



DIVERSITY AROUND THE WORLD – HOW OUR GEOGRAPHY AND OUR DAILY LIVES CONNECT US

SUMMARY:

The full collection of Racial Literacy Grade 2 lessons use nonfiction and fiction texts to explore the role and impact geography has on our lives, including the development of culture. Through this lens of geography, students will learn more about how people live around the world, as well as the experiences they themselves bring into the classroom. By investigating aspects of our daily lives and routines — housing, clothing, hobbies, traditions, family, food, etc. — students will understand the interconnectedness of humans and the environment, or how our physical and cultural space shapes us and vice versa. With a focus on celebrating differences and recognizing similarities, an ultimate goal is for students to apply a lens of inclusivity while expanding their sense of self and awareness of our larger world — which is a big, diverse place, filled with beauty and commonality. We strongly encourage teachers to read carefully through all lessons, before launching the unit, to best understand the overarching objectives and to increase comfort with the scope and theme of topics.

GRADE 2 LESSONS BY TOPIC:

- 1 **An Introduction to Geography**
- 2 **Where We Live: How Geography Shapes Us and How We Shape Our Environment**
- 3 **What We Wear: Clothing Around the World**
- 4 **What We Eat: (Common) Food Around the World**
- 5 **Connecting with Stories of Kids Around the World**
- 6 **“Children Just Like Me”: Finding Similarities and Celebrating Differences**
- 7 **Day in the Life of Seven Kids: Seeing the World from Another Viewpoint**
- 8 **Country Studies: Cultivating a Sense of Pride**

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LESSON 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO GEOGRAPHY

Grade: 2 | Suggested Time: 45 minutes

Unit: Diversity Around the World – How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Geography

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the difference between fiction and nonfiction.
- To read maps (i.e. physical and political, symbols, legend/key, etc.).
- To improve geography skills.
- To understand that people are both influenced by and interact with their environment.
- To understand how geography may shape culture and vice versa.

MATERIALS

- For this lesson, we suggest using an age-appropriate atlas, such as *National Geographic Little Kids First Big Book of the World* by Elizabeth Carney.

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- In order for students to be successful with this unit, they should have a base knowledge of geography, such as how to read a map and general knowledge of continents and countries. This lesson is recommended as a way to introduce basic concepts of geography, while also exposing students to aspects of various cultures around the world.

VOCABULARY

- As this lesson introduces students to concepts of geography, it would be appropriate to review basic terms such as country, continent, city, capital, climate, political and physical maps, legends/keys, symbols, etc. Also consider introducing more advanced ideas, such as rural, urban, and suburban. Additional terms may include nationality and culture.
- For further guidance, a glossary is included in the suggested text, listing words, such as the following: atlas, climate, desert, equator, glacier, landmass, plateau, rain forest, etc. Words referencing people are also included, such as caravan, pilgrimage, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

There are many ways to introduce and explore geography with students. In order to have inclusive conversations about people around the world — including conversations that will eventually center on culture, nationality, and/or ethnicity — having students find similarities and differences in the geography across continents may be a helpful initial step. Students can draw connections between land types, cities and countryside, etc. If a more advanced review is desired, a teacher may also introduce the five themes of geography: location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, and region.

OPENING

Tell students that we are going to dive into a unit on geography. When we say geography, what do we mean? Unpack the term. Geo = earth + graphy = writing. In a way, geography is like the “writing of the earth,” or perhaps more appropriately, “the story of the earth.” As a class, create a definition for geography. For guidance, review the example below.

- Consider the following definition from *National Geographic*: “Geography is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments. Geographers explore both the physical properties of Earth’s surface and the human societies spread across it. They also examine how human culture interacts with the natural environment and the way that locations and places can have an impact on people. Geography seeks to understand where things are found, why they are there, and how they develop and change over time.”

After crafting an agreed upon definition or understanding of geography, ask the class: How does geography impact our lives? Think about where we live. How does where we live impact what kind of home we may live in, or how we dress, or what is grown locally? This opening is a good place to introduce key vocabulary, such as continent, country, climate, etc.

GUIDED PRACTICE

Tell the class: To learn more about geography, we are going to use the text *National Geographic Little Kids First Big Book of the World*. This is a nonfiction book. What does that mean? Nonfiction texts are not imaginary, they present facts. Usually, nonfiction books are organized in a particular way, such as this atlas. Together, as a class, review features of the book, such as the table of contents, glossary, index, etc. Look at these features together. To assess if students understand how to use the table of contents, ask them specific questions, such as how many chapters are in this book? How are the chapters divided? Ask about specific content threads, such as on what pages can we find information about the people of North America, the people of Asia, etc.? Review the layout of the pages, as featured on page 7, such as the fact boxes. Refer to the world map featured on pages 8 and 9, which also distinguishes between physical and political maps. For each continent, the following topics are explored: the countries (point out the use of a political map), the land (point out the use of a physical map), the weather, the people, the animals, and the sights.

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

On their own, or in small groups, students may read through a majority, or all sections, of the book. If time is limited, they may also work in groups to read an assigned section of the book. They may take notes (i.e. bullet points) on the main idea and important details, to later share with the class. When assigning students a specific focus, we suggest having them pay attention to “The People” and “The Sights” pages, or concentrate on human characteristics and/or cultural aspects of a given place, as the curriculum will focus mostly on human interaction with the environment. For example, ask students to jot down a few words to capture the main idea of each brief paragraph on “The People” and “The Sights” pages, similar to a “chunking” or “chunk and read” strategy.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

Depending on what the teacher assigned students to focus on, a wrap-up activity may include having students share their findings, or the main ideas they noted. When sharing, the teacher may write the students’ observations on a board or type them on a projected screen. When students are done sharing, the class can compare their findings. Are there any trends they notice? For example, when looking at the information from “The Sights,” and “The People” pages, what do different continents and cultures have in common? Answers will vary, but may speak to common ideas, such as the following: people around the world speak languages, play games and sports, dress according to weather and/or cultural traditions, build structures, etc. In short, people around the world are both influenced by and interact with their environment. Have students think about their local geography. How does the climate impact the way they dress? What kinds of materials are locally grown? What may have been introduced to the environment through trade and markets? Tell students that in the next lesson they will learn more about how humans interact with the environment by exploring housing.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- To extend the lesson, consider using software, such as Google Earth, to get a better idea of how the continents and countries are connected, as well as the various terrains. This is a good opportunity to explore another presentation of physical maps.
- For video exposure, consider viewing selections of brief clips from *Planet Earth* and/or *Planet Earth II*. It is not recommended that a teacher play entire episodes for a few reasons. For instance, students may not sustain attention if played in its entirety. Also, some scenes include content that may be considered violent, such as hunting scenes. Common Sense Media rates the *Planet Earth* programming for ages 7 and up, yet please be mindful and pre-watch any and all material that is up for consideration. Additionally, when choosing appropriate scenes, also consider exposing students to landforms they may not be familiar with, or landforms that are different from where they live.
- For a quick round of trivia, consider watching, "Geography for Kids: People and Place," by DK Books. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8OAg4gICeY>

LESSON 2

WHERE WE LIVE: HOW GEOGRAPHY SHAPES US AND HOW WE SHAPE OUR ENVIRONMENT

Grade: 2 | Suggested Time: 45+ minutes (teacher may decide to extend)

Unit: Diversity Around the World – How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Geography

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To enhance global and cultural awareness.
- To improve understanding of the environment, including the availability of natural resources and how we construct and maintain homes.
- To understand that people are both influenced by and interact with their environment.
- To understand how geography may shape culture and vice versa.
- To develop a more inclusive, informed point of view.
- To connect to others by recognizing similarities and celebrating differences.

MATERIALS

- For this lesson, we suggest using books that feature different kinds of housing options from around the world. We recommend *If You Lived Here: Houses of the World* by Giles Laroche as the primary text. Having multiple copies of this text is helpful.
- For additional sources, consider: *Homes Around the World* by DK; and *Houses and Homes (Around the World Series)* by Ann Morris. Choose the one that best suits the classroom's needs, or consider using more than one text for text-to-text comparisons.

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- To build an inclusive community, students should be encouraged to nurture positive social behavior. Students should have and show appreciation for others and for themselves. Using the symbol or idea of a bucket, this lesson will focus on the concept that showing kindness and respect for others may not only impact another person, it can also impact our own self worth and improve our own happiness and joy.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- With detailed collages, the nonfiction book *If You Lived Here: Houses of the World* introduces the reader to unique homes across the continents — log cabins, cave dwellings, boathouses, houses on stilts, yurts — and how each home tells a story of geography, need, and culture. For example, some people of the Netherlands live in floating green houses, while some people in southern Spain may have part of their home carved out of the side of a mountain, and houses in South Africa may be built to represent family legacy. Reasons for home variation are discussed, such as the need to blend into the landscape, to evade potential invaders, to have the ability to take your home with you, or even to tell the story of your family. Similarly, another book, *Houses and Homes*, includes numerous photographs of various kinds of houses: large and smaller homes, houses that are more permanent and some that are transportable, houses made from various materials, such as wood, stone, mud, and straw. Both books are nonfiction texts that present different ways in which humans have manipulated the environment or have adapted to the environment in order to live. Themes of symbiosis and balance

may be explored, as well as the concept that — since we are often responding to our physical and cultural world — one house or form of living is not necessarily better than another.

- Having multiple copies of each text is helpful, as students can be split into two groups, working in pairs to read through the books, taking notes on graphic organizers (and switching texts when they are done, so they get a chance to read both books).

OPENING

- Introduce the chosen book, such as *If You Lived Here: Houses of the World*. Before reading, ask students if they have read or seen this book before. Based on the cover and title of the book, ask students what they think this book will be about?
- If extra copies are available, distribute them to students.

GUIDED PRACTICE

- While reading, pause on every page or so to ask students where the home is located. What materials were used to build this home? How does this house adapt to the environment? Does the home move? Who might live here? Why would people from this area build a home like this? How is this home different from your own? How is it similar?
- After reading, ask students to think about a particular home they saw in the book. Have students imagine what it may be like to live somewhere else, such as in that particular home. For example, ask: How would your life be different if you lived here? How would it be the same? Have some students share their ideas out loud. Encourage students to reflect on the role geography has on the construction of housing. For guidance, ask students to think about the role of weather, available natural resources, traditions, culture, etc.

INDEPENDENT OR GROUP WORK

- Transition the lesson so that students think about their own neighborhood. What are homes like in our neighborhoods? What types of houses, buildings, or dwellings are most popular? What material might be used to construct them? (A teacher should do a bit of research ahead of time to understand the types of materials used in local housing. For example, if living in New York City, the buildings are quite tall! What materials are needed in order to construct a building with many stories, or even a skyscraper? Also, what sort of terrain is needed? The earth below some parts of Manhattan is solid bedrock, which serves as a strong foundation for skyscrapers.)
- If there's time, consider going for a walk through the local neighborhood (perhaps during another class period), where students may take photos or make sketches and notes in a slim notebook to record their observations of housing materials, size, overall aesthetics, etc. Discussions of local geography and climate should precede neighborhood walks, so students can look for specific findings as they move through their physical world. If it's not possible to go for a walk, provide students with photographs of housing from the school's neighborhood. Using these photographs, students should be able to make educated guesses and observations about housing.

CLOSING

- Regroup students to have a brief discussion. What role does geography play in the creation of our homes? What is something that every home, whether it's across the world, permanent or temporary, large or small, made of brick, wood or mud, have in common?
- Finally, conversations should remain respectful, and aim to honor the choices people have made to ensure one form of housing is not necessarily deemed superior to another. In other words, marveling at human creativity and the ability to adapt should be at the center of our exploration.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- To enhance understanding of the topic of housing, consider learning more about jobs that are related to the development and upkeep of homes, such as: an architect, construction worker, interior designer, landscaper, painter, housekeeper, etc.
- Consider extensions for other subjects beyond social studies, such as diving into math through a study of area or perimeter (using floor plans of housings, size of walls, etc.). Additionally, consider exploring engineering ideas, such as the strength of structures, by having students build structures of their own to learn more about what is needed to build a roof that doesn't collapse. Also, consider exploring the ways other animals adapt to, or influence, their environment to make a home.
- For an art or writing-centered activity, students can craft descriptions and images of homes, as if they were creating a travel magazine, encyclopedia article, a fictional real estate advertisement, etc. If desired, students may design a home for an assigned geographical location that is or is not in the neighborhood, but should still take into consideration the geography and climate of that region.
- If teachers/students live in New York City and/or happen to be interested in the relationship between geology and how parts of Manhattan can host such tall skyscrapers, consider reading "New York City Geology," an article provided by the American Museum of Natural History. Available here: <https://www.amnh.org/our-research/physical-sciences/earth-and-planetary-sciences/public-outreach/new-york-city-geology>

LESSON 3

WHAT WE WEAR: CLOTHING AROUND THE WORLD

Grade: 2 | Suggested Time: 45+ minutes (teacher may decide to extend)
Unit: Diversity Around the World – How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Geography

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that people are both influenced by and interact with their environment.
- To understand that geography (climate and raw materials) impacts clothing.
- To gain an appreciation for different kinds of clothing and bodily adornment.
- To understand that clothing and decoration is a part of culture.

MATERIALS

- *What We Wear: Dressing Up Around the World* by Maya Ajmera, Elise Hofer Derstine, and Cynthia Pen; *Hats, Hats, Hats* by Ann Morris; and *Shoes, Shoes, Shoes* by Ann Morris. Having multiple copies of each text is recommended.

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- As mentioned in previous lessons, where we live dictates many things about our lives, such as what kinds of resources we have access to, what our needs may be, etc. What we wear, especially what we have historically worn, is connected to geography, as well as trade and technology. Clothing is a part of culture. Sometimes we wear similar things, and sometimes we wear things that may seem different or unfamiliar to other people. One thing we have in common is we wear clothing and we have a right to be respected because of and despite of our choice in clothing.
- Key questions will focus on the role climate, geography, and culture have had on clothing, as well as general functions of clothing.

VOCABULARY

- Consider introducing words to increase familiarity with the reading material and for the class discussion: clothing, culture, nationality, etc. Glossaries for the names of different items of clothing, shoes, and hats are included in the back of the books.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Similar to housing, clothing is often linked to geographical and cultural needs and purpose. This collection of books presents photos of people around the world, wearing various types of hats, shoes, clothing and forms of body or face paint — from tartan (plaid), to bead necklaces, and crowns made of flowers, leaves, and feathers. Celebrating cultures around the world, these nonfiction books inspire readers to think about how dress and bodily adornments can express identity and even help form a positive image of self.

Since the three suggested books include simple text with photographs, centers are recommended, with students using background knowledge, or information gained from previous lessons, to make connections between physical environment and choices in wardrobe and appearance.

OPENING

Tell students that our study of geography also includes discussing what people wear. How might geography impact how we dress? To guide students, encourage them to think about warm climates and cold climates, and the types of raw materials or resources available in certain places of the world, such as silk worms, cotton, leather, wool, natural dyes, etc. Besides the need to adapt to and protect ourselves from certain climates, what is another function of clothing? Sometimes we wear clothes as a uniform; it may indicate a job, a religious belief, a sports team, etc. Clothing can also be a part of our culture. In addition to protecting us from the elements, clothing has the function of identifying us. Sometimes we wear things as a form of celebration and cultural pride.

GUIDED PRACTICE

Introduce the texts: *What We Wear: Dressing Up Around the World*; *Hats, Hats, Hats*; and *Shoes, Shoes, Shoes*. Show students the cover of each book. Flip through a few pages, so students see that the books are filled with photographs and brief sentences. Point out the index in the back, which provides more information (i.e. origin or purpose, materials used, etc.) about the types of clothing, hats, and shoes. Consider providing a graphic organizer with three sections, titled: Clothing, Hats, and Shoes. As they read, students should take notes of their observations in the appropriate section. For example, what did they notice about clothing? What types of clothing did they see? What did they observe about hats? About shoes? What materials are used to make these different items? What are their functions? What did they find most interesting? Before students begin, provide time guidelines, such as giving ten to twelve minutes per center. (Have multiple copies of each book, so students can either have their own copy in a center, or share with a partner.) Tell students that they will hear a bell, or be given another indication, to signal that it's time to switch to another reading center.

GROUP WORK

As students read, the teacher may circulate about the classroom, helping students and/or encouraging thoughtful dialogue and notes. Ring the bell, or gently call out, after the allotted time is up, so students know when to switch centers.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

When students are done reading each book, regroup as a larger class. Have a discussion about their observations and/or any questions they may have. For guidance, ask students again about the various functions of our clothing and physical presentations. Encourage students to think about where different items of clothing or adornment are located on the body, such as the head, face, torso, etc. For example, in the books, children around the world can be seen wearing makeup or face paint, leaves or feathers in their hair, necklaces made of beads, different types of shirts, etc. Sometimes religion and cultural traditions play a role. Why or how? Did they see any examples of that in the books? For instance, what might beadwork represent? Students may say something signifying adornment. It seems as if many people around the world like to decorate their bodies. This may be cultural, or something that people of a particular place do to communicate something about themselves, such as their religious beliefs, family lineage, status, age, etc. In addition to cultural practice, climate and geography play a large role in what we wear. Why or how? Did they see any examples of that in the books? Sometimes our clothing is important for our work. From the text or from their own observations around them, can they think of jobs that require a uniform? When thinking about the ways people dress, we should consider how what we wear can often identify something about us. End the conversation by having students bridge commonality. In regard to what we wear, what is something that everyone around the world has in common?



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

If a teacher would like to include more lessons about clothing in the curriculum, the following may serve as helpful resources:

- The “Clothing” archives of the National Museum of American History, a part of the Smithsonian may be a helpful resource. The archived photographs include an array of items, such as clothing, jewelry, spectacles, hats, etc, which represent various time periods throughout the development of the United States. We recommend pre-selecting a handful of items from the archives, as some pieces of clothing may not be suitable for a second grade audience, such as shackles, or items that symbolize violence. Archives available here: <https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/subjects/clothing-accessories>
- The Boston Children’s Museum’s online collection titled “Clothing” may be another helpful resource. This site includes links to specific BCM collections on Japanese clothing and Native American clothing, which list materials used, date, etc. Available here: <https://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/about/collections/clothing>
- For a sample of striking beadwork around the world, as well as head coverings and the use of patterns, such as tartan (or plaid), consider reviewing, “Striking Photos of Cultural Fashions You Have to See,” an article by Johnna Rizzo for *National Geographic*. Available here: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/travel-interests/arts-and-culture/style-culture-fashion-around-world/>
- To extend the activity, a teacher may bring in actual clothing or textile samples to lay out on the table for students to see and touch. Many examples (including local wardrobe choices) should be brought into the classroom to make comparisons, finding differences and similarities between clothing choices. Essentially, activities should focus on finding similarities. The end goal is not to indicate that one form of clothing or aesthetic choice is better than another, but that we all must participate in clothing options and that it is yet another way we are similar to each other.

*Finally, please note that it is not recommended that students dress as children from other parts of the world, as it can often take on the form of cultural (mis)appropriation or viewing others as “exotic,” rather than underscoring our human connection.

LESSON 4

WHAT WE EAT: (COMMON) FOOD AROUND THE WORLD

Grade: 2 | Suggested Time: 45+ minutes (teacher may decide to extend)
Unit: Diversity Around the World – How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Geography

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that people are both influenced by and interact with their environment.
- To understand that geography impacts available food sources.
- To understand that many early societies cultivated a cereal grain.
- To understand that trade and technology impact food sources.
- To gain an appreciation for different kinds of food around the world.
- To understand that food is a part of culture.

MATERIALS

- The following books are central to the lesson: *Bread, Bread, Bread (Around the World Series)* by Ann Morris and Ken Heyman; *Everybody Cooks Rice* by Norah Dooley and Peter J. Thornton. Multiple copies are ideal.
- “Baked Bread: How Flour is Made,” Video available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8vLjPctrU>
- “Remarkable Rice: How Does Rice Grow,” Video available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxAEiH-CErSA>
- The following article may serve as an engaging read to expand teacher awareness: “Were Carbs A Brain Food For Our Ancient Ancestors?,” by Angus Chen for NPR. Available here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/the-salt/2015/08/17/432603591/were-carbs-a-brain-food-for-our-ancient-ancestors>
- The following article may also serve as an engaging read to expand teacher awareness: “In the Future, Everything Will Be Made of Chickpeas,” written by Amanda Mull for *The Atlantic*. Available here: <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2019/03/chickpea-products-have-exploded-popularity-us/584956/>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- As mentioned in previous lessons, where we live dictates many things about our lives, such as what kinds of resources we have access to, what our needs may be, etc. What we eat, especially what we have historically eaten, is connected to geography, as well as trade and technology. Food is an important part of culture. Sometimes we eat similar things, and sometimes we eat things that may seem different or unfamiliar to other people. No matter what, food is something that should be appreciated, even celebrated. A human right, access to healthy foods should be given to all.
- One common staple found in food around the world is starch, which is found in cereal grains, such as wheat, barley, and rice. Ancient civilizations around the world have been farming and cooking these grains for thousands of years!

VOCABULARY

- Consider introducing words to increase familiarity with the reading material and for the class discussion: cereal grains (wheat, barley, rice), agriculture, farming, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Ahead of time, teachers may want to understand the historical, cultural, culinary, even scientific importance of cooked carbohydrates. For their own research purposes, reading works by Michael Pollan may be helpful, or watching his documentary, *Cooked*, which explores how humans adapted fire, water, air, and earth to essentially create civilization, or how many people around the world emerged from being hunters and gatherers to living in more sedentary communities (note that some people in the world still live a nomadic lifestyle). Similarly, understanding how humans began to develop agricultural methods, such as successfully cultivating cereal grains, may be helpful for a more sophisticated historical approach. However, such research is not essential. In short, using the recommended picture books and brief videos may suffice to better understand the common food source that drives much of our planet. (Please note that this lesson focuses on wheat and rice as their production is often tied to the development of the earliest known permanent civilizations. Other food items, like corn and sorghum, have cultural importance as well, but are not covered in this lesson.)
- Around the world, people eat grains in the form of bread, rice, corn, etc. From baguettes, to chappatties, rolls and tortillas, many societies have some form of bread or rice. The book *Bread, Bread, Bread* is a photographic journey of people from all over the globe and the type of bread they eat — which some say is as necessary as air and water! In addition to bread, people eat other starches, such as rice. The book *Everybody Cooks Rice* is a fictional story about a girl going house to house, noticing that even though the families in her neighborhood come from different areas of the world, they cook a rice dish. When we realize that many of us eat foods that are both different, yet similar, we begin to draw conclusions and make observations that underscore our commonalities and interconnectedness as humans.

OPENING

Ask students what they know about wheat? What is it? Where is it grown? What kinds of foods are made from wheat? Ask students what they know about rice? What is it? What kinds of foods are made from rice? Consider distributing a graphic organizer to students, in the model of two “icebergs” — one for corn, one for wheat. At the top of each iceberg, students should write what they know about wheat, and what they know about corn. Tell them that we are going to learn more about these cereal grains today. As we learn more about them, we’ll jot down that information on the bottom portion of the iceberg, the part below the water. (If another graphic organizer is desired, consider using a K-W-L to measure what the students already know, what they want to know, and what they’ve learned.)

GUIDED PRACTICE

Consider showing selected videos, such as “Remarkable Rice: How Does Rice Grow” and “Baked Bread: How Flour is Made.” The videos are produced by an organization in the United Kingdom, yet the information is quite relevant for students learning about wheat and rice cultivation. Ask students to pay attention to various ideas, such as how long humans have been cultivating wheat and rice, where and how it is grown, etc. Students may add ideas to their organizers. After viewing the videos, have a brief discussion as a class to share further observations and/or questions. Focus on the role that geography plays. For example, what type of climate is needed to grow rice? What time of year is wheat harvested? Can these crops be grown anywhere and at any time?

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

Now that students know a bit about how wheat and rice are grown, they will spend time learning about the different foods that can be made with these grains. Since both wheat and rice are the focus, consider splitting the class into two groups for group and/or independent work. One group may read *Bread, Bread, Bread* (which is a lower reading level), while a second group may read *Everybody Cooks Rice* (which is a higher reading level). Either independently or in small groups, students may read the text and add to their notes. For example, students can list the different types of bread and/or rice dishes. The teacher should circulate around the classroom, helping students and/or encouraging thoughtful interaction with the text.

DISCUSSION AND CLOSING

When students are done reading their assigned book (or both books, if desired), regroup as a larger class. Have a discussion to share what they learned or noticed. As an earlier part of the lesson focused on the role of geography, segue to speaking about culture. When thinking about the different foods we eat, we may consider how what we eat can often identify something about us, as food is a part of our culture. Eating certain foods may be something that people of a particular place do to communicate something about themselves, such as their religious beliefs, traditions, etc. Can you think of a food dish your own family eats? What is one of your favorite dishes? Encourage many students to share, as all students have some form of culture. Remind students that having cultural differences is okay. In fact, cultural diversity is a good thing. Diversity makes communities stronger. Yet, we also have similarities. End the conversation by having students bridge commonality. In regard to food, what is something that everyone around the world has in common? Answers may vary. Students may mention that everyone needs to eat, that many cultures have a starch, that most humans cook food, etc. If desired, circle back to cereal grains. Cereal grains, like wheat and rice, were key to early civilizations. Once humans in certain parts of the world had access to these grains — such as the Middle East thousands of years ago — they learned to farm and cook these foods and civilization emerged. So even though our foods have evolved at this point, from baguettes to tortillas, much of it still comes from similar types of seeds.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- For an additional lesson, a study of seeds, or the parts of seeds, is another way to incorporate science. The ancient methods of making bread included all parts of the wheat or grain seed, and thus served as a nutritious food source for humans thousands of years ago. Looking at diagrams of the seed parts — bran, germ, and endosperm — would expand students' knowledge and perhaps interest. Please note that many modern food companies do not include "bran" and that is how we have less nutritious, "white" bread — however, it is not recommended that teachers focus too much on how "white bread is not nutritious" as many students may eat white bread and do not have much choice in this matter. Instead, teachers may focus on the parts of the seed and how incorporating all parts allowed our ancestors to thrive. In short, by exploring, baking, and hopefully eating bread (check for gluten allergies among student population and consider grain alternatives), students will have yet another way to celebrate similarities with other people and cultures — locally, globally, and even historically!
- Another science lesson may focus on the chemical transformation required to turn flour, water, and other ingredients into a form of baked bread. For a hands-on approach, consider sharing a baking/cooking activity with the class. If students have access to the appropriate appliances and resources, they may make various types of "bread-like food" (i.e. baguette, naan, tortillas, etc.) and/or rice dishes. This is a great chance for parent/guardian volunteers to help in the classroom. Of course, ask about food allergies ahead of time. For a video on making bread, consider "The Magic of Making Bread" by Tasty. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGbNI26PPYg>
- To read more picture books about food, consider the following:
 - *Mama Panya's Pancakes* by Mary Chamberlin, Richard Chamberlin, and Julia Cairns shows a family who lives in a Kenyan village and how generosity is possible and preferable, even if material wealth is not abundant. The book includes a recipe for Mama's pancakes.
 - *Salsa: Un Poema Para Cocinar/A Cooking Poem* by Jorge Argueta and Duncan Tonatiuh is a book written in both English and Spanish featuring pre-Columbian era inspired illustrations and a cooking poem that explores the character's culinary culture and the influence of their ancestors. The poem is a recipe for salsa, which students can emulate, hopefully with great success and delight.

LESSON 5

CONNECTING WITH STORIES OF KIDS AROUND THE WORLD

Grade: 2 | Suggested Time: 45-60 minutes

Unit: Diversity Around the World – How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Geography

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To connect to the lives of (fictionalized) children around the world.
- To understand that children around the world have both differences and similarities.
- To enhance cultural competency.

MATERIALS

- The following books are recommended for this lesson: *For You Are a Kenyan Child* by Kelly Cunnane and Ana Juan; *Lola's Fandango* by Anna Witte; *Cora Cooks Pancit* by Dorina Lazo Gilmore and Kristi Valiant; and *Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin* by Duncan Tonatiuh. Multiple copies are recommended.
- "What is Culture?" Video by LiveScience. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fL5WzpuvXfY>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- To enhance cultural competency, students will read about the fictionalized lives of different children from around the world. Each story follows the daily lives or special hobbies of children. While the cultural differences may be more obvious to students at first, and should be celebrated, another goal will be for students to find similarities with these characters in an effort to underscore human commonality.

VOCABULARY

- Consider introducing words to increase familiarity with the reading material and for the class discussion: nationality, culture, ethnicity, etc.

Lesson Procedure

OPENING

Remind students that, at this point, they have learned about housing, clothing, and common food from around the world. Tell students that today, they will read stories about (fictionalized) children across the continents. Since we're looking at people's daily lives, introduce relevant terms, such as nationality, culture, and ethnicity. Nationality refers to the country a person is from. For example, if someone is born in China, their nationality is Chinese. If someone is born in Canada, their nationality is Canadian. We've been speaking about cultural things, but how can we define culture? What is ethnicity? As a class, create a definition for culture and ethnicity. Culture and ethnicity can be a bit more complex to define. For guidance, review the examples below:

- Consider the following definition of culture from *Britannica Kids*: "Culture is a pattern of behavior shared by a society, or group of people. Many different things make up a society's culture. These things include food, language, clothing, tools, music, arts, customs, beliefs, and religion." With influence from other groups, aspects of a given culture can change over time. Sometimes we can be a blend of cultures.

- Consider the following definition of ethnicity from *Britannica Kids*: “The term ethnicity may be used to describe the cultural background of a person. An ethnic group is made up of people who share the same ethnicity.” While ethnicity is often used in reference to race, some usage of ethnicity is more connected to a societal group, often rooted in religious, cultural, and/or linguistic affiliation. Using the term ethnicity can often include nationality and culture, and sometimes race (though race is not a biological truth, it does have a social reality).
- For a video introducing the idea of culture, consider viewing “What is Culture?” Video by LiveScience (link provided in Materials section above).

GUIDED PRACTICE

Since we are going to read about children from different countries and cultures, let’s begin by reviewing where some of these countries are located, by using either a map, or a software program, like Google Earth. If using the suggested books, review where the following countries are located: Kenya, Spain, the Philippines, and Mexico. Country by country, ask questions. For example, which continent is this country a part of? What is the climate? What are some of the popular foods that are grown and/or eaten in this country or part of the world? What are some of the major religions and popular languages? Remind students that no culture is superior or inferior to another. Finally, before reading, ask students if they think they’ll have more differences or similarities with the children in these books?

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

In groups, students may read suggested books in self-selected or assigned groups or centers. If self-selected, allow them to pick out titles that resonate with them, whether it’s because they are being exposed to something new, or they see themselves in the story. Tell students that at the end of the reading period, they will share a bit about what they liked about a particular book. The following picture books are recommended:

- *For You Are a Kenyan Child* shares the life of a boy who lives in Kenya. Coming from a more rural place, he wakes to the sound of a rooster’s crow, eats insects for his afternoon snack, and uses found objects to play soccer. With gorgeous illustrations and optimistic language, this book celebrates his life as something quite “ordinary” and human. A story deserving of a picture book, his life is something to be cherished.
- *Lola’s Fandango* introduces the reader to a girl named Lola who feels like she “lives in the shadow” of her older sister. Lola begins taking secret flamenco lessons and hopes to share her new talent with the world. This book may encourage students to find similarities, as Lola’s culture is naturally introduced throughout story, serving as a background to the plot.
- *Cora Cooks Pancit* features the story of a girl who desires to cook the food she loves, which happens to be Filipino family dishes, the same ones her Lolo used to make. In this book, the reader will be exposed to aspects of Filipino cuisine and language. This story wonderfully explores family dynamics, including legacy, and ways children can help around the house, such as by cooking with adult supervision. At the end, Cora beams when she receives her family’s approval and love.
- *Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin* has a different format from the other suggested books, as it features the lives of two cousins: one from the United States, the other from Mexico. However, it may be worth adding to the collection, as whoever reads it can compare their own life to both Charlie (who lives in the U.S.) and Carlito (who lives in Mexico). As both boys do, hopefully the reader will realize that while their worlds have differences, there are also ample similarities.

After students read their books, have them reflect about the story and featured character. In order to learn more about the main character(s), what questions could you ask him or her? What is something this character could teach you? What is one activity you’d like to do together (such as something you could teach the main character, or something you’d like to show them about your neighborhood, school, hobbies, etc.)? Revisit an idea posed earlier: Think about ways you are different from and similar to your character.

DISCUSSION / LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Consider having students gather in two concentric circles, or lines, facing a partner. Each student can share their response to a prompt. The prompt may have them say which book they read and one way they were different from their character and one thing they had in common with their character. After each person speaks, after about one or two minutes, the teacher may ring a bell, or gently call out, so students know when to switch (i.e. the outer ring can move one person to the right). Have students share many times. If possible, have the outer ring share with everyone in the inside ring.

CLOSING

Gather everyone together. What is something you learned? What is something you'd like to know more about, such as the particular culture or country the characters were from? Finally, why is it important to recognize our similarities and celebrate our differences?



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

If time and interest warrants, students may conduct research, in order to learn more about the country where their character is from. Consider using *Britannica Kids* as a safe, age-appropriate resource to begin such research. Available here: <https://kids.britannica.com/kids>

LESSON 6

“CHILDREN JUST LIKE ME”: FINDING SIMILARITIES AND CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

Grade: 2 | Suggested Time: 45+ minutes (teacher may decide to extend)

Unit: Diversity Around the World – How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Geography

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To discuss and learn more about cultures and ethnicities around the world.
- To enhance geographical, cultural, and racial awareness.
- To improve geography skills by introducing students to various countries, cultures, religions, and real life (nonfiction) perspectives from around the world.
- To find ways to connect to others. To make connections with other children. To see the potential of friendship in others.
- To recognize similarities and celebrate differences.
- To understand that people are both influenced by and interact with their environment.

MATERIALS

- *Children Just Like Me* by DK Penguin Random House. We suggest having multiple copies for the class.
- “Children Just Like Me,” Video by DK Penguin Random House. In this video, children are presented one at a time, speaking about themselves. Available here: <https://www.dkfindout.com/us/video/more-find-out/children-just-like-me-video/>
- “Children Just Like Me,” Video by DK Penguin Random House. In this video, children are presented in random order, answering the referenced questions. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4JEw3yfVGw>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- Around the world, children, and people in general, can appear to be quite different from one another. Yet, we are also incredibly similar. In a way, we are “both/and,” meaning we are “both” different “and” similar. In the previous lesson, we looked at fictionalized children around the world. In this lesson, we are going to find or recognize these similarities and celebrate our differences using nonfiction resources, or by learning more about the lives of real, actual children.

VOCABULARY

- Since this lesson “visits” children around the world, we recommend that students have a foundation in geography ahead of time, such as knowledge and familiarity with the geographical terms: country, state, city, village, urban, suburban, rural, continent (name the seven continents), ocean (name the major oceans of the world), equator, hemisphere, latitude, longitude, globe, precipitation, climate, compass, landforms, etc.
- Review nationality, culture, and ethnicity (which were introduced and defined in the previous lesson). Consider reviewing the term ancestors.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- Featuring 44 children from 36 different countries, *Children Just Like Me* focuses on various aspects of the lives of young people around the world. Exploring both rural and urban settings, the book celebrates the beauty of diversity and highlights our similarities. In print for over twenty years, a newer edition features updated photos, maps, and stories that provide the reader with a snapshot of other children's worlds, including their homes, diet, clothing, families, hobbies, and education.
- In addition to evoking curiosity, this book is a key resource for sharing cultural information and deepening global awareness; various lessons and/or centers may be developed around this core text. Taking inspiration from the page, topics of small group centers can vary. For instance, some students may focus on what people eat, or people's hobbies and activities, how families are structured, etc.

OPENING

- Tell students that we are going to learn about children from all over the world. First, ask students to think about what they may have in common with children in this classroom. Would they also have something in common with students in other parts of this country? What about around the world?
- Let's begin by thinking about ourselves for a moment. Ask specific questions that will get the students to think about their lives and interests. The suggested video will ask: What food do you like the best? What hobbies do you enjoy? What [kind of work] do you want to do when you grow up? Consider having students answer similar questions on paper, or simply think about them. Then, show the suggested "Children Just Like Me" videos (referenced in the Materials section), asking students to see if any of their answers match the ones given by the children being interviewed.
- After the video, ask the students follow-up questions. What did you notice about the children? (They may speak different languages. They may come from different countries. They may have different skin colors or racial/ethnic backgrounds, different clothing, different hairstyles, etc.) If students focus on differences, make sure to ask: What did they all have in common? And what may we have in common with the children? Be specific.

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Introduce the book, *Children Just Like Me*. Before reading, ask students if they have read or seen this book before. Based on the cover and title of the book (and the videos they just watched), ask students what they think this book will include?
- Depending on how many copies you have of this book (we recommend as many as you can obtain) have students work in small groups, or partners, or on their own for now (if you have enough copies). Together, point out the features of this book, such as the table of contents, glossary, and index. Flip to the center pages to point out more layout features, such as photographs, captions, etc. Note how the children are both similar and different ages, eat both similar and different foods, wear both similar and different clothes, have both similar and different skin colors, hair textures, eye shapes, etc.
- If you want to connect geography to physical differences, consider mentioning a scientific idea like melanin. As mentioned in a Kindergarten lesson: What makes our skin different colors is a pigment called melanin. When people have more melanin, their skin is darker. When people have less melanin, their skin is lighter. Depending on where our ancestors came from a long, long time ago, we may have more or less melanin. Tens of thousands of years ago, before we lived in permanent homes, skin with more melanin helped people live with a lot of sun. And skin with less melanin helped people live with less sun. Now, we live all over the world. So, no matter where we live, our skin can be different colors.
- Because of human movement over thousands of years, we now occupy six continents. Thus, there are six continents, or seven regions, featured in this book, in the following order: North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Southeast Asia and Australia (which are grouped together). Have students find the table of contents. Ask students about how the book is organized (the mini-biographies of each child is presented by continent). Consider reading the names of the countries out loud to enhance exposure.

INDEPENDENT WORK

- On their own, or with a partner, students should look through the books, reading about the lives of children. Ask students to pick a child from each continent that they could see themselves being friends with, and explain why he or she could be their friend.
- To “record” their thoughts, students may write a sentence about each student, on lined paper or on a template created by the teacher. Consider modeling for students how this may look, such as: “I would be friends with Lauryn because I think having a femur as a pet would be fun. I also speak French and visit my dad on the weekends since my parents are divorced.” Or, “I would be friends with Miguel because he is also from South America, like my mom. We could speak Spanish. He also lives in a warm place like me.” Or, “I would be friends with Yaroslav because he is from Moscow. He doesn’t look like me. Maybe we can teach each other things. I could teach him English and he could teach me Russian.” Or, “I want to be friends with Amu because she lives in the beautiful countryside. I want to learn to cook meals outside with her grandma.” We recommend not being too didactic or overly specific about this, so children can focus more on envisioning friendship, perhaps through finding commonality or celebrating differences, rather than trying to achieve the “right” answer. Use this as an opportunity for intake as well. How are your students building connections with others? What are they looking for? What matters most to them? Take notes and consider adapting lessons for the future based on some of your observations. Is race/ethnicity part of their thinking? Gender? Language? Etc.

CLOSING

- At the end of the class period, consider having students reflect on the idea of friendship. Did they choose friends based on similarities? Differences? Did they pick friends of other genders or perceived ethnicities?
- For another direction of conversation, ask students to reflect on the information presented. Did they learn something new? Did reading about other children change or improve the way they viewed themselves?
- Consider giving students a chance to share their findings and observations at the end of their reflections, and perhaps making a list as a classroom of ways we may “connect” to others. For a tangible symbol, similarities may be written on strips of paper that can then be linked together to display in the classroom.



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

- For an extension activity, consider having students make their own “About Me” page, modeled after the format presented in *Children Just Like Me*. They may discuss their families, school, typical or favorite foods, pets (if they have any), hobbies and interests, etc. Drawings or photos may accompany their text.
- If a second book is desired, the *Children Just Like Me* publisher produces other books with a more focused topic, such as the *Children Just Like Me: Celebrations!* text by Anabel Kindersley and Barnabas Kindersley, which would serve as a rich resource for students to have a discussion of religions, holidays or rituals around the world, again looking for ways to find commonalities.
- For more resources about religious holidays and/or festivals, consider the following texts produced by National Geographic as part of their *Holidays Around the World* series: *Holidays Around the World: Celebrate Hanukkah*; *Holidays Around the World: Celebrate Kwanzaa*; *Holidays Around the World: Celebrate Christmas*; *Holidays Around the World: Celebrate Chinese New Year*; etc. For additional resources, consider the following texts: *Celebrations Around the World (Adventures in Cultures Series)* by Charles Murphy; *Holidays Around the World (Adventures in Cultures Series)* by Jeff Sferazza; and *Festival of Colors* by Surishtha Sehgal, Kabir Sehgal, and Vashti Harrison.

LESSON 7

DAY IN THE LIFE OF SEVEN KIDS: SEEING THE WORLD FROM ANOTHER VIEWPOINT

Grade: 2 | Suggested Time: 45+ minutes (teacher may decide to extend)
Unit: Diversity Around the World – How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us
Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Geography

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To enhance global and cultural awareness.
- To improve geography skills by introducing students to various countries, cultures, religions, and real life (nonfiction) perspectives from around the world.
- To find ways to connect to others. To develop an inclusive, multicultural and/or racially informed point of view.
- To connect to others by recognizing similarities and celebrating differences.
- To understand that people are both influenced by and interact with their environment.

MATERIALS

- *This Is How We Do It: One Day In the Lives of Seven Kids From Around the World* by Matt Lamothe.

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- No matter where we live, all of us have daily routines. What are they? For instance, we all wake up and sleep. Hopefully all of us have something to eat and someone to share our lives with. Are children around the world living a life that is similar to your own, or different? Can we be both similar and different?

VOCABULARY

- Consider introducing the following terms and places to increase familiarity with the reading material and for the class discussion: Uchaly, Russia; mining town; Ural Mountains; Kanyawara, Uganda; Cordignano, Italy; vineyard; Los Naranjos, Amazon rainforest, Peru; metropolis; Tokyo, Japan; Gorgan, Iran; Caspian Sea; Haridwar, India; Ganges River.
- Consider reviewing different types of foods: Barbari bread, feta, kasha, Nutella, plantains, matoke, paneer paratha, furikake, miso soup, chapati, sage, adas polo, etc.

Lesson Procedure

BACKGROUND

- This book depicts a typical day in the lives of seven real children from various countries: India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Peru, Russia, and Uganda. Clear, colorful illustrations show a snapshot in the life of these children, including their diet, activities, households, etc. Initially, the book juxtaposes the children's lives in an effort to celebrate differences (and show some more hidden similarities), yet it ends with the fact that we all share the same nighttime sky. A thoughtful and realistic portrayal, the text echoes the sentiment of this unit: the world is a big, diverse place, filled with beauty and commonality.
- Since this text has a similar message and goal as *Children Just Like Me*, it provides a great opportunity for text-to-text connections, to add more resources to centers or small group discussions, etc.

- Teachers may want to devote multiple periods to activities, which may happen during the same day or within the week. Dividing the class into small groups, and working in centers may be ideal. For example, students can be split into seven groups, and each group is assigned a specific child from the book. They may read the text for that child, taking notes on a graphic organizer about their assigned child’s housing, family, clothes, work and things to do, language, etc.

OPENING

- Tell students that we are going to continue to learn about children from different countries. Introduce the book, *This Is How We Do It: One Day In the Lives of Seven Kids From Around the World*. Ask students if they have read or seen this book before. Introduce the counties. Show them on a map or globe (or Google Earth if available): Iran, India, Peru, Japan, Italy, Uganda, and Russia. Mention the names of continents, and point out nearby landforms and bodies of water. Speak briefly about other details, such as climate and languages spoken in each country. Show the children’s faces (the opening pages have illustrated, close-up portraits). Note physical appearances (i.e. skin color, face shape, hair texture, smiles and sparkling eyes, etc.) and perceived racial identity. For example, Romeo, from Italy, may identify as Italian, European, or white. Kei, from Japan, may identify as Japanese or Asian, or East Asian. Ribaldo, from Peru, may identify as Peruvian, Latino or Latinx, Hispanic, South American, etc. Daphne, from Uganda, may identify as Ugandan, African, or black. Ananya, from India, may identify as Indian, South Asian, Asian, etc. (When using such “labels,” note the difference between the terms nationality, ethnicity and race, and how our identities can reflect all of these terms or just some of these terms.)

GUIDED PRACTICE

- Read the book. Each spread covers a new topic. Stop to point out details. For instance, when showing their homes, what are the different homes made from? Why are some homes made from bricks and others are made from wood and mud? (Geography often dictates what’s available, or the natural and/or nearby resources someone can use. This idea was already explored in a previous lesson, so there isn’t a need to provide a plethora of details at this time.) Notice the family structures, such as how there are different numbers of family members. Note how all of them have a mother and father, and siblings. Mention out loud how sometimes children can be the only child, and how sometimes people have a single parent, or two mothers or two fathers, or are raised by grandparents, or are adopted, etc. The book continues to show details of the children’s lives, such as: what they wear, what they eat for breakfast, how they travel, details about their teacher and school, how they write/spell their name (a lovely drawing!), what they eat for lunch, how they play, how they help at home, how they eat dinner, what they do in the evening, where they sleep, and finally, what their nighttime sky looks like — which all the children share!
- After reading, ask students how each child was both different and similar to themselves. Try to refer to them by their actual names (this book is based on real life children!).

INDEPENDENT WORK

- Assign students to write a journal entry of the illustrated day from the perspective of one of the children (consider assigning a child or allowing the students to choose). Discuss ways we can imagine someone else’s life in a way that honors them, not reduces them. Journal pieces should be optimistic and respectful. The teacher should model out loud and consider providing a written example for students to see (if given a model, perhaps students shouldn’t write about that child, but write about a different child so as to avoid mimicry).
- The teacher may work with students in small groups or move around the classroom to provide further guidance to students. When students are done, they may share their journal entries with the class. Consider collecting student writing to provide revision notes, so students may revise their work during another class period, and post to an online, password-protected classroom blog. Recording their voice to pair with images would serve as a meaningful portfolio piece, and something that can be shared with families.

CLOSING

- Close the initial period of instruction with a brief discussion. How are children around the world different? How are we different in this classroom? Why are differences good? In what ways are we similar to other children around the world? Are we more alike than we are different?



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

For another activity, consider having the students create an insert for the opening pages of the book. For example, each child is introduced with a portrait and a sentence, such as: "My name is __ and I'm called __. I'm __ years old." Have students write a sentence using this as a guide (they can create more complex sentences if they're ready for that!). They may also add a portrait to accompany their statement. Display their pages around the room or include in a class book, or post online again via a password-protected blog.

LESSON 8

COUNTRY STUDIES: CULTIVATING A SENSE OF PRIDE

Grade: 2 | Suggested Time: 45+ minutes (2-3 class periods).

Unit: Diversity Around the World – How Our Geography and Our Daily Lives Connect Us

Related Subject(s): Reading/Literacy; Social Studies/Geography

Background

OBJECTIVES

- To gain an appreciation for different countries and cultures.
- To find commonalities with people who appear or seem different from ourselves.
- To embrace difference and cultivate a sense of empathy and pride.

MATERIALS

- Library resources.
- If library resources are not available, consider using *Britannica Kids* as a safe, age-appropriate online resource. Available here: <https://kids.britannica.com/kids>

ESSENTIAL IDEA

- For the final lesson, we recommend that students research a country of their choice. The country may be one they are already familiar with, or a country that is new to them. Students will conduct research to better understand aspects of the country's culture or mix of cultures. The big idea behind the project is for students to not only learn more about different people and places around the world, but to find ways to connect with it, as the final question asks students to consider: If you were from this country and/or culture(s), what would you be proud of?
- If available, consider teaching this lesson in conjunction with the school librarian.

VOCABULARY

- At this point, students may be familiar with most terms used in this lesson.

Lesson Procedure

OPENING

Remind students of the various ideas they've learned thus far. For instance, they learned about the way geography and culture shapes housing around the world, our clothing, what we eat, etc. Hopefully, they have also learned that they have a lot in common with people and children around the world. Today, they are going to choose a country in the world to learn more about. They will focus on two ideas: culture and pride. For culture, they will research various aspects of the cultural life of a place, such as the food, language, clothing, religious beliefs, customs and traditions of some people who come from a particular place and time (or the mix of cultures). For pride, the big idea is for students to ask themselves: If you were from this country and/or culture(s), what would you be proud of? (When students choose their country, try to have little to no repeats, so many places and cultures are represented.)

GUIDED RESEARCH

Ideally, with a school librarian, guide students through resources to conduct research about different countries and/or cultures around the world. If using the library, how do we find physical books? How do we find and use online resources? Consider reviewing digital literacy ideas, such as safety parameters for online research use. Provide students with support on gathering their information, such as how to store it and keep track of it (i.e. folder systems, notecards, online bibliography tools, etc.)

INDEPENDENT AND/OR GROUP WORK

As students read through materials, provide them with either graphic organizers, templates, or guided questions to help them record what they've learned. Provide ample time for research, such as a few class periods. Remind students that they will present cultural facts about their chosen country, such as speaking about the customs, holidays, and/or major religions practiced in that country; the cuisine; the types of clothing, jewelry, shoes, makeup, hats, or head coverings worn; the different languages spoken; etc. Encourage students to design their project so they end with the key idea: If they were from this country, what is something they would be proud of?

PRESENTATIONS AND CLOSING

Students will present their findings. If a larger celebration is desired, consider inviting parents/guardians ahead of time to view the presentations. Food and decorations of the various places may be brought in. (Of course, ask about allergies ahead of time.) If treating this as a Multicultural Festival of sorts, we encourage the class to also focus on what we have in common. And for identified differences, how can they be a source of pride?



Extension Activities

SUGGESTIONS

While many of these lessons have surveyed the role geography has on the development of housing, clothing, and food, the lessons have not explored the more negative impact humans have had on the environment. If another activity is desired, review ways people can impact the environment in a more positive way. Consider speaking about ways to reduce pollution, carbon emissions, etc. Consider beginning a recycling club — students can recycle paper, cans, bottles, etc. Learn about ways people are creating renewable energy and plastics, etc. In short, encourage students to celebrate both culture and “green” initiatives.