

LESSON PLAN

I Want to be an Ambassador! *What Does It Mean to be Culturally Curious?*

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LESSON PLAN:

I Want to be an Ambassador! What Does It Mean to be Culturally Curious?

OVERVIEW & RATIONALE

Imagine you lived in a world where there was only one language, one way of thinking, one style of music, and one type of cuisine. Who would determine *which* one way of culture we should all follow... and how would you feel if *you* were not among the group that made such a decision?!

Cultural diversity contributes to a vibrant, richer, and more interesting world... and an understanding of, and respect for, other cultures and diverse viewpoints is the key to collaborating and solving problems that benefit all of society. Yet scientific studies show people fear what they do not understand – and culture is no exception.

Through detailed lecture notes, large-group discussion guides, and a Small Peer Team activity, the lesson provides easy-to-understand methods for teens to explore and appreciate cultural traditions, viewpoints, and practices that differ from their own. Students will also discover strategies to communicate, collaborate, and explore other cultures while listening and learning to diverse perspectives *without judgment*.

This lesson plan is designed to be used in tandem with the Luminari video *I Want to be an Ambassador! What Does It Mean to be Culturally Curious* <https://www.luminari.org/i-want-to-be-an-ambassador-online/> copyright 2020 Luminari All Rights Reserved

Content in this lesson plan aligns with the Common Core State Standards Initiative - English Language Arts Standards » History/Social Studies » Grade 9-10
<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/9-10/>

And, content is aligned with National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies.
<https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/introduction>

GRADE LEVEL OF TARGET GROUP: 9th & 10th graders. ADAPTABLE for rising 8th – 12th graders.

TOTAL TIME: 2 x 60-minute class periods

***Full description of Benchmark & Performance Standards at end of this document**

Key Ideas and Details

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1](#)
[LITERACY.RH.9-10.2](#)
[LITERACY.RH.9-10.3](#)

[CCSS.ELA-](#)
[LITERACY-](#)

Craft and Structure

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4](#)
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5](#)
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6](#)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9](#)

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10](#)

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies – Applied Strands:

CULTURE

PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

GOALS FOR UNDERSTANDING // ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is meant by the term “cultural curiosity”?
- How does society overall benefit when diverse and dynamic cultures are able to develop freely; and how does that development provide a source of identity and basic human rights?
- What are the *personal* benefits of cultivating broader cultural awareness?
- What social and emotional skills are necessary to navigate a complex, diverse, and increasingly interdependent world?
- How can the concepts of the Cultural Iceberg Model be applied to build cultural awareness and cultural competence; and develop a better understanding of diverse viewpoints, customs, and belief systems?
- What qualities and global perspectives are necessary for successful leadership in a global society?
- How can individuals contribute to a safe environment in which all cultures can develop freely?

As per National Standards, by the end of these lessons students will be able to:

- Recognize, create, learn, share, and adapt to diverse cultures.
- Analyze ways in which dynamic cultures change over time.
- Observe and reflect upon elements of culture, as well as similarities and differences among cultural groups across time and place.
- Learn and apply an understanding of the past and key historical events to analysis and interpretation of present-day cultures.
- Learn and apply an understanding of a culture’s social, economic, and civic influences to build cultural awareness and competencies.

LESSON I – INTRODUCTION & LECTURE – (60 minutes total)

Supplies: Internet connection; SmartBoard or ability to project instructor's screen on overhead.

Imagine you lived in a world where there was only one language, one way of thinking, one style of music, and one type of cuisine. Who would determine *which* one way of culture we should all follow... and how would you feel if *you* were not among the group that made such a decision?!

Cultural diversity contributes to a vibrant, richer, and more interesting world... and an understanding of, and respect for, other cultures and diverse viewpoints is the key to collaborating and solving problems that benefit all of society. Yet scientific studies show people fear what they do not understand – and culture is no exception.

A quick glimpse at the daily news domestically and around the world gives more than enough evidence that conflicts and clashes exist.

