

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

"Diversity Quilt: A Lesson on Culture"

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SUMMARY

This lesson focuses on cultural diversity, communication, and artistic expression. Students consider aspects of their cultural identities before conducting an interview to determine a classmate's cultural traits. After reading and analyzing a piece of writing, looking specifically for cultural components, students create a visual representation of who they are in terms of their various cultural attributes. All works will be attached to create a Culture Quilt that will be displayed for all students to enjoy. Students ultimately reflect on the impact of culture and how various cultures make us who we are both individually and collectively.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does our culture shape and form our identities? How can the study of different cultures enrich our lives?

DURATION

150 Minutes

TIME FRAME

3 - 4 Class Period(s)

SUBJECT(S)

English/Language Arts, Social
Studies

GRADE LEVEL(S)

10th, 11th

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. ENGAGE:

Students brainstorm aspects of their cultural identity, considering their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, etc.

2. EXPLORE:

Students conduct an interview with a peer, determining aspects of a classmate's culture.

3. EXPLAIN:

Students read a work of literature, analyzing the various cultural components present.

4. EXTEND:

Students create a visual representation of their unique culture(s).

5. EVALUATE:

Students compile a diversity quilt, attaching visual representations together. Students then reflect on their learning and new knowledge of various cultures.

LESSON PROCEDURES

1. ENGAGE

To begin this lesson, ask students to complete a short, five-minute quickwrite addressing the following question: What's your idea or definition of culture?

After five minutes, ask students to share their quickwrite response with a partner. Then, ask for volunteers to share out with the whole class.

TEACHER'S NOTE

During this activity, students will likely focus on race and ethnicity. Be sure to have the conversation with students centered around other aspects of culture that exist, too: clothing, language, religious beliefs, values, traditions, identity, sexual orientation, music, etc. Prepare students for the remainder of this lesson by informing them that they will be considering and engaging with various aspects of their own cultures and the cultures of others. The goal is for students to recognize that the concept of culture is multi-faceted and includes many aspects of one's life.

Locate the [Show Our Culture](#) and [King Eats Hot Dog](#) video clips. (Links are noted under Resources at the end of the lesson.) These two video clips will allow students to see how various aspects of culture (including race, ethnicity, and even food) play a role in one's life.

Before students watch the videos, ask them to pay specific attention to aspects of culture they see represented in the videos. Encourage students to jot down notes as they watch, as they will discuss in pairs and then as a whole class afterward in a [Think-Pair-Share](#) activity,

After each video, give students a few minutes to add to their notes, thinking about what aspects of culture they found relevant or interesting.

After both videos, encourage students to pair up with a classmate to compare notes. Students should feel free to add to their notes during this process. The goal during this part of the activity is for pairs to create a "shared" responses, synthesizing their ideas.

A whole-class discussion can now commence. Each pair should share out their ideas. As the teacher, be sure to act as scribe and write down the gist of each pair's responses on the board. A whole-class list will take shape on the board during this conversation.

2. EXPLORE

Students can remain with the same partner from the previous activity, or students could pair up with another partner. For this activity, it might be wise to strategically pair students who likely have different cultural backgrounds. Strategic grouping would allow for students to learn as much as possible about various cultures.

Once students are in pairs, distribute copies of the "Cultural Interview Questions" handout under Attachments. Each student needs a copy of this handout.

Provide students ample time to interview one another. Students should feel free to ask questions from the handout, but be certain students know that they are not expected to ask every question, nor do they have to stick to the exact questions on the handout. Students should feel free to ask other questions as the interview progresses.

TEACHER'S NOTE

To narrow the focus, students could choose their own subculture (athlete, musician, scholar, gamer, etc.) and answer interview questions from that particular perspective.

Encourage students to take thorough notes during the interview process, but note that they should not attempt to write down everything their partner says word-for-word. Promote (and model, if necessary) active listening techniques before students begin interviewing one another.

Once partners have completed the interview, ask students to write a brief biography (one or two paragraphs) of their partner, focusing on their partner's particular cultural aspects.

For a fun activity, you can collect all of the biographies, redistribute them, and ask students to read one aloud without giving away the name. The class could then guess whose biography has been read.

For a later activity, it is important that students get the biography their partner wrote about them and the interview notes. This will assist students in the culminating project for this lesson.

3. EXPLAIN

As students transition from the interview and biography activity, make clear that many cultural aspects are present in different works of literature, too.

During this activity, students will read and analyze an excerpt from an interview with author Alice Walker. (See "Alice Walker on Quilting" under Attachments).

Provide each student with a copy of the one-page text. There are a few different ways you can approach this reading activity:

- Read the selection out loud as a whole class. A student can read one paragraph aloud and then call on another student to take over.
- Ask students to work in collaborative groups to read the piece aloud.
- Students could read the piece individually, engaging in the Stop and Jot instructional strategy.

Regardless of how students approach this text, the idea is for them to locate instances of cultural activities or attributes. During and after students read, ask them to note these instances of cultural activities/attributes. Ideally, students should recognize the following:

- quilting as a social activity
- cooking/food
- clothing
- race/ethnicity
- family values
- politics
- physical appearance

After reading, ask students how various aspects of culture were apparent in the interview excerpt. Ask students what the symbol of quilting represented. Again, the teacher should act as scribe and record student responses on the board.

4. EXTEND

Inform students that now they will have the opportunity to create their own cultural quilt. Each student will need a blank piece of white copy paper and plenty of art supplies.

Using their interview notes and biography, students will create a visual representation of their culture. They should include as many aspects of their cultural identity as possible. On their copy paper, students should attempt to visually represent their cultural identity.

Encourage students to carefully consider what colors, symbols, images, and words they use. All facets of their project should be representative of their cultural background and experiences.

Allow students ample time to work on designing and creating their piece of the quilt. If time is a factor, this portion could be assigned as homework.

5. EVALUATE

To conclude this lesson, create a diversity quilt by piecing together all students' squares. The entire quilt can be displayed in the classroom or around the school.

As a reflective writing activity, ask students to consider their own cultural identity, their partner's culture (whom they interviewed), and the representation of culture in the video clips and in Alice Walker's interview excerpt. Ask students to consider the impact one's culture has on his/her identity. Students should focus on the importance of accepting and celebrating all cultures. Students can respond to these questions/prompts through a brief Exit Ticket.

STANDARDS

- Draw inferences such as conclusions, generalizations, and predictions, and support them with text evidence and personal experience.
- Investigate influences on a reader's response to a text (e.g., personal experience and values; perspective shaped by age, gender, class, nationality).
- Evaluate the significance of various literary devices and techniques, including imagery, irony, tone, allegory (the use of fictional figures and actions to express truths about human experiences), and symbolism (the use of symbols to represent an idea or theme), and explain their appeal.
- Analyze and evaluate literature from various cultures to broaden cultural awareness.
- consider specific purposes for writing whether to reflect, inform, explain, persuade, make a social statement, or share an experience or emotion.
- analyze the characteristics of a specific audience (interests, beliefs, background knowledge) and select an appropriate audience for the writing task.
- communicate, quote, summarize, and paraphrase information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently.
- connect lessons from literature, history, current events, and movies/media to personal experiences and ideas.
- Engage in critical, empathetic, appreciative, and reflective listening to interpret, respond, and evaluate speaker's messages.
- Prepare, organize, and present a variety of informative and persuasive messages effectively.
- Assess the spatial dimensions of culture as defined by language, religion, race, ethnicity, and gender.

MATERIALS LIST

- Computer/Internet access for film clips
- Writing materials: pen, pencil, paper, etc.
- White copy paper
- Art materials: crayons, colored pencils, markers, tape, etc.
- Copies of handouts located under Attachments

ATTACHMENTS

- [Cultural Interview Questions.docx](#)
- [Alice Walker on Quilting.pdf](#)
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- [Cultural Interview Questions.pdf](#)

RESOURCES

- Show Our Culture video: <http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/dragon-the-bruce-lee-story/show-our-culture>
- King Eats Hotdog video: <http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/hyde-park-on-hudson/king-eats-hotdog>