessment of student-produced materials and oral presentations. The lecturer will act as a guide and facilitator and will foster student' reflection and creativity.

Students will handle a variety of materials, which will be available on *Blackboard* as well as published material found in the Library. This subject does not use a course book, but will take advantage of published books, journals, and articles, as well as Internet sources.

5.ASSESSMENT

Each of the assessment tasks in this subject is linked to the attainment of linguistic and communicative goals in the Foreign Language (English) which correspond to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) descriptors (B2+ and C1 levels). If the attainment of these goals is not demonstrated, the assessment task will be considered not to have been passed.

In the following tables students can find the specific competences the subject deals with, the assessment criteria set and the appraisal criteria the lecturer will apply to measure these outcomes and, finally, the assessment system, divided into the tools which will be used. This table may serve as a guideline to know how competences will be assessed.

Specific competence	Acquire a good communicative competence (introduction to C1
English	CEFR) (SC1)
Specialization	





Assessment criteria	Acquisition of a communicative competence higher than a B2+ (CEFR).
Appraisal criteria	Demonstrating appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level.

Specific competence	Have an extensive training in the field of Foreign Language			
English	teaching at Primary Education level, considering both theoretical			
Specialization	and practical implications (SC2)			
Assessment criteria Production of effective activities and/or lesson plans which around cultural or intercultural topics.				
Appraisal criteria	Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics.			

Specific competence English Specialization	Develop classroom research and reflection on the teaching- learning process in the Foreign Language classroom (SC3)
Assessment criteria	Development of a plan-do-review didactic strategy to integrate reflection and research as a fundamental component of good teaching.
Appraisal criteria	Effective integration of previously acquired knowledge and a plan- do-review teaching strategy in their work. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching-learning process.
Specific competence English Specialization	Be able to use the knowledge and procedures which contribute to autonomy in relation to professional practices and lifelong training. (SC4)
Assessment criteria	Choice of appropriate materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set. Integration of previously acquired knowledge, such as classroom management techniques. Ability to work in groups effectively. Ability to manage own time in independent work effectively.
Appraisal criteria	Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set. Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge.

Appraisal criteria	Definition	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level.	Shows a communicative competence which fulfills the requirements set for a B2+ level or higher.	30
Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics.	Designs and implements effective activities and/or lesson plans working with or around cultural or intercultural topics.	30
Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set.	Selects materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set and is able to produce a justification to support this choice.	15



Effective integration of a plan- do-review teaching strategy in their work. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching- learning process.	lesson plans working with or around cultural or	15
Development of cross- curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge.	is able to link prior knowledge to new knowledge	10
		100%

The teaching-learning methodology and the assessment process will be adjusted when necessary, following the guidance of the CUCC Guidance Service and/or the UAH Diversity Support Unit to implement curricular adaptations for students with specific needs, upon submission of documentation certifying such need.

The learning outcomes included in the verification report for the Primary Education Teacher qualification corresponding to this subject are:

Learning outcomes: A Practical Approach to English-Speaking Cultures	Code	
To achieve level B2+ of the Common European Framework of Reference		
for Languages and initiation into level C1.		
To develop reflection and research in the classroom on the processes of		
teaching and learning a foreign language.		
To apply independently the knowledge and procedures acquired in		
relation to professional practice and ongoing training.	RALE 4	

Report Criteria

Although **attendance** will not be marked, students unable to attend regularly and/or submit works within the submission deadline set should choose final assessment. If students submit **one assignment** in the continuous assessment evaluation, they cannot opt for final assessment, even if this happens during the first two weeks of class.

The assessment system is articulated according to the current legislation established by the University of Alcalá. These regulations establish, among others, the following criteria:

- 1. This subject has one ordinary call in January and another extraordinary call in May/ June.
- 2. The **ordinary examination** follows the criteria set in the continuous assessment system. To follow it, a minimum attendance to classes, a prompt submission of tasks and an appropriate attitude during the teaching and learning process are compulsory. Students who cannot cover this minimum must retake the subject in the extraordinary call.
- 3. If any student cannot follow the continuous assessment system proposed for the ordinary call, he/she should ask for **final assessment** to the lecturer. This request must be asked in the **first two weeks of the term** and will be approved or rejected by the Academic Sub-Director.





- 4. An **extraordinary call** is set for students who cannot attend classes or are unable to pass the ordinary call. It is their **own responsibility to contact the lecturer** to know which the assessment tasks and exams are in order to pass the subject.
- 5. Students whose request for final assessment is approved, should cover the same assessment criteria and achieve the same competencies established to pass the subject as for the continuous assessment system and complete these assignments by using digital tools the lecturer will indicate. They will also be required to record videos to supply for their impossibility of carrying out oral presentations in class.
- 6. To pass the subject, students must demonstrate, through the above-described assessment criteria, that they have achieved all the competencies established in this study guide. Students are **required to complete all the assessable work** presented in this study guide. This applies both to continuous and final assessment systems, and ordinary and extraordinary calls.
- 7. During all assessment tasks, the guidelines established in the University of Alcalá Coexistence Regulations must be followed, as well as the possible implications of irregularities committed during those tasks, including the consequences for committing academic fraud, according to the Disciplinary Regulations for Students of the University of Alcalá.
- 8. To access more information on the University of Alcalá assessment regulations, visit: <u>https://www.uah.es/export/sites/uah/es/conoce-la-uah/organizacion-y-gobierno/.galleries/Galeria-Secretaria-General/Normativa-Evaluacion-Aprendizajes.pdf</u>

The description of both continuous and final assessment is detailed below.

Continuous assessment – first call (ordinary and extraordinary)

All students will be asked to engage in oral presentations and micro-teaching activities. These will simulate teaching-learning situations students will need to cope with in the future. Whenever it is possible, schoolchildren will be invited to participate in these micro-teaching activities. Students will also complete written exams, oral and written activities, and research projects, including video-making.

Assessment tool Appraisal criteria	Written tasks	Oral presentation s	Reflection tasks	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level.	х	х		30
Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics.	х	Х	Х	30



and resources according to the teaching-learning context set. Effective integration of a plan-do- review teaching strategy in their		X	X	15
work. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching-learning process.	Х	Х	Х	15
Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge.	х		Х	10
TOTAL	40%	40%	20%	100%

Please, notice that these percentages are approximate and can slightly vary depending on concrete circumstances, i.e.: the ratio of students per class, the average level of English of a given class, etc.

Final assessment – first call (ordinary and extraordinary)

Assessment tool Appraisal criteria	Written tasks	Oral tasks / Defence before a tribunal	Reflection tasks (either oral or written)	%
Production of appropriate, accurate and fluent English higher than a B2+ level.	х	Х		30
Creation of effective activities and/or lesson plans dealing with cultural or intercultural topics.	х	х	х	30
Appropriate selection of materials and resources according to the teaching-learning context set.		х	х	15
Effective integration of a plan-do- review teaching strategy in their work. Awareness of and reflection on his/her teaching-learning process.	Х	Х	х	15
Development of cross-curricular skills which help them link new knowledge with previous knowledge.	Х		Х	10
TOTAL	40%	40%	20%	100%

The following references will constitute the basic bibliography for the course, and more specific references, journal articles, or Internet sources will be provided throughout the course.

Basic bibliography

Brocklehurst, R. (2008). The Usborne History of Britain. Usborne

This is a comprehensive compendium of British History, from prehistoric times to the turn of this millennium. It features internet links to additional resources, including video clips, games and interactive features.

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.

Teaching English should prepare learners to have language fluency and accuracy, as well as to speak with people with different cultural identities, social values and behaviours. This text aims to define precisely what competences are required, how these can be included in teachers' objectives and methods, and how the ability to communicate across cultural differences can be assessed.

Byram, M. (1988). Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education. Multilingual Matters

This book deals with the acquisition of understanding of foreign cultures and peoples. It is also a study of the philosophy and purpose of language teaching in all its facets, in the context of foreign language teaching in secondary education. The book is an attempt to raise teachers' and learners' awareness of the full educational value of foreign language learning.

Byram, M., Nichols, A., & Stevens, D. (2001). *Developing Intercultural Competence in Practice*. Multilingual Matters

Learning a language should not just involve linguistic competence but also intercultural competence, which can be developed through related subjects such as geography, history, mother tongue teaching. This book takes this as a given and provides practical help for teachers who wish to help their learners acquire intercultural competence in the ordinary classroom. It contains descriptions of lessons and materials from a wide range of classrooms in several countries and for beginners to advanced learners.

Byram, M., & Golubeva, I. (2020). Conceptualising intercultural (communicative) competence and intercultural citizenship. In The Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication (pp. 70-85). Routledge.

Corbett, J. (2022). *An intercultural approach to English language teaching* (Vol. 36). Multilingual Matters.

Crowther J. & Kavanaugh, K. (1999). Oxford Guide to British and American Culture. OUP. A richly illustrated source of information about everything that is important in British and American culture.

Dennis, A. (2003). Spotlight on Australia. OUP

This book is an overview in Australia and offers insight into Australian life and culture.

Grant, C., & Portera, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Intercultural education and competences: Challenges and answers for the global world*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.





Kearney, E. (2015). *Intercultural Learning in Modern Language Education: Expanding Meaning –Making Potentials* (Vol. 28). Multicultural Matters.

Many educators aim to engage students in deeply meaningful learning in the language classroom, often facing challenges to connect the students with the culture of the language they are learning. This book aims to demonstrate that substantial intercultural learning can occur in the modern language classroom and explores the features of the classroom that support meaningful culture-in-language-learning. The author argues that modern language education is intimately tied to a view of language learning as an engagement in meaning-making activity. The empirical evidence presented is analyzed and then linked to both the theorizing of culture-in-language-teaching and practical concerns of teaching.

Lindop, C. (1998). Australia and New Zealand. OUP

This is an intermediate level reader that offers introductory information on these countries. It offers easy-to-read insight into these two fascinating countries.

Mauck, D. & Oakland, J. (2009). American Civilization: An Introduction. Routledge.

This text provides the perfect background and introductory information on contemporary American life. It covers all the central dimensions of American society from geography and the environment, government and politics, to religion, education, media and the arts.

McCormack, W. J. (2001). *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Irish Culture.* John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Blackwell Publishers.

This book provides insight into those subjects such as literature and political history. It features coverage of architecture, music, and painting with stress upon their European contexts.

McDowall, D. (1999). *Britain in Close-Up. An In-Depth Study of Contemporary Britain*. Longman.

This book on contemporary Britain examines aspects of British society from government and politics to culture and style.

Newton, J. (2016). Teaching English for intercultural spoken communication. *English language teaching today: Linking theory and practice*, 161-177. Springer

Oakland, J. (2010). British Civilization: An Introduction. Routledge.

This is a quite up-to-date, highly readable exploration of British culture, media and the arts.

O'Driscoll, J. (2015). Britain for Learners of English. OUP.

Students will understand the country and its people with this culture guide that gives a good insight into what it means to live in Britain today.

Tomalin, B. & Stempleski, S. (1993). Cultural Awareness. OUP.

This popular book gives teachers practical advice and guidance, along with resource ideas and materials for the English class with the aim of taking care about cultural differences. Tasks and activities are clearly presented, and offer teachers the information they need about level, time, preparation, materials, classroom management, monitoring, and follow-up activities.

Websites

There is an enormous amount of Internet resources to learn about the cultures in the English-Speaking world, among them, these will be widely used:

World Culture Encyclopaedia: http://www.everyculture.com/ Culture Glossary: http://www.laguardia.edu/intercultural/key_terms.htm#1 British: http://www.britannia.com/history/h100.html

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British: http://www.learnenglish.de/britishculture.html British: http://ww.elt.britcoun.org British: http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk British: http://projectbritain.com British: http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/festivals-and-holidays/ English: http://ww.englishculture.allinfoabout.com Scottish: http://www.scotland.com/culture/ Scottish: http://www.scottish-at-heart.com/scotland-culture.html Welsh: http://www.britannia.com/wales/culture1.html Irish: http://www.mythicalireland.com Irish: http://www.weleyjohnston.com/users/ireland.html Irish: http://www.irishcultureandcustoms.com Irish: http://www.surfnetkids.com/resources/ireland Irish: http://irelandseye.com/aarticles/culture/index.html Irish: http://www.irishindeed.com/index.htm US: http://www.historychannel.com/ US: http://www.night.net/tucker/ US: http://www.ushistory.org/us/index.asp US: http://www.usconsulate.org.hk/pas/kids/ US: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/index.cfm

US: http://education.byu.edu/diversity/culture.html

All Web references were accessible at the time of publishing this study guide.