

## ***How can I best use these materials to support the Social Studies TEKS for Grade 6?***

In our own region of overlapping cultures, the highly motivating content of this issue will help you “bring home” the concepts of cultural traits and analyze how they have been shared and spread in the past and present. Use these activities to help students develop the understanding and skills related to the TEKS below.

Define the concepts of culture and culture region (6.15A); describe some traits that define cultures (6.15B); and analyze the similarities and differences among selected world societies (6.15C). Analyze how culture traits spread (6.17C); and explain why cultures borrow from each other (6.17D). Relate ways in which contemporary expressions of culture have been influenced by the past (6.18B); and identify examples of art, music, and literature that have transcended the boundaries of societies and convey universal themes (6.18D). Early in the semester is a good time to introduce a principal by teaching from near to far, from the known to the unknown. Start with our own Borderlands region of South Texas to illustrate the blending of cultures. One fun way to observe the blending of cultures, emerging cultures, and universality of culture is through cucuis.

Many Texans who are not of Mexican heritage know about the lechusa, the chupacabra, or la llorona. Ask for a show of hands on each. Ask about other cucuis and bogeymen students know of. Follow their lead in discovering which places in your town or county are associated with these legendary creatures or others. If your class is self-contained or if you are teamed with a writing and literature teacher, do the activity together as an oral literature and narrative writing project.

All “Haunting Legends” activities support the vertically aligned Social Studies skills. Expand on the map activity to show geographic features of your county and surrounding counties, such as rivers, plains or hills, bays, estuaries, or lakes, as well as highways and constructed landmarks. Use a county map to locate (or draw in) features which are already known to students and to reinforce their understanding of the relationship of maps to the real landscape.

Explain ways in which human migration influences the character of places and regions (6.4C). Compare the fall holidays of Halloween (with roots in the Celtic Samhain) and El Día de los Muertos (with its Mayan roots). Observe how the two are mixing in Borderlands America. For example, among families who clean and decorate graves for El Día de los Muertos, the graves of children are often decorated with jack-o-lanterns and other images manufactured for sale as Halloween items. Why do you think that is so? In a class discussion, list reasons why this tradition may be changing. What other factors could cause traditions to change? (Technology, renewed interest in ecology and nature.) Cite examples (electronic birthday cards, artificial re-usable Christmas trees.)

Visit our Ofrenda del Día de los Muertos between October 22 and November 10. See the “El Día de los Muertos,” a 10-minute puppet show which tells the story of this unique Borderlands holiday for elementary students during morning tours on Tuesdays through Fridays.