

Social Realities in Chile

Sarah Lerdal – School not available

Grade Level (Req.): 9th-12th grade	Content Area (Req.): Social Studies	Unit (Opt.):
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		
Time Frame (Req.): 1-2 days	Goal (Req.): Students will think critically about current realities in Chile, regarding why the situation may exist, and how it compares to the United States.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will be able to identify differences in Chilean and American societies. Students will be able to explain why and how societies develop different laws and customs. Students will be able to debate the pros and cons to current Chilean societal situations.	
Materials Needed (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student journals • “Divorce Ties Chile in Knots” article • List of current situations for teacher to read • Critical thinking worksheet • • • 	New Vocabulary (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	
Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): Societies are shaped by many factors. Students need to realize that among other things, culture is created by the geography of the location, the history of the people, and the people themselves. As an introduction, students will do a quick-write in their journals: “Explain one policy, practice, or law in the United States that you dislike or do not understand?” Discuss their responses.		
Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read together the New York Times article “Divorce Ties Chile in Knots.” 2. Pass out the critical thinking worksheet and explain to students that under current situation they should write “recent legalization of divorce.” Together, we will fill out the other columns together by thinking of factors that may have shaped this reality, and pros and cons. 3. Next, the teacher will state the next current situation and students will write it into the column. 4. As a class, we will brainstorm possible causes, then with a partner they will think of possible pros and cons. 5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until all the situations have been filled in. 6. Next, students will number off from 1-4. When their number is called, they will be asked to debate one specific topic. All students will participate in two debates, while the rest of the class listens. Classmates can give input and ask questions. 7. As a wrap-up, students will then have about 10 minutes to independently write down their own opinion regarding three of the issues. They must determine their thoughts about the current 		

reality and support it with reasoning.

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Formative Evaluation (Req.): Class discussion, debate arguments

Assessment (Req.): Completion of chart, written analysis

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- Behavioral Sciences, grade 9-12: Understand current social issues to determine how the individual formulates opinions and responds to those issues.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how culture affects the interaction of human populations through time and space.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

- Speaking and Listening, grade 6-12: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on specific grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
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NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions
- The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
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Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place• Human-Environmental Interaction• Region••	School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
21 st Century Universal Constructs (Opt.): Critical Thinking	
Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••	
Other Essential Information (Opt.):	
Other Resources (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••	

Divorce Ties Chile in Knots

By LARRY ROHTER

Published: January 30, 2005

SANTIAGO, Chile — Two months ago, Chile became the last country in the Western Hemisphere to legalize divorce. Everyone predicted an avalanche of divorce petitions, but it hasn't worked out that way. In fact, almost nobody is lining up outside the courts, except lawyers.

Chileans, it turns out, are being as canny - some say sly - as they were all the years that they had to function under a marriage code written in the 1880's. There was no provision for divorce, so Chileans became famous for the novel ways they got out of or ignored unhappy marriages.

Small wonder, then, that in the first eight weeks of legal but cumbersome divorce procedures, barely 1,000 couples in a nation of 15 million took advantage of the new law. According to news reports here, only four divorces were granted.

As for the rest of the country, it seems to be writing off the opportunity to divorce as too bureaucratic and expensive.

"People don't trust the new process," said Carolina de la Cuadra, a public aid lawyer here who specializes in marriage issues. "They are holding off for now to wait and see what develops."

It's not as if the government hasn't tried to sell the concept. As soon as the law was passed, officials trotted out one middle-aged woman as a poster child for its benefits - María Victoria Torres, who complained that her husband had kicked and hit her, was unfaithful, and would not pay child support after they separated. "On many occasions, I went looking for help, and no one listened to me," she said before a battery of television cameras and radio microphones. "Today, I dare show my face and give my testimony, because I feel supported."

Too bad the authorities proved unable to locate her husband and formally notify him that divorce proceedings were under way. The law is very precise, and notifying an offending spouse is the mandatory first step. So the case is now stalled, waiting for him to show up or be tracked down.

Grounds for divorce include abandonment, abuse and adultery. But claims and proof are different things. Complainants must show "repeated infidelity," for example, not just one instance. Or they must submit evidence of physical violence, like photographs or police records. Hiring a lawyer is almost a necessity.

"People are frightened by the cost," said María Antonieta Saa, a member of Congress who was a sponsor of the legislation. "With all of the bureaucratic obstacles, a divorce can run to more than \$1,500" - a lot of money, she pointed out, in a country where the minimum wage is just over \$200 a month.

Before divorce was legalized, Chileans could escape from failed marriages, but usually only by subterfuge. The most creative schemes involved civil annulment, which required the separating couple to persuade a court that the original marriage had not met legal requirements. So marrying couples frequently left an escape hatch, in case things didn't work out.

Witnesses to a wedding, for example, would sometimes deliberately misspell their names or give an incorrect address. Or a couple might marry in a jurisdiction in which neither lived. More than 5,000 annulments were granted annually; the beneficiaries included President Ricardo Lagos.

But if the new law eliminates hypocrisy that the old one encouraged, it may also have made breaking up more difficult.

In the past, another common way out of a marriage was for a husband to simply take off. That led to a phenomenon known as "the poor couple's annulment," in which a jilted wife would put ads in the newspapers calling on the husband to appear or be declared legally dead, thus freeing her to claim widow's benefits or to marry again.

Teacher Handout—Situations to read aloud

recent legalization of divorce

wearing of school uniforms in most private and public schools

children living at home until early twenties or later

kids receive a drivers license at age 18

feral dogs roam the streets freely

monetary incentives exist for students that attend public schools after 8th grade

kids can legally drink alcohol at age 18

Critical Thinking Table

Current Realities in Chile

current situation (factors that have shaped reality)	possible reasoning	brainstorm pros	brainstorm cons

Written ideas regarding three of the situations:
