WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

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SCHOOL: Shepard Middle School
SUBJECT AREA: Foreign Language
GRADE LEVEL: Sixth Grade

STATE GOALS
- Foreign Language:
  1. Communication
  2. Culture and Geography
  3. Connections and Application

OBJECTIVES
- Students will:
  1. Learn about the major languages of the Silk Road
  2. Learn the meaning of *lingua franca*.
  3. Appreciate how travelers along the Silk Road were able to interact and communicate with people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
  4. Recognize that linguistic and cultural diversity is an important part of our world.

MATERIALS/RESOURCES/GALLERY OBJECTS
- Handouts from *Along the Silk Road*:
  1. Six Silk Road Regions (map)
  2. Language card worksheet with six languages
- Transparencies from *Along the Silk Road*:
  1. Six Silk Road Regions
  2. Languages of the Silk Road Region
  3. Indo-European Language Tree
- CD from the SPICE Curriculum Guide *Along the Silk Road*
  “Audio Clips of Six Languages”
- Silk Road wall map
- Student passports
- Representative gallery objects

PROCEDURES
Pre-visit Lesson
1. Initiate a brief discussion on how we would communicate with someone who speaks a language we have never heard.
2. Explain the expression *lingua franca*, which is a medium of communication between peoples of different languages. It might be a standard language used in diplomacy or a pidgin language.
3. Hand out the *Six Silk Road Regions* map and language worksheet. Using the wall map identify the geographic areas.
4. Using the CD cued to “Audio Clips of Six Languages,” play each audio clip and have students list its number next to the language they think is being spoken.
5. Share answers and point out that these were only the major ones. Arabic #2, Chinese #3, Italian #6, Persian #1, Turkish #5, Urdu #4. (Audio clips with standard greetings may be used as a follow-up activity.)

6. Show students transparencies, Languages of the Silk Road and Indo-European Language Tree, to reinforce the language diversity.

7. Discuss that we will be identifying the cultures of these languages when we visit the museum. We will also connect them to gallery objects.

8. Students will make a passport to take on the visit. There will be a separate page for each of the six languages.

Visit Lesson – The Art Institute of Chicago

1. Small groups visit various galleries displaying objects from the six linguistic regions. Examine gallery objects representative of the cultures of major languages spoken on the Silk Road.

2. View Objects: [http://www.artic.edu/aic/exhibitions/silkroad/works.html](http://www.artic.edu/aic/exhibitions/silkroad/works.html)
   - Emperor’s Jifu, Chinese
   - Bodhisattva, Gandharan (Pakistan)
   - Camel with Rider, Chinese
   - Delft Vase with Cover, Dutch
   - Horse, Chinese
   - Mandala Pilgrim’s Box, Tibetan or Nepalese
   - Botticini, The Adoration of the Magi, Italian

3. Gallery objects are sketched and described in student passports.
4. Origin and destination of the object are discussed.
5. Discussion about where these objects are found today other than museums.
6. Pose question: how do the objects reflect their culture?

Post-Visit lesson

1. Display pictures of gallery objects in appropriate language regions on the Silk Road wall map.
2. Discuss where objects traveled and to whom.
3. Students write reflections on the influence of the objects
4. Play audio clips of language greetings.
5. Students add language clips to their worksheets.
6. Students act out exchanges with a partner.

Follow up:

Students may further research linguistic groups and cultures related to the gallery objects, dividing up and reporting to the class. A classroom museum display will illustrate what students learned. Community members representing the six languages visit the classroom. Students continue to acquire language skills. The Silk Road extends to our classroom!