**Lesson Plan – Wedding in Cultures**

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| **Time Allocation** | **Content** |
| 10 minutes | **Introduction**  Quick discussion about the importance of weddings in different cultures.  What do you think, is wedding important? Is it important to you? |
| 10 minutes | **Activity 1**  Wedding showcase in different cultures.  Take notes about things you find interesting. |
| 5 minutes | **Activity 1.5**  Discussion about the above shown cases.  What are the key differences? What is unique about them?  Would you like to attend any wedding like that? |
| 5-10 minutes | **Activity 2**  Quiz  Split class into few small groups |
| 5 minutes | **Activity 2.5**  Quiz answers |
| 5-10 minutes | **Final Discussion**  What culture did you like the most? What surprised you in showcased cultures or in the quiz? Did you particularly like something? |

**Activity 1**

**German wedding**

In Germany, a traditional wedding often spans three days, beginning with a civil ceremony attended by close family and friends. This is followed by a religious ceremony, where traditions such as the bridal couple's transportation in a horse-drawn carriage were once common, now replaced by limousines. Before leaving for the church, it's customary to throw a firebrand on the threshold in Northern Germany.

The morning of the wedding includes a special breakfast known as 'morning soup' or 'bridal soup' for guests. The ceremony, typically held in the late morning, involves unique customs like a struggle of hands between the bride and groom during the **priest's joining ritual**. The newlyweds might throw coins to children as they leave the chapel.

A distinctive German tradition awaits the couple outside the church, where they must **saw a log** in half symbolizing their commitment to facing the first challenges of married life together.





**Indonesian wedding**

When it comes to weddings, Indonesia is a land of rich cultural diversity. With its diverse ethnic groups and religious beliefs, the country is home to a fascinating array of wedding traditions that have been passed down through generations. From elaborate ceremonies to unique customs, Indonesian weddings are a sight to behold. Below, we explore 10 of the most captivating wedding traditions in Indonesia, each with its own charm and significance.

A person pouring water on a person's head

Description automatically generatedIndonesian weddings are a rich tapestry of traditions, each adding a unique and colorful layer to the celebration. One captivating ritual is the "**siraman**" a pre-wedding purification ceremony where the couple is bathed in a concoction of flowers, herbs, and spices. This cleansing water symbolizes the purification of the couple before embarking on their marital journey.

Adding to the vibrant spectacle are the diverse traditional attires from different regions, such as the intricate batik patterns of Java and the dazzling kebaya dresses of Bali. The exchange of gifts, or "seserahan" is a significant Javanese tradition symbolizing the union of two families.

Among the mesmerizing dances is the "Tarian Piso Surit" performed by bridesmaids in traditional Batak attire, believed to bring good luck. In Solo, the tradition of "Pengantin Solo" adds an element of mystery as the bride, adorned in a striking batik dress, is carried to the venue by attendants.

The "Ngerik" ceremony of the Toba Batak community involves seeking blessings from elders, emphasizing respect and gratitude. The "kirab pengantin" in Yogyakarta sees the couple parading through the streets in a decorated carriage, showcasing the joyous celebration.

**A person and person in white dresses holding hands and standing next to a table with food

Description automatically generatedTraditional dances**, like the Legong in Bali and Reog Ponorogo in East Java, contribute to the enchanting atmosphere of Indonesian weddings. In Javanese tradition, "sengkalan" compares the birthdates of the couple for compatibility, aiming to bring harmony and good fortune.

The Toraja culture's "Mappacci" ritual concludes the wedding, symbolizing the bride's farewell from her birth family to her new one—a poignant moment filled with emotions and well-wishes for her future.

**Puerto Rican wedding**

In Puerto Rico, where history, culture, and nature converge, wedding traditions form a captivating tapestry that reflects its unique blend of Spanish colonial and indigenous influences. Rooted in the predominantly Catholic customs, Puerto Rican weddings follow a Catholic timeline, intertwining both shared Latin traditions and distinctive practices. From vibrant all-night receptions and an abundance of Puerto Rican cuisine to symbolic elements like the bridal bouquet of wildflowers and fans, each tradition tells a story of the island's rich heritage.

The celebration often extends into the night with lively dance parties, featuring traditional Latin music and, for those with ample budgets, folk dancers. A Puerto Rican wedding is incomplete without an array of local dishes such as pollo guisado, arroz con gandules, and mofongo. The bride and groom are served espresso, or café con leche, in coconut cups as part of the celebration.

A purple ribbon with a silver heart on a wooden surface

Description automatically generatedUnique to Puerto Rican weddings is the tradition of **capias**—narrow strips of ribbon with the names of the couple and the wedding date. These ribbons, attached to the bridal bouquet, are individually cut and pinned onto guests during the reception, fostering interaction between the newlyweds and attendees.

Other distinctive customs include playing the sounds of the tiny tree frog, coquí, during the ceremony for a romantic atmosphere. The first dance, or danza criolla, is a Puerto Rican waltz, and a doll, often symbolizing fortune and gratitude, graces the main table. Rituals like el lazo (wedding lasso) and **las arras (gold coins)** symbolize unity and commitment.

