

# Unit Activities

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## Before You Begin—15 minutes

Use the following definition of globalization: The process of globalization has accelerated the process of human integration through the movement of people, technological innovation, the spread of ideas, and economic connections. In many cases, this integration occurs without reference to national borders or boundaries. Globalization has also reinforced inequities in some places, and it has led to the creation of new inequities in others. For example, the forces of globalization can reinforce existing perceptions of gender differences, or it can create new inequalities in the global balance of power because of differential access to markets and resources.

~~In pairs, list at least six ways that the Olympics, popular music, and sports reflect globalization. Share your lists with a larger group of about 10 people. Make a larger list and then put the items in categories such as: National Identities, Cultural Adaptations, Communication Technology, Transportation Technology, Economic Process, and Global Identities. If some of the categories are empty, then write questions about the category.~~

## Watch the Video for “Unit 25: Global Popular Culture”—30 minutes

While you watch the video, look for more items that can go in the categories.

## Activity 1: Globalization of Culture—110 minutes

**Groups of 2 people**. Each group will focus on one of the following examples of globalization: the Olympics, reggae, or soccer (football). Each group will prepare a presentation ~~for the other two groups~~. The presentations will consist of:

- A short introduction to the topic.
- A televised or radio town hall meeting about proposed public funding for a new stadium that could host the Olympic games, popular music, or professional sports.
- A private meeting among politicians with the power to make the funding decision.
- A private editorial meeting at a local newspaper about the way to cover the controversy over the stadium.

Some of the controversial discussions should include:

- This process of globalization has had an impact on popular culture everywhere. Dances and songs, sports and software, superstars and fashion have grown in popularity around the world.
- Many regard globalization as a form of imperialism in which capitalist powers wipe out local customs to maximize profits.
- Others consider the global marketplace an area of free choice, one that enriches individual perspectives without replacing inherited traditions.

### Information for the Olympic Games Presentation

When the Olympic games began back in the eighth century BCE, it was considered a sign of a city-state’s tremendous superiority if one of its’ residents won an Olympic contest. Today, it is no longer city-states that enter the Olympics, but nation-states. Still, when an individual from a given nation-state wins an Olympic medal today, it is a source of great pride.

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Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic games:

The most important thing in the Olympic games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well. (Stan Greenberg, *Whitaker's Olympic Almanack*, [Chicago: Fitzros Dearborn Publishers, 2000]: 34.)

Before World War II, when many colonial empires were still intact, most Olympic athletes and spectators were European. Many of those spectators believed that the white, male body epitomized—as it had in ancient Greece—the image of athletic prowess. In 1936, Adolph Hitler's ambition for the Olympic games in Berlin was to demonstrate to the world the superiority of the Aryan race. But that plan was undermined by the remarkable showing of Jesse Owens, a young African-American runner from Oakville, Alabama. Jesse Owens won four gold medals in track and field events. He set world records in the broad jump and the two hundred-meter race, and he tied the Olympic hundred-meter record. Owens became the star of the games and a dramatic repudiation of the myth of Aryan racial superiority. Issues of racial and gender discrimination have been reflected in the structure of the Olympic games. At first, women were allowed to compete only in a few selected sports. But the world-class performances of ice skater Sonja Henie proved that women clearly belonged in the Olympic games. During the 1920s, the International Olympic Committee began to permit female participation in a variety of events, including fencing, track, and gymnastics.

