

*Southeast Asian Connections*

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| **Introduction** | |
| The image shown is a mouth organ called a *khaen* from Thailand. It is made of bamboo and has canes of various lengths and diameters. The wooden mouthpiece holds canes with a putty-like material. Khaen are also found in Laos and Cambodia.  The exact origin of the khaen is uncertain, but it is believed to have originated in Laos or Northeast Thailand more than 1,000 years ago. The instrument has been used in the traditional music of various ethnic groups in the region, including the Lao, Thai, and Hmong. The khaen has a significant cultural and spiritual significance in these communities, and it is often played at festivals, weddings, and funerals.  The khaen is believed to have spread from Laos to other parts of Southeast Asia through a combination of migration, trade, and cultural exchange. As people moved and traded goods, they also exchanged cultural practices, including music. The khaen's portability and versatility made it well-suited for this kind of cultural diffusion. Over time, the khaen became a popular instrument in other parts of Southeast Asia, including northeastern Thailand and southwestern China, where variations of the instrument can still be found today.  The *khaen* (pronounced KHEN) is a wind instrument commonly used in traditional Thai and Lao music. Often more than 3 feet in length, they are made of bamboo and consist of several small diameter, parallel pipes with finger holes. It is often played in ensembles with other traditional instruments, such as the *saw duang* (a two-stringed bowed instrument) and the *ranat ek* (a xylophone-like instrument). The khaen is also sometimes used in contemporary music genres in Thailand. | |
| **Indiana Standards Connections:**  7.1.15 Create and compare timelines that identify major people and events and developments in the history of civilization and/or countries of Africa, Asia and the Southwest Pacific.  7.1.18 Compare and contrast perspectives of history in Africa, Asia, and the Southwest Pacific using fictional and nonfictional accounts including visual, literary, art, and musical sources.  7.3.1 Formulate a broad understanding of the location of countries of Africa, Asia and the Southwest Pacific.  7.3.3 Describe and compare major cultural characteristics of regions in Africa, Asia, and Southwest Pacific.  Examples: language, religion, recreation, clothing, diet, fine arts, family structure, and traditions  7.3.11 Analyze current issues and developments related to the environment in selected countries in Africa, Asia and the Southwest Pacific. | **Compelling Question(s):**     * How does the khaen promote family and social cohesion among southeast Asian communities? * How do you think the spread of the khaen reflects broader patterns of cultural diffusion? |
| **Lesson Objectives:**    Students will learn about Laos and Southeast Asian cultures through the khaen. They will explore the significance of the khaen in cultural celebrations such as festivals, weddings, and funerals in different southeast Asian cultures. | |
| **Materials** | |
| * [Laos- Geography Now](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbmZQDySpzY) * [Khaen Music of the Lao People- UNESCO](https://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/document-4630) * [How the Khaen Instrument is Made- YouTube](https://youtu.be/lA8YDQLe-Ek?si=Z5lHP7-IUhvi2Gm3) * [Khaen Master Nouthong Phimvilayphone playing Lotfai talang](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_u5w5d2xiQ) | |
| **Learning Plan** | |
| **Activities**   1. Ask students to observe the khaen and describe it. What do they think it is made of? Does it look similar to something they are familiar with? What do they think it is? How is it used and who uses it? Where do you think this instrument is from?   What makes the khaen different from other wind instruments such as the harmonica?   1. Show them the video of the [khaen master](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_u5w5d2xiQ) playing the instrument. Explain that the khaen is the national instrument of Laos, however, it is also played in Thailand, and Cambodia. It has been used for over 1,00 years in various cultural contexts, such as festivals, weddings, and funerals. 2. Watch [Laos- Geography Now,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbmZQDySpzY) and [How the Khaen Instrument is Made- YouTube](https://youtu.be/lA8YDQLe-Ek?si=Z5lHP7-IUhvi2Gm3) videos to provide a broad overview of Laos and the khaen. After watching the videos, discuss:  * Why do you think the khaen has such cultural significance in these communities? * How does the khaen connect to the people who play it?  1. Using a map, ask students to identify the continents. Focusing on Southeast Asia, ask them to locate Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand in the map. Reflect on the physical boundaries of these countries. Considering that these boundaries are man-made, invite students to reflect how these cultures interacted with each other 1,000 years ago when these boundaries did not exist. Reflect on the role migration, trade, and cultural exchange might have had in the spread of the khaen.  * How do they think the khaen travelled and spread throughout these countries?  1. In 2017. UNESCO designated the khaen as an Intangible Cultural Heritage because of its key role in promoting family and social cohesion. Families are vital in maintaining and transmitting the practice, and with the aid of UNESCO, communities create initiatives to safeguard it through formal and informal education.   Explain why the khaen is important for different ethnic groups in southeast Asia, including the Lao, Thai, and Hmong. It is used not only for entertainment but also in spiritual and ritual settings like weddings and funerals.  Discussion:  Why is the khaen a significant instrument in this region?  Why did it spread widely across Asia?  Discuss how different cultures have instruments that are unique to them, what role music plays in cultural identity and celebrations.  Students can share their thoughts on how music connects people across different regions and traditions. | |
| **Assessment Suggestions**    Assess students’ participation based on in-class discussions and active participation. | |
| **Extensions**    Students can browse UNESCO’s “Intangible Heritage: Arts and Traditions of the World” and select a different culture to research. They should focus on traditional art and discuss the relevance to that culture. Why do they think UNESCO designated it as Intangible Cultural Heritage? | |

Khaen Activity Possibilities

Some of the best opportunities for education are *integrative*—meaning that students are able to make connections across disciplines to reinforce the knowledge that they are developing. For example, they may be learning about Renaissance Italy in World Studies at the same time that they read Dante’s *Inferno* in English class while also studying Botticelli in Art. Feel free to combine and adapt some of the ideas across disciplines and standards to best suit your particular context. You can also collaborate with other teachers at your school or supplement the resources provided by contacting your librarian.

**Note: The following ideas are meant to give general guidance for teachers to include artifacts and other material culture in their classrooms. They are not meant to be treated as comprehensive activities or lessons that are one-size-fits-all for any classroom. They should be personalized to best fit the needs of a teacher’s individual context in accordance with prior student learning, student abilities, available resources, and any curricular guidance.**

**Art**

**Visual Arts – Responding:**

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| **Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work**  **Enduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed throughout engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.**  **Essential Question(s): How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art? How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world? What can we learn from our responses to art?** | |
| **VA:Re7.1.1a** | Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences. |
| **VA:Re7.1.6a** | Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value. |
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| **VA:Re9.1.5a** | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society |
| **VA:Re7.1.Ia** | Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences. |
| **VA:Re7.1.IIa** | Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments |
| **VA:Re7.1.IIIa** | Analyze how responses to art develop over time based on knowledge of and experience with art and life |

**Visual Arts – Connecting:**

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| **Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.**  **Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.**  **Essential Question(s): How does art help us understanding the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures? How is art used to impact the videos of a society> How does art preserve aspects of life?** | |
| **VA:Cn11.1.1a** | Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.2a** | Compare and contrast cultural uses of artwork from different times and places. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.3a** | Recognize that responses to art change depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made |
| **VA:Cn11.1.4a** | Through observation, infer information about time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.6a** | Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.7a** | Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses |
| **VA:Cn11.1.8a** | Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity |
| **VA:Cn11.1.IIa** | Compare uses of art in a variety of social, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.IIIa** | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society. |

*Students can be asked to consider how art reflects time periods, beliefs, cultures, traditions, etc. In exploring the khaen, students are examining how items such as this represent belonging to ethnic or cultural groups. Students could also explore how different musical instruments used in rituals, festivals, and other social contexts promote social cohesion and strengthen social ties among community members. They can also explore different songs played with the instruments, if these songs are also played in other cultures and in what contexts are they played.*

**Social Studies**

**Grade 6: History, Places, and Cultures in Europe and Americas**

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| **6.1.3** | ***Explain the impact of humans on the physical environment in Europe and the Americas.*** |
| **6.3.10** | *Explain the ways cultural diffusion, invention, and innovation change culture.* |
| **6.3.11** | *Differentiate between the terms anthropology, archaeology, and artifacts while explaining how these contribute to our understanding of societies in the present and the past.* |

**Ethnic Studies**

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| **ES.4.1** | *Students examine historical and contemporary economic, intellectual, social, cultural and political contributions to society by ethnic or racial group(s) or an individual within a group.* |

**Geography and History of the World**

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| **GHW.4.2** | *Use a variety of text (writing, maps, timelines and/or other graphic representations) to show the movement, spread and changes in the worldwide exchange of flora, fauna and pathogens that resulted from transoceanic voyages of exploration and exchanges between peoples in different regions. Assess the consequences of these encounters for the people and environments involved.* |
| **GHW.4.3** | *Identify and compare the main causes, players, and events of imperialism during different time periods. Examine the global extent of imperialism using a series of political maps.* |
| **GHW.4.4** | *Analyze and assess how the physical and human environments (including languages used) of places and regions changed as the result of differing imperialist and colonial policies.* |

**World History and Civilization**

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| **WH.7.3** | *Investigate and interpret multiple causation in analyzing historical actions and analyze cause-and-effect relationships.* |
| **WH.7.6** | *Formulate and present a position or course of action on an issue by examining the underlying factors contributing to that issue and support that position.* |

*Outside of the 6th and 7th grade Indiana standards, the exploration regarding how the emergence of nation-states, and imperialism has led to an impact on other cultures and environments. Students should be able to examine the role of human environment interaction involved in the development and spread of such items as the khaen included in this lesson. There’s room for them to make connections to contemporary issues that are similar to and a consequence of this result of cultural diffusion.*

**Language Arts**

**Writing Skills:**

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| **4.W.5** | **Conduct short research on a topic.**   * **Identify a specific question to address (e.g., What is the history of the Indy 500?).** * **Use organizational features of print and digital sources to efficiently locate further information.** * **Determine the reliability of the sources.** * **Summarize and organize information in their own words, giving credit to the source** * **Present the research information, choosing from a variety of formats.** |
| **5.W.5** | Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.   * With support, formulate a research question (e.g., What were John Wooden’s greatest contributions to college basketball?). * Identify and acquire information through reliable primary and secondary sources. * Summarize and paraphrase important ideas and supporting details, and include direct quotations where appropriate, citing the source of information. * Avoid plagiarism and follow copyright guidelines for use of images, pictures, etc. * Present the research information, choosing from a variety of sources. |

*Students could conduct research projects in which they examine examples of cultural diffusion of similar instruments or cultural practices. Alternatively, they can analyze a song played with this instrument, the meaning of the song, and its formal elements.*