**Identifying Elements of Culture**

**Directions:** Carefully read each description in the left-hand column of the handout and identify and explain the elements of culture that apply in each situation in the right-hand column.

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|  | **Social/Cultural Description** | **WHAT element(s) of culture applies and WHY?** |
| 1 | Mecca, in a desert valley in western Saudi Arabia, is Islam’s (a major world religion) holiest city. Only Muslims, a person who follows the religion of Islam, are allowed in the city with millions arriving for the annual Hajj (pilgrimage). Dating from the 7th century, the central Masjid al-Haram (Sacred Mosque) surrounds the Kaaba, the cloth-covered cubic structure that’s Islam’s most sacred shrine. |  |
| 2 | Ahu is a young girl from Instanbul, Turkey. She is very friendly and always says merhaba (mer-hah-bah), or “hello” to everyone she meets. One of her favorite Turkish dishes is yaprak sarma, which consists of wrapped vine leaves with a filling of rice, onion and spices like mint, currant, pepper and cinnamon. According to Ahu, her father, and two younger brothers, Ahu’s mother makes the best yaprak sarma in Turkey! |  |
| 3 | South Africa is located at the southern tip of the continent of Africa. South Africans celebrate Freedom Day on April 27th of every year, which is a national holiday commemorating the day in 1994 when the first democratic election was held in South Africa. Citizens must be 18 years of age to vote in the country’s elections and South Africa is the world's largest producer of platinum, gold, chromium. |  |