How many of those conflicts exist because of **cultural differences**, for instance, differing beliefs about religion; differing concepts about equality and human rights; and the acceptance, or lack thereof, of certain cultural practices or traits?

It is often said that youth are the key to the future. If that is true, then it is essential that young people help shape the *present*, too. To help shape the present and drive peace and positive change, it is beneficial to develop **cultural awareness** and **cultural competence**.

Cultural awareness is the recognition of nuances of one's own and others' cultures.¹

Cultural competence² is an individual's ability to use academic, experiential, and interpersonal skills to increase their understanding and appreciation of those cultural difference *and* similarities within, among, and between groups.

We will continue to talk more about those ideas, but first, we will screen a 9-minute video that expands on the idea of **cultural curiosity**.

The instructor will lead the class through SCREENING OF THE LUMINARI VIDEO *I Want to be an Ambassador! What Does It Mean to be Culturally Curious*

The video is titled
I Want to be an Ambassador!
What Does It Mean to be Culturally Curious

The instructor will play the LUMINARI VIDEO at the following link:

<https://www.luminari.org/i-want-to-be-an-ambassador-online/>

¹ "Cultural Awareness-Glossary of Key Terms, Online PDF." *Labor Occupation Health Program*, National Institutes of Health, www.niehs.nih.gov/news/events/pastmtg/hazmat/assets/2007/wtp_2007ntec_wruc_latino_tips_glossary_508.pdf.

² Ibid.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION - After screening the Luminari video

As we saw in the **Luminari video**, a culture is defined by many features, some of which are visible – *that is, at the top of the iceberg* – and some of which are not visible – *that is, the part of the iceberg that is not visible, beneath the water's surface*.

In order to build cultural awareness and develop cultural competencies... it's beneficial to actually have a healthy cultural curiosity! Of course, there may be reasons – valid or otherwise - - why someone is resistant to learning about other cultures.

QUESTION: *Without judgment, what might some reasons be why an individual may be resistant to learning about other cultures?*

A.) Possible answers include:

- Negative perceptions, biases, or stereotypes about other cultures.
- Misconceptions and fears about other cultures.
- Personal sensitivities due to previous experiences with a culture.
- Belief that other cultures may threaten your own culture or cultural identity.
- No prior knowledge of the culture.
- Fear of being accused of cultural appropriation, *i.e.* the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of cultural customs, practices, etc., by members of another and typically more dominant people or society.³

QUESTION: *How might society overall benefit when diverse and dynamic cultures are able to develop freely?*

A.) Possible answers⁴ include:

- Allows for an exchange of creativity, ideas, and innovations that can be appreciated by all of humankind.
- When people have an understanding of, and respect for, a culture, it provides a more peaceful framework for communication and compromise to peacefully solve problems.
- Policies for the inclusion and participation of peoples from different cultures provides social cohesion and a more civil society, which could improve human rights and conditions for marginalized populations.
- Respect for cultural diversity is a factor in development, including economic, intellectual, and moral development.

³ “Cultural Appropriation: Definition of Cultural Appropriation by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com Also Meaning of Cultural Appropriation.” *Lexico Dictionaries / English*, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/definition/cultural_appropriation.

⁴ “All Different, All Unique: Young People and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.” *Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, Culture Sector Section for Youth, Bureau of Strategic Planning*, UNESCO, unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000134556.

QUESTION: Do you think there are *personal* benefits to cultivating broader cultural awareness and cultural competencies? *Defend your answer.*

A.) Possible answers include:

- Could improve personal communication skills
- Could build leadership skills
- Could aid in more productive collaborations with diverse people in school and work environments.
- Could provide new outlets for creativity, entertainment, and social pursuits.
- Could expand academic and intellectual capacities.
- Increased capacity to understand diverse peoples and viewpoints could make me a more effective agent of positive change.

QUESTION: Without judgment, what qualities and global perspectives are necessary for successful *leadership* in a global society? *Defend your answer.*

A.) Possible answers⁵ include:

- Self-awareness, i.e. understanding why you hold certain beliefs
- