

# Cultural Diffusion

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## Objectives

As a result of this lesson students will be able to:

- define and distinguish between cultural diffusion, assimilation and imperialism.
  - label and identify on a world map the different products or ideas that have come to Nicaragua from other parts of the world due to diffusion, assimilation or imperialism.
  - analyze case studies to identify the impact of cultural diffusion, assimilation and imperialism on Nicaragua.
  - interpret the poem “To Roosevelt” and its view of American Imperialism.
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## Materials

- Student Handout: **World Map**
  - Student Handout: **Map Questionnaire**
  - Student Handout: **To Roosevelt**
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## Activities

1. List the following terms and definitions on the chalkboard:
    - a. **Cultural Diffusion**- The spreading of ideas from one culture to another.
    - b. **Assimilation**-The incorporating of ideas into a culture and making them a part of that culture, often taking on new characteristics.
    - c. **Cultural Imperialism**-Forcing ideas to be incorporated into a culture.
  2. Explain that these three words all deal with the way in which a culture attains ideas, whether by accident or choice (**Cultural Diffusion**), force (**Cultural Imperialism**), or by taking all these ideas and then melding them into your own culture so that they take on characteristics of what was there before (**Assimilation**).
  3. Assign students to work in pairs.
    - a. Distribute the student handouts entitled **World Map** and **Map Questionnaire** to each student.
    - b. Explain that this map is a visual aid showing different products and ideas that came to Nicaragua over time and where they came from.
    - c. Explain that for each of the pictures/symbols on the maps, the students are to identify whether they think it came by diffusion or imperialism and to answer the questions that follow.
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**Activities  
(continued)**

4. After the pairs have completed the **Map Questionnaire**, review each item on the worksheet and ask the following questions to generate discussion:
    - a. Who were the transmitters of this idea? Was it conquistadors, media, travelers, neighboring countries, immigration etc.?
    - b. How does someone force an idea upon someone? What measures might they take?
    - c. Do you think the natives of Nicaragua wanted any of these products or ideas originally? Would any be beneficial?
    - d. How would you feel if someone forced you to believe something you didn't know? Eat something you didn't want to eat?
  5. Distribute the student handout entitled "**To Roosevelt.**"
    - a. Explain to the class that Theodore Roosevelt was president of the United States from 1901 – 1909 and that during this time period the United States was carving out a sphere-of-influence in Central America, which included the development of the Panama Canal.
    - b. Ask for student volunteers to read the poem aloud.
    - c. Following the reading, provoke discussion by asking the following questions:
      - What is the mood set by the author of this poem?
      - What is the author saying when he talks about the United States and "our America, Spanish America"? What is the difference?
      - What does the author say about the United States?
      - What does the author say about Spanish America? What are its characteristics?
      - What words does the author say that evokes nationalism and patriotism?
      - How do you think the author feels about President Roosevelt?
      - What would Roosevelt have to be able to do to manage to "manage to grab us in your iron claws"?
      - Is this poem pro- or anti-imperialism? Why?
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# The World



## Map Questionnaire

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1. Were these products/ideas spread by diffusion or by imperialism?

Roman Catholic Religion	_____
Rice	_____
Disease	_____
Sugar cane	_____
Coffee	_____
Horses	_____
Exotic spices/salt	_____
Tea	_____

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2. What products were brought over by the Columbian exchange to Nicaragua?  
List these and draw a symbol for these items below.

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
  - 6.
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3. What items/ideas has our culture assimilated from another culture?
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# “To Roosevelt”

by Rubén Darío

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The United States is potent and great.  
When you shake there is a deep tremblor  
that passes through the enormous vertebrae of the Andes.  
If you clamor, it is heard like the roaring of a lion.  
Hugo already said it to Grant: The stars are yours.  
(The Argentine sun, ascending, barely shines,  
and the Chilean star rises...) You are rich.  
You join the cult of Hercules to the cult of Mammon,  
and illuminating the road of easy conquest,  
Liberty raises its torch in New York.

But our America, that has had poets  
since the ancient times of Netzahualcoyotl,  
that has walked in the footprints of great Bacchus  
who learned Pan's alphabet at once;  
that consulted the stars, that knew Atlantis  
whose resounding name comes to us from Plato,  
that since the remote times of its life  
has lived on light, on fire, on perfume, on love,  
America of the great Montezuma, of the Inca  
the fragrant America of Christopher Columbus,  
Catholic America, Spanish America,  
The America in which noble Cuauhtemoc said:  
“I'm not in a bed of roses”; the America  
that trembles in hurricanes and lives on love,  
it lives, you men of Saxon eyes and barbarous soul.  
And it dreams; and it loves, and it vibrates, and it is the daughter of the Sun.  
Be careful. Viva Spanish America!  
Roosevelt, one would have to be, through God himself,  
the fearful Rifleman and strong Hunter,  
to manage to grab us in your iron claws

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