



## Teacher's Resource Article

### Understanding World Heritage

During the first half of the last century, many historical towns, monuments and buildings were destroyed or damaged by two world wars. In response to this destruction, the League of Nations, which later became the United Nations, appealed for worldwide cooperation in protecting cultural heritage.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established in 1945 in part to accomplish this task.

Since that time, UNESCO has drafted several international conventions and recommendations to protect heritage throughout the world.

The concept of World Heritage emerged in part because of the construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt in the 1960s. Various ancient historical monuments and architectural complexes that were going to be covered by water were saved by relocating them. UNESCO launched an international campaign to save the monuments, which prompted many countries to help finance their preservation.

The immediate international response to saving these monuments showed that certain sites in the world are considered to be of outstanding universal value (a value that is shared by everyone). This concept gave rise to the Convention Concerning the Protection of World

Cultural and Natural Heritage (more commonly known as the World Heritage Convention).

The World Heritage Convention is an international agreement was adopted in 1972. It works to protect both natural and cultural heritage (tangible heritage) threatened by population, urbanization, pollution, deforestation and excessive tourism. Over 150 countries have signed the Convention and there are now some 1000+ recognized World Heritage Sites. In the United States, we have 23 such sites.

Nature and culture are intimately linked; this is the reason why World Heritage includes both types of heritage. Countries (known as State Parties) that have joined the Convention, voluntarily commit themselves to safeguarding heritage sites that they nominate for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

The main goals of the World Heritage Convention are to:

- Identify the world's shared heritage by compiling a list of sites whose universal value should be preserved for all humanity;
- Ensure their protection through close cooperation among nations;
- Ensure at a national level that State Parties will protect their sites.

But remember, even if a site or monument or important natural area is not on the World Heritage List, it can still be important to a state or local area. All countries have sites, building and museum collections of local and national significance that need to be protected. World Heritage Sites are areas that are significant to everyone in the world.

The World Heritage List gets longer every year as new nominations are accepted and more countries sign the Convention.

The inscription of a site in the World Heritage List is a long process requiring many steps. The first step is to sign the Convention and become a State Party. Then a country develops a Tentative List of natural and cultural sites that they deem worthy of recognition as a World Heritage Site and which they intend to nominate.

A country can annually submit up to two nominations of sites on their Tentative List to a 21-nation committee comprised of World Heritage signatories. Once a year, this committee determines if the site satisfies at least one of the 10 selection criteria, is properly managed, and has strong legal protection so that its preservation is assured. . Two advisory bodies of technical experts (one for natural sites, another for cultural sites) review the nominations and make recommendations to the committee. If a property is believed to meet the requirements, then the committee moves to include the site on the World Heritage List.



In order to be selected as a World Heritage Site, the nominated area must meet at least one of these criteria:

- Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius (for example, the Egyptian Pyramids);
- Have exercised considerable influence at a certain period or within a cultural area of the world (like the medieval city of Rhodes, Greece);
- Provide exceptional evidence of a culture which is living or has disappeared;
- Be an outstanding example of a type of building, an architectural grouping or a landscape that illustrates a significant stage of human history;
- Be an outstanding example of a traditional way of life which is representative of a culture;
- Be directly associated with events, living traditions or beliefs of outstanding universal value;
- Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional beauty;
- Be an outstanding example representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-

going geological processes in the development of landforms;

- Be an outstanding example representing on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems;
- Contain the most important and significant natural habitats of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species.

Across the globe, it is a high honor to have a heritage site recognized as a World Heritage Site. In addition, in many cases, tourists will visit a site just because it has become a World Heritage Site. This in turn, creates jobs and revenue for the communities where these sites are located.



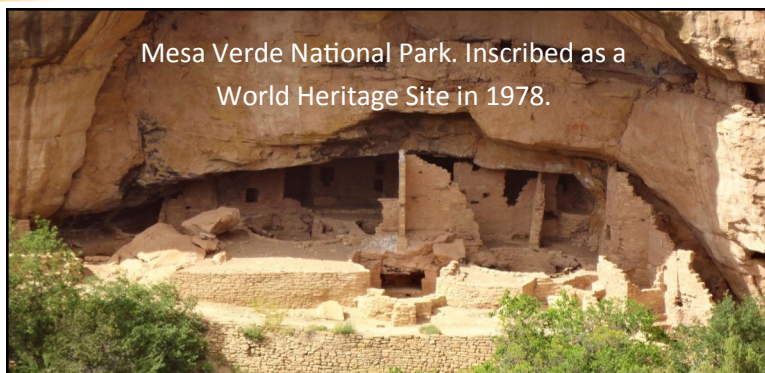
World Heritage Emblem



Statue of Liberty. Inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1984.

## LESSON 1

### What is World Heritage?



Mesa Verde National Park. Inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1978.

#### Essential Question:

*What is a World Heritage site, why are they selected, and what can I and my community do to help preserve heritage sites in my community and globally?*

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Students will understand the concept of World Heritage regarding natural and cultural sites.
2. Students will understand and identify criteria required for designation as a World Heritage site.
3. Students will evaluate site examples and determine appropriateness of site for World Heritage designation.
4. Students will provide evidence to support arguments in supporting or opposing designation of example sites as World Heritage sites.

#### Common Core Skills:

- ◆ Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- ◆ Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
- ◆ Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

#### Time Required:

1-2 40-minute class periods

#### Materials:

- ◆ Resource sheets from this lesson
- ◆ Internet access
- ◆ Dictionaries or online dictionary access

## LESSON 1

### What is World Heritage?



#### **Vocabulary:**

Tangible, intangible, heritage, cultural, natural, threats, preservation, conservation, management, criteria, endangered, diversity, resources

#### **Getting Prepared:**

Go to [www.whc.unesco.org](http://www.whc.unesco.org) to learn about the UNESCO World Heritage program and the sites identified and protected by the program. Click on the tab at the top labeled “The List” and review the interactive map to locate World Heritage sites that are nearest to your area. Use the map legend at the right side of the page to identify sites’ designation as natural areas, cultural areas or mixed areas as well as areas identified as endangered.

Identify sites in your local area that are culturally or naturally significant to your community. These sites may be designated as state or national parks or historic sites or simply sites important to the history and heritage of your community.

#### **Class Period 1**

#### **Getting Started:**

1. Begin by asking students what the word “heritage” means. Allow students to offer answers and then have them look up the definition in a printed or online dictionary. Write some of the definitions down on the board and discuss them with the class. Ask students if they can offer some examples of “heritage” based on the definitions written down on the board. Some possible responses could include inherited property, money, or businesses that were passed down through family generations. Guide students in the discussion to other kinds of heritage that might include cultural or historical legacies passed down from our ancestors. Ask students if they can think of a few cultural or historical heritage examples. Some possible responses could include language, literature, art, music, dance, or religion or even buildings and monuments.
2. Write the words “tangible” and “intangible” on the board. Ask students if anyone can explain what these terms mean. Again, allow students to look up the definitions in a printed or online dictionary. Explain that things that are “intangible” are those that we can describe or understand but do not have a physical presence. Things that are “tangible” are those that can be physically touched or experienced. Ask students to look back at their list of heritage items on the board and identify any that might be intangible (music, dance, religion, language, etc.) or tangible (buildings, statues, monuments, etc.). However, once the two different types of heritage have been explored, explain to your students that the World Heritage

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### What is World Heritage?



Convention is primarily about tangible heritage. The majority of these lesson plans will just focus on tangible heritage.

3. Explain that Heritage Sites can reflect places that commemorate cultural heritage or natural heritage areas. Cultural heritage sites are things related to the past like buildings, townscapes, archaeological remains, but also include objects like books, documents, statues and pictures. Examples of Cultural World Heritage Sites include places like the Statue of Liberty, Independence Hall or Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. Natural heritage sites are those places not created by humans but have significant ecosystems or geological formations. Natural World Heritage Sites include Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, and Everglades National Parks. Sometimes heritage sites can contain both natural and cultural heritage like the Papahānaumokuākea are north of the Hawaiian Islands. This area is made up of 1,200 miles of islands, atolls, coral reefs and the adjacent waters covering over 89 million acres. Though much of the protected area is under water, some of the islands contain archaeological sites from past human habitation.
4. Pass out Resource Sheet #1, “Tangible and Intangible Cultural and Natural Heritage” and ask students to work in pairs or small groups to identify the areas pictured as tangible or intangible heritage and also if they represent cultural or natural heritage. Have groups discuss their answers with the class.
5. Pass out Resource Sheet #2, “Characteristics of Heritage”. This worksheet can be reviewed as a class or sent home as homework. You can review the sheet as a class or have students work together in groups. You might select a local heritage site that the students are familiar with as an example to answer the following questions:
  - a. What value does the site hold for your community?
  - b. Does the site represent natural or cultural heritage?
  - c. What do people/visitors do at the site?
  - d. Is the site important or known to people outside of your local area?
  - e. Are jobs created by the site? What kinds?
  - f. What would happen if the site was damaged or destroyed?
  - g. What might cause damage or destruction to the site?
  - h. Would the site still be remembered following destruction or would people quickly forget about it?

# LESSON 1

## What is World Heritage?



### Class Period 2

#### Getting Engaged:

1. Review with your students why heritage needs protection. Write the following words up on the board and ask students to explain what threat each term represents to heritage sites. (Possible answers are listed in parentheses).
  - a. Climate-(frost, sun, rain, freeze/thaw cycles can deteriorate material over time)
  - b. Pollution- (can be a major cause of deterioration for cultural sites, especially those built of marble, limestone or lime mortar. Bronze statues can also be affected by pollution),
  - c. Natural disasters- (earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions).
  - d. Wars and vandalism
  - e. Light- (Visible and ultraviolet light as well as heat from light can cause fading and discoloration on paper, wood, textiles and photos).
  - f. Animals-(pests, birds, and rodents can destroy wood and paper. Their droppings also contain acids that may have a corrosive effect on stone or bronze).
  - g. Neglect or abandonment- (buildings and structures fall into disrepair if people fail to maintain them).
  - h. Tourism- (too much tourism can cause damage to the sites).
  - i. Urban development- (too much increase in population, new construction or changes to historic buildings can cause historic or archaeological areas to be destroyed or change the character of historic areas).
2. Project the images from Resource Sheet #3 “Threats to Heritage Resources” on the whiteboard or screen and have the class determine what threat is illustrated in each photo. Students may also speculate about what heritage site managers might do to restore the resource and reduce the threat of future damage. (Answers: A. Roof moss on shingles will eventually damage them. B. Acid rain on buildings damages the structures. C. Bird droppings will damage stone and make it unsightly. D. Neglect will cause vegetation to overgrown the buildings and cause damage. E. Urban development next to a historic site can cause damage. F. Wildfires destroy natural and cultural resources. G. Overcrowding can cause damage to resources.)
3. Divide students into groups of three or four to complete Activity Sheet #1 “Be a Resource Manager.” Distribute Resource Sheet #4 “Resource Management Practices” along with the activity.



**Instructions:** Work together in pairs or small groups to analyze the pictures below. Discuss with your partner/group whether you believe the photo represents an example of tangible or intangible heritage and also if the picture represents an example of natural or cultural heritage. In some cases, an area could contain both characteristics. Circle your group's answers below each photo.



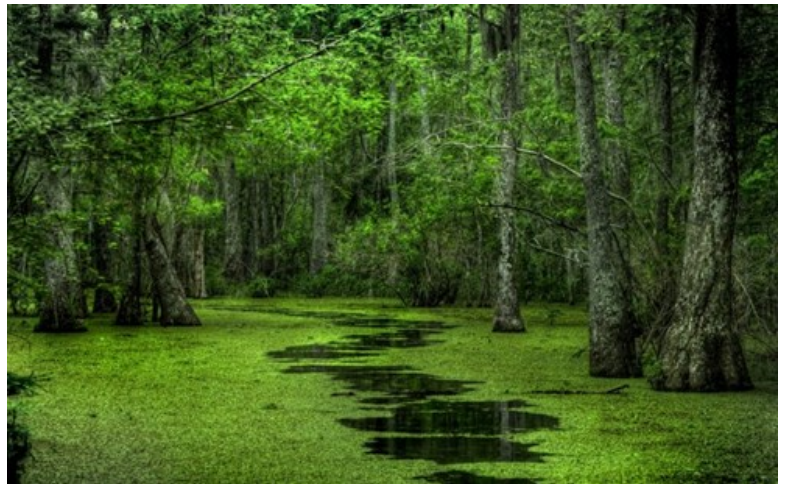
Tangible/Intangible      Cultural/Natural



Tangible/Intangible      Cultural/Natural



Tangible/Intangible      Cultural/Natural



Tangible/Intangible      Cultural/Natural



Cultural and natural heritage can have various meanings for different groups of people. Read through the sections below to learn a bit more about what heritage is and why people value it.

### 1. Identity:

People maintain their identity through their heritage, which is both tangible and intangible. Frequently, a country or city can be identified through its heritage. Look at the two photos.

Do you think of Paris, France and ancient Egypt? What kind of heritage would make someone think about the United States? Perhaps baseball or American football would identify U.S. heritage. Maybe Grand Canyon or Yellowstone National Parks make people think of the U.S. Since the World Heritage Convention primarily deals with tangible heritage, can you think of an example of tangible heritage that is found in your local area?







## 2. Cultural Diversity:

Heritage is also a way to understand cultural diversity. Many groups of people identify with their own tangible heritage. Many U.S. citizens may identify with the U.S. Capitol as a symbol of their government.

## 3. Economic Development:

Heritage can be a source of economic development through tourism and preservation by creating jobs for the people who care for and manage heritage sites. Tourism has been an important industry for cultural heritage sites since the 1800s. With the rise of trains, cars and airplanes, access for tourists to visit cultural and natural heritage sites has increased.

## 4. Heritage is Unique and Often Cannot be Replaced

Heritage is unique and often times cannot be replaced if damaged or destroyed. Recent armed conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere have resulted in the destruction of many historical and archaeological treasures, some nearly 2,000 years old. These tangible heritage objects and places are now lost forever. People in the future will only be able to see them in pictures. Other threats to cultural and natural heritage sites include natural disasters, weather, erosion, pollution, deforestation and other human caused or natural events. In some cases, conservation efforts can restore heritage sites.



This photo illustrates how an earthquake destroyed a World Heritage site in Nepal in 2015. It is beyond repair and is now lost to future generations.



*Instructions:* What threats to the heritage resources are found in each of these photos? These images can be projected in front of the class or printed and passed out as a resource sheet.

A.



B.





C.



D.



E.



F.





G.



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What other kind of threats to heritage can you think of?



Protection and proper management of natural and cultural heritage sites are important for many reasons. After many years of scientific study and experience working with heritage sites, resource managers have developed skills and principles necessary to keep our special sites safe from damage or destruction. The following list contains the steps that resource managers or conservators (generally people with more technical expertise), take in protecting heritage sites and resources.

**Step 1: Identify the characteristics of the site and its values.**

- What makes the site important to humans to protect?
- Does it represent architectural style, history, or natural beauty? (tangible characteristics)
- Does it represent religion, music, literature, poetry, dance or artistic values of a group of people? (intangible characteristics)
- Who lived in the area? When and why?

**Step 2: Analyze and identify the current condition of the site.**

- Conservators need to know the present condition so they will document the site using the following tools.
- Photographs
- Inventory of objects, buildings, documents, or natural resources
- Research of historical information about the site
- Create detailed drawings or computer images of the buildings, structures, objects

**Step 3: Identify any possible threats or hazards to the site.**

- Natural events like weather, erosion, earthquakes, floods, wildfire, volcanic eruptions, vegetation overgrowth
- Human-caused events like vandalism, neglect, wars, urban development,
- Pollution
- Pests or damage by animals
- Light- visible or ultraviolet light
- Tourism pressures



#### **Step 4: Make a management plan**

- Determine how much money and how many people it will take for daily care and management of the site and where the money for management will come from.
- Develop plans to make sure visitors to the site do not damage the resources by walking over fragile landscapes or historic areas. Determine how visitors can best experience the site without breaking or damaging it.
- Determine what facilities will be needed for visitors' use. For example, bathrooms, water fountains, restaurants or cafes, hotels or places to stay. Access to the site by cars, trains, buses, bikes, hiking, boats, etc. Determine if vehicles transporting visitors to the site will cause damage by exhaust fumes, tire tracks, parking on landscapes, or other threats. Plan for visitors' experience that does the least damage to the site.
- Make a plan in case of natural disasters or human-caused damage to site. What will managers do in an emergency to protect both the site and the humans working and visiting at the site? How will damaged areas be restored?

#### **Step 5: Identify people or groups that will help managing the site.**

- Think about local people or groups that are connected to the site's history or culture
- Colleges or universities interested in researching or studying the site
- Government agencies that may help pay for or provide staff to manage the site
- Organizations interested in preserving the site



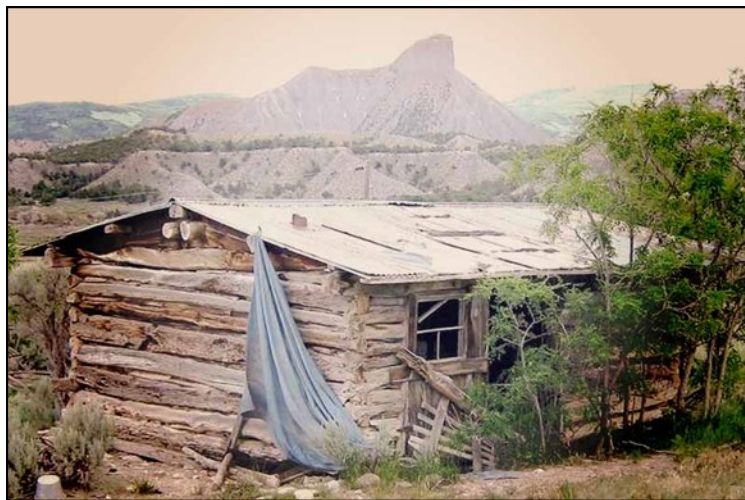
Team Member's Names: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your team has been assigned to protect the Lizzy Knight cabin in Colorado. Let us assume that it is a historic resource and needs to be protected as a state operated heritage site. Review the two articles found on the following links and then as a group, answer the questions below. Use a separate sheet of paper to write your group's answers.

<http://circaoldhouses.com/lizzy-knight-cabin-disappointment-valley/>

<http://www.cortezjournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120403/NEWS01/704039971/Lizzy-Knight>



**Step 1. Identify the characteristics of the site and its values.** *What makes the Lizzy Knight cabin important to protect? What makes Lizzy Knight an important person in Colorado history? Is the architecture of the cabin important to the area's history?*

**Step 2. Analyze and identify the current condition of the site.** *What condition is the building in? What tools could be used to document the cabin's current condition?*

**Step 3. Identify any possible threats.** *What could do further harm to the cabin? What are human threats to the cabin? What are natural threats to the cabin?*

**Step 4. Make a management plan.** *As a group, write out a management plan for the cabin. Be sure to include plans for each of the items listed on Step 4 of the Resource Management Practices resource sheet.*

**Step 5. Identify people or groups that might help in managing the site.** *Who might help with funds or skills needed to manage the heritage site?*



Congratulations on completing the Every Kid in a Park World Heritage classroom activity. Use the resources below to further explore the World Heritage program.

The National Park Service manages the World Heritage program in the United States. Check their website for information about the U.S. program.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/internationalcooperation/worldheritage.htm>

Maps showing all the current U.S. World Heritage Sites and Tentative List Sites.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/internationalcooperation/current-and-tentative-list-maps.htm>

The National Park Service coordinates a World Heritage in the United States Junior Ranger program. This site can provide students with a fun overview of the program through the use of games and activities.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/internationalcooperation/world-heritage-junior-rangers.htm>

This website contains a great many links to information about World Heritage Sites in the United States and around the world.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/internationalcooperation/worldheritagelinks.htm>



**Yosemite National Park. Inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1984.**