

## LESSON 2: CHOICES AND HEALTH

### OVERVIEW:

*The purpose of this lesson is to explore the evolution of human culture and its relation to health. Because overall population health is difficult to measure, statistics of life expectancy will be presented. Factors that influence life expectancy such as access to resources and technology as well as culture will be discussed. Students will also compare the weekly food consumption of different countries to explore how culture may play a role in health. Finally students will participate in an activity that has them reflect on their own choices and the possible influence of culture on those choices.*

### SUB-QUESTION:

What role has culture played in the health of the human population?

### WAYS OF KNOWING URBAN ECOLOGY:



Students will...

**Understand**

1. Recognize the relationship between choices, health, and life expectancy across cultures. (*ecosystem change, ecosystem state and structure, forces and drivers, human impact*)
2. Understand factors that influence a human population's overall health. (*ecosystem change, forces and drivers, human impact*)

**Talk**

- Explain the relationships between culture and health.

**Do**

- Analyze trends in life expectancy across cultures.

**Act**

*No specific goals connected with acting on urban ecology in this lesson.*

### SAFETY GUIDELINES

No specific safety issues are associated with this lesson.

### PREPARATION:

**Time:**

1 class period

**Materials:**

**Day 1:**

**Activity 2.1**

PowerPoint and projector (or overheads of slides and projector)

**Activity 2.2**

## Worksheet 2.2

**INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE****Introducing the Lesson****Activity 2.1:**

1. Begin the lesson by reviewing the main concepts discussed in lesson 1 about factors that influence public health (i.e. water quality, air quality, food quality, etc.).
2. Next show students the PowerPoint presentation for this lesson. Some questions and their potential answers can be found in the notes section of the slides. The main idea is to have students really think about the following two questions:
  - Why is the health of populations in different regions of the world so different?
  - How can culture influence a population's health?
3. In the PowerPoint, Slide 2 can be used to introduce the idea that culture can impact health, Slide 3 provides a definition of culture (e.g. the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time) and slides 4-16 provide examples of cultural difference with a specific focus on weekly food consumptions in different countries across the world.

**Lesson 2.2:**

1. After distributing Worksheet 2.2 to each student, read through the directions with the class and stress to them that this is for their own information and will not be collected or graded at the end of class.
2. Students should also be reminded that although they will be starting from zero for the first question, they should not return to 0 after each question, the steps should continue from the position of the last question.
3. After reading through all of the questions, have students discuss in groups or as a class their reactions to this exercise.
4. Some questions to consider
  - a. *How much has the American culture played a role in their choices?*
  - b. *Are there students that believe another culture plays a more significant role in their choices than the American culture?*
  - c. *Were they surprised about the outcome of their decisions when they looked at them as a collective?*

**Concluding the Lesson**

1. The last slide on the power point suggests a question that can be discussed in class or addressed in the student journal - *If it is known that some behaviors are less healthy than others, why is it that certain cultures encourage unhealthy behaviors?*

