

Title: A Way of Life

Overview: Students will see how culture shapes how we look at the world, others and ourselves.

Objectives and Standards:

Students will be able to:

- Explain the concept and attributes of culture
- Describe how their culture has shaped them
- Define diversity and give an example
- Explain how culture and experiences influence perception of places and regions

V.D.2-Geography. Interconnections. The student will demonstrate how various regional frameworks are used to analyze the variation in culture and humans' occupation of the Earth's surface. 2. Students will describe the patterns of languages on the surface of the Earth and identify patterns of change.

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Subject: Multi-disciplinary

Time: Five 45-minute class periods

Prerequisites: Students should be familiar with concepts and features of their own culture such as language, religion, foods, and traditions. Students should also be familiar with the SQ3R strategy and have basic map reading skills.

Required Materials:

- "Chatter" Etiquette Sheets
- From World Cultures: North America (NGS)
- Worksheet – This is me!
- Whiteboard and markers
- Newsprint and markers
- Pencil and paper
- Pictures of people from different cultures and cultural information
- Broad choropleth regional map of world language regions
- Pop versus Soda Data

Suggested Procedures:

Day 1: Chatter activity -This activity is a simulation game that asks students to pay attention to subtleties of communication and to discuss how these influence their perceptions of individuals and groups.

- Divide students into groups of four to six members. Select another group of three to four students to act as observers.
- Shuffle the cut etiquette strips and give one to each student. Students should keep their strip to themselves and study it carefully. All students should receive an etiquette strip even if they are observing.

- Tell the students they are attending a party with guests from different cultures. The etiquette strips define their roles that the students will play as they mingle at the party. The observers will look for behaviors that the partygoers exhibit.
- Ask the partygoers of each small group to talk with each other using the conversational rules described on their etiquette strip.
- After five to ten minutes, ask students to form new groups. All students should have the opportunity to play the role of the partygoer and the observer.
- These groups should start new conversations with the partygoers continuing to follow the conversational rules indicated on their etiquette strip. The observers should watch the behaviors of the groups as they converse.
- After five to ten minutes, ask the students to stop and return to their seats.
- Explain to the students that there are 12 different etiquette strips and it is possible for one than one student to have the same conversation rule. Ask students to think about the conversations and allow for them to guess the various conversation rules. After students have attempted to guess, ask students to take turns stating their conversation rule.
- End the activity by having a discussion with students about the challenges of cross-cultural communication. Ask students to give their observations of the group and individual behavior.

Ask students:

- How did you feel about this activity? Were you happy or disappointed that it came to an end? Why?
- Did you feel embarrassed or frustrated? What made you feel that way?
- What differences occurred during the first group's conversation and the second group's conversation? Why do you think these differences occurred? Does this happen in real-life situations?
- Do you know about any conversational behaviors that you do that others may think are strange?
- What do you think would have happened if the conversations lasted for a longer period of time?

Day 2: Defining Culture – This activity will introduce students to the concept of culture. Students will individually read pages four and five in *From World Cultures: North America (NGS)*. Students will look at the attributes of culture. Offer the simple definition of culture as a way of life and subcultures are aspects of the larger culture.

- In the center of a piece of paper ask students write the word culture. Along the spokes that branch out from the center of the concept map, students should note A – Z cultural attributes such as language, holidays, festivals, type of government, dress, foods, religion, etc. Model an example on the whiteboard.
- Next ask students to share examples and add to the example on the board.

Using the SQ3R strategy, students will look at the section titled “Diversity in the United States” in *From World Cultures: North America (NGS)* pages eight to thirteen. Students should look at the bold text, subtitles, map, and pictures before they begin reading. Next students should formulate a question about the text and write it on the backside of their graphic organizer. Students should read the selection, think about the main points, and see if they can answer their question. Then ask students to share their question and answer with a partner. Allow some time for the two to discuss and bring the class together to ask a few students to share with to help as a review to determine if they understand.

Day 3: This is me!

- Handout “This is me!” worksheet to all students. Allow approximately 10 minutes for students to complete the worksheet.
- Post newsprint around the room with the 8 questions from “This is me!” worksheet.
- Divide students into 8 groups, each group should stand by one of the 8 large sheets of paper. Each group should receive a different color marker to record their responses.
- Each group will begin at one of the questions and records their responses using their colored marker.
- After two to four minutes a signal is given and students should rotate to the next posted newsprint to record their responses.
- As the group rotates, they read previous responses and add their own responses. Students may wish to star responses that they agree with.
- When the group has returned to their original question, they should review the responses and summarize the responses to the entire group. After carousel brainstorming compare answers, ask:
 - Were your responses to the questions exactly alike?
 - What differences did you find?
 - Can you explain these differences?
 - Are differences related to culture?
- In the same groups, give students a large sheet of paper and a variety of pictures that depict other cultures. Have students select and record visual clues that indicate a person is from a different culture area. This should focus on clothing and background clues. Ask students, “What do you know about this person in the picture?”
- Have students share with their responses with the class. After each group share information about the pictures. This should be cultural information and some should be different from what is expected. For example, a person who is Asian may have been born in the United States and only speaks English.
- Have a discussion about their responses and how their responses are shaped by the culture that they are raised. Be sure to point out that students from different cultures will have different answers because they have grown up in a different culture. Also include how cultures are not necessary different. Students may have found differences depending on the diversity of the classroom and their small group.

Day 4: Write “culture” in capital letters on the board. Have students take a couple of minutes to individually define culture. Have students discuss in pairs their definition of culture. Ask students to share their definition of culture with the class. Then as a classroom come up with a common definition. Some students may find it easier to list aspects of culture rather than defining culture.

- Provide the following definition of Culture: Culture is a system of beliefs, values, and assumptions about life that guide behavior and are shared by a group of people. It includes customs, language, and material artifacts. These are transmitted from generation to generation, rarely from explicit instruction.
- Divide students into five groups and assign each group one of the following questions:
 - How did you learn your culture?
 - How are you passing on your culture?
 - How has culture shaped you? What influences has culture had on your values and beliefs?
 - What are some things that we all have in common?
 - How does culture shape how we view the world, others, and ourselves?
- Once groups have discussed their question, students will use the jigsaw method to share their information to others. Each group member will play an active role in sharing their question until all pieces come together to complete the whole.

- Ask the students, Should all cultures in the world be the same so that we can all get along? Open the question up for discussion with the students.

Day 5: World Language Regions

- Begin by asking students by raising their hand on what word they use to describe a carbonated soft drink. Offer the following choices: pop, soda, coke, or other. Record data on the white board. This will help introduce students to The Great Pop vs. Soda Controversy. Data from <http://www.popvssoda.com/> will help show students patterns within the United States. Pass out one soft drink map to each student that illustrates pop, soda, coke, other and all. Ask students to analyze the map and ask them what they see.
- Divide students into groups and pass out a broad choropleth regional map of world language regions to each group. Ask students to analyze the map by discussing the following questions:
 - What is the date of the publication and who published the map?
 - What do the large color bars represent on the map? What do the smaller boxes beneath the large color bars represent?
 - Locate the large teal color bar on the map. What is the language family and what is it famous for?
 - What are the top ten languages spoken?
 - What effect does cultural diversity have on language?

Differentiation: After the Chatter activity, students could observe conversation rules that they encounter after class in the hallways, at the mall, and at home. They could look at the conversations between the age groups. During the pop versus soda controversy activity, students may wish to enter their data into the research.

Assessment: Write on the board: *Everyone has a culture. It shapes how we see the world, ourselves, and others.* Have student Fast-Write answering the following questions:

- What is culture?
- How does culture shape who we are? How we see the world? How we view others?

Credits: Heather Krier, Westwood Middle School, Counselor

Resources:

[Building Bridges: A Peace Corps Classroom Guide to Cross-Cultural Understanding \(NGS\)](#)

[World Cultures: North America People and Places \(NGS\)](#)

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wvs/guides/looking/contents.html>

<http://www.popvssoda.com/>

What Language/s
do you speak?

What type of food do
you eat at home?

What type of music do
you listen to?

What is
your belief
system?

This is me!

What is your favorite
celebration?

What type of clothing do
you wear?

What is important to you?

When do you see your
extended family?