Tropical decor, incorporating native orchids, palm branches, and abeto ferns, along with a choice of traditional wedding cake flavors like rum, coconut, or pineapple, further enhance the Puerto Rican wedding experience. While certain traditions, such as the family's financial roles, have evolved, the essence of Puerto Rican weddings remains a beautiful reflection of its cultural richness.



**Chinese wedding**

Chinese weddings are elaborate affairs filled with rituals and customs that symbolize prosperity, abundance, and happiness. The celebration, lasting the entire day, consists of two main parts: the intimate Chinese tea ceremony and the Chinese banquet, equivalent to Western wedding receptions.

The Betrothal (Guo Da Li) is a significant step where the groom presents betrothal gifts symbolizing prosperity to the bride's parents. Half of the gifts are returned as an acceptance, signifying a good relationship between the families.

Choosing the Wedding Date involves couples consulting fortune tellers, Chinese monks, or Feng Shui masters to choose an auspicious date, considering Chinese zodiac signs and birthdays.

Chinese wedding invitations, typically red with gold lettering and featuring the Double Happiness symbol, provide details including the wedding banquet dates, birth order, and names of the couple and parents.

Preparing the Marriage Bed (An Chuang) is a pre-wedding tradition where the bed is dressed in new red bedding and pillows with dried fruits and nuts, symbolizing a sweet and lasting marriage. No one can sit or sleep in it until the couple returns.

The Hair Combing Ceremony, performed the night before the wedding, symbolizes the couple's entry into adulthood. Blessings are recited as the bride or groom's hair is combed four times.

Lucky Colors and Auspicious Symbols, such as red and gold, dominate Chinese wedding decorations, symbolizing love, prosperity, and wealth. The Double Happiness symbol and other auspicious symbols like dragons and phoenixes are common.

Picking Up the Bride, though modernized, remains a lively affair involving firecrackers, drums, gongs, or a lion dance. A child often walks in front of the procession symbolizing fertility.

Putting the Groom to the Test (Chuangmen) is a highlight involving fun tests set by bridesmaids to determine the groom's determination to marry. Tasks may include testing his knowledge of the bride and challenges involving pain.

Offering Tea and Paying Respects is a crucial Chinese tea ceremony expressing respect and gratitude to parents for their love and support. The couple serves tea in a specific order, receiving blessings and red envelopes in return.

The Exchange of Vows may take place at a government office or in an intimate ceremony in front of the family altar.

The Wedding Banquet, a lavish eight-course affair hosted by the couple's parents, features symbolic foods for abundance, purity, peace, unity, and fertility. The bride often changes into a red qipao, and a "yam seng" toast is made.

Three Days After, the bride and groom visit the bride's family, and she is no longer considered part of their household. The groom brings a roasted pig as a gift.

These traditions provide a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage of Chinese weddings, emphasizing family, respect, and symbolic blessings for the couple.





**Activity 2**

**International Wedding Customs Quiz**

**1.** In which country does the groom and then the bride drink Sake (rice wine) three times? The

bride also traditionally wears a triangular band on her head, known as the tsunokakushi, or horn

cover, to hide the horns of jealousy which supposedly all women possess.

**2.** In which country does the bride wear a red dress (symbolising good fortune, love and joy)?

**3.** Why in Korea are ducks included in the wedding procession?

**4.** In which country does the wedding cake have a tiny sapling (baby tree) on top - Poland, Greenland, Bermuda?

**5.** In which country did a couple used to jump over a broom to the sound of drums to declare publicly that they were married - Zaire, Chile, America?

**6.** In which country do guests dance with the bride and pay her for the privilege of giving her a kiss - France, Scotland or Hungary?

**7.** In which country does the new wife serve her husband a meal after which he will tie a bundle

of money to her dress symbolising their future roles - America, India or Papua New Guinea?

**8.** In which country are 7 benedictions recited over a glass of wine, then a little is drunk by the bride and the groom after which the groom shatters the glass under his heel - Greece, Spain or Israel?

**9.** In which country does the bride leave her family to join her husband’s family with the Holy Qur’an held over her head - Pakistan, Madagascar, Paraguay?

**10.** In which country are two small fir trees planted on either side of the door to the couple’s house until they are blessed with a child - Canada, Norway or the Sudan?

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**11.** In England our wedding anniversaries are marked by particular minerals which signify the importance of the anniversary eg the 50th wedding anniversary is Gold. The idea is that the husband and wife exchange gifts made from that mineral on that particular anniversary. Try to match the following anniversaries with their minerals.

Silver, Tin, Ruby, Diamond, China, Wood, Cotton

1, 5, 10, 20, 25, 40, 60

1. Japan

2. China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Korea, Singapore, South Sudan (1 is enough)

3. Because they mate for life

4. Bermuda

5. America (amongst African slaves who were not allowed formally to marry or live together)

6. Hungary

7. India

8. Israel

9. Pakistan

10.Norway

11. 1=cotton, 5=wood, 10=tin, 20=china, 25=silver, 40=ruby, 60=diamond

Source:  
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