Historians have observed that throughout the twentieth century, international events disrupted the Olympic games more than did gender-related politics. World War I forced cancellation of the Berlin Games in 1916, and the Olympics did not take place at all during World War II. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the early Soviet Union withdrew because they considered the Olympic games to be bourgeois events. But after World War II, when the Soviets were again participating in the Olympic games, the games got caught up in the politics of the time: Sometimes medals in the Olympics became tokens of the struggles between the superpowers during the Cold War. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. In protest, the United States withdrew from the Olympic games, which were held in Moscow that year. Through the cultural medium of television, the boycott became an effective weapon for one superpower to wield against the other. When 50 countries joined the U.S. boycott, this Cold War crisis affected hundreds of millions of people who were unable to watch their teams compete. A global chasm that the Olympic games have never bridged is the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. Palestine had competed under the British flag before World War II. After the establishment of the state of Israel, Arab countries threatened to withdraw from the Olympic games. They were unwilling to compete with a team whose nation they refused to recognize. The tensions caused by Israel's participation in the Olympic games ran deep within the Arab world. During the Munich games in 1972, an expression of Palestinian nationalism violated the international "Olympic spirit" in a horrific way. On September 5th, nationalist extremists from an organization known as Black September scaled a perimeter fence, entered the headquarters of the Israeli team, killed two Israelis, and took nine hostages. The German government allowed the kidnappers to leave for the airport with their hostages. A failed rescue attempt at the airport resulted in the deaths of five kidnappers and all nine hostages. The International Olympic Committee faced an agonizing decision. By canceling the games, would they be awarding terrorism a victory? The games went on, but they did so under a shadow of political violence that made a mockery of the Olympic ideal. Historians have noted that this tragic event obscured a significant achievement. The 1972 games reflected the transformation of a decolonized world. Athletes from newly independent nations, especially in Africa and Asia, had come to Munich as cultural ambassadors. At last the competitors at the Olympic games truly represented the peoples of the world.

## Information for the Reggae Presentation

Early in the twentieth century, a Jamaican began to preach that Africa was the Promised Land. Marcus Garvey, whose Back-to-Africa movement had already encompassed about a million followers in the United States, soon became a national hero in Jamaica. Garvey's pan-African nationalism laid a foundation on which a new religion and a new style of music would be built. The Rastafarian movement began in Jamaica in the 1930s with the coronation of the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. Prior to his taking on the name Haile Selassie, his name was Ras Tafari; Tafari was his given name; Ras was the Amharic (Ethiopian language) designation of prince or lord. Haile Selassie claimed descent from the union of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. As King Solomon was the son of King David, the entire Ethiopian noble house then claimed descent from David. So, the Rastafarians read quite logically that Selassie was the root of David, ergo the Christ returned, therefore the Messiah. At the same time,

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Jamaicans were influenced by artists from abroad. Elites in the Jamaican cities gravitated toward U.S. and English pop music on television. While there was certainly crossover between classes, in general the poor black majority tuned in to AM radio stations from New Orleans and Miami to hear R&B and soul. Stirred by religious, political, and musical influences, some Jamaicans began transforming African-American rhythm and blues into homegrown styles of music. "Sound system men" traveled around the island bringing music to Jamaicans who were too poor to afford televisions, phonographs, or radios. At these outdoor discos, Jamaicans often danced to a speeded-up R&B beat they called "ska." Reggae, its beat slower and accented differently than ska, caught on at about the same time. According to musician Toots Hibbert, the word reggae meant "coming from the people" in Jamaican English slang. His 1968 dance record *Do the Reggay* first made the music form popular. Reggae's breakthrough to international popularity came with *The Harder They Come*, a film about a fictional Kingston singer. The 1972 movie, with its soundtrack featuring Jimmy Cliff and other artists, brought reggae music to the masses.

But it was a band of young men from the slums of Kingston, The Wailers, led by Bob Marley, who would fuse reggae and Rastafarianism into a phenomenon that would reach far beyond show business. As the Wailers took their music on tour to the U.S., Europe, Africa, and other places around the world, their songs hit the music charts in country after country. The international appeal of their homegrown, non-commercial style of music was extraordinary. In places like Mauritius and Zimbabwe, reggae's message of struggle against oppression inspired political resistance and fostered new forms of African identity. At Wailers concerts, non-Jamaican audiences—which were predominantly white and middle-class—may have been surprised by what they experienced. Marley often began his set by playing a West African drum. Then he would make a ritual invocation to Ras Tafari as banners above him displayed the Ethiopian flag, a picture of Haile Selassie, and another flag depicting Marcus Garvey. In the second half of the twentieth century, the vast majority of popular music and entertainment had come from the U.S. and Europe. And the major labels in the recording industry were subsidiaries of global corporations. But ironically, these channels of what Marley called "the Babylon system" gave reggae a worldwide audience. This appeal and power of reggae clearly demonstrated that the globalization of popular culture was a two-way street.

## Information for the Soccer Presentation

In 1883, the Blackburn Rovers, a team of English textile workers, defeated the elite Old Etonian team for the Football Association Cup. By then, soccer had gained popularity as the game of the working class. In the 1880s, soccer became a professional sport in England; it soon spread to European countries. And by 1904, seven western European nations had founded The International Federation of Football Associations, known as FIFA. As the British Empire grew, the soccer ball went with it as a perhaps unlikely symbol of European imperialism. English railway workers took soccer to Argentina. British soldiers brought it to India and South Africa. But throughout Africa, European missionaries and colonial officials used soccer as a recruiting device for their schools and as a tool or instrument in their civilizing mission. Before the British colonized Burma, the Burmese had played their own head-and-foot game that involved a hard rattan ball. After introducing the organized sport in the late nineteenth century, the colonizers insisted that the Burmese play by Association rules to show respect for authority and the ideal of fair play. The Burmese saw an opportunity to thrash their colonial masters at their own game. But this European game could also be used for anti-imperialist purposes, as African nationalist leaders soon recognized. One example was Kwame Nkrumah, the father of Ghanaian independence, who used soccer to generate a sense of national identity in a new nation divided by ethnic rivalries.

Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana:

I discovered that sportsmanship was a vital part of a man's character, and this led me to realize the importance of encouraging sport in the development of a nation. (James Le Sueur, *The Decolonization Reader*, [New York: Routledge, 2003]: 367.)

Although Britain held no territories in South America, British enterprises and commerce were extensive there. English railway workers brought soccer to Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil in the 1870s. Over time, the Brazilians developed a unique style of soccer that contrasted strongly with European techniques. They avoided fixed positions, team strategies, and long passes. Instead, Brazilians displayed an unpredictable fluidity, with individuals breaking away, controlling the ball, and making lightning moves with sudden changes in direction. And long shots from unexpected angles brought further excitement to the game. Brazilians call their elegant style of ball-playing "the beautiful game." It's based on long-standing Afro-Brazilian traditions such as capoeira, a martial art

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form created by Angolan slaves who disguised their military training as a form of dance. In capoeira, opponents taunt each other with illusive moves and spectacular acrobatics, but they never touch. One sees this game of keep-away in the style of Brazilian soccer players. Another innovation that Brazilians brought to soccer was performance art in the stands. Brazilians were the first fans to paint their bodies with team colors, wear wigs and wild outfits, and set off fireworks when their team scored. Every match had shades of Carnival. In recognition of Brazilian pre-eminence in soccer, FIFA selected a Brazilian, Joao Havelange, as its first non-European president in 1974. During the quarter century he held that position, Havelange helped make soccer the world's game. Doubling the number of teams that could play in the World Cup, he gave countries from every continent a shot at the championship. He also created the Women's World Cup that today includes over a hundred competing teams. And now, the passion for soccer has spread to places where it had never been popular before, such as Korea and Saudi Arabia.

Historian Peter Winn:

When the World Cup was played in East Asia in 2002, two billion people around the world watched it. I remember being in Bolivia, where a woman of indigenous origin had her nose pressed up against the glass of a store selling computers and watching on the screen Brazil and Germany play in Korea. That is globalization of popular culture. That shows how globalization has affected all of us, no matter where we are and no matter who we are, all around the world. (Peter Winn, interview with Oregon Public Broadcasting, *Bridging World History, Unit 25: Global Popular Culture* [Oregon Public Broadcasting, October 2003].)

## Activity 2: Globalization and Music—25 minutes

Write a short response to Obo Addy's quote below, exploring the ways that his experience is an example of the effects of globalization.

Obo Addy:

I was born in Accra in a village called Avena. Accra is the capital of Ghana. I was raised among 55 brothers and sisters. My father married 10 women. And my father was a medicine man who performed ceremonies with drumming, dancing, and singing. And through that, I became a musician. In 1972, me and my brothers were invited to come to the Olympic games in Munich, to perform there. And after the Olympic games, we met an agent who took us to England, and we stayed in England. We came on tour in the United States. Here I am now in the United States with two bands, two groups. One is a traditional group—music and dance group. And the other is a band using American musical instruments. Most of the things that bring us down, or get us away from what we should be doing, traditionally, is money. When people start getting money, they forget about what they have to do. They forget about their culture. But to me, I think you can make money with everything you want to make money with. But one thing is: Don't forget where you come from. I'm writing it for the world, and whatever they think it sounds like—all I want is for them to enjoy it. If they enjoy it, good, just call my name and I'll call my father's name to it. (Obo Addy, interview with Oregon Public Broadcasting, *Bridging World History, Unit 25: Global Popular Culture* [Oregon Public Broadcasting, January 2004].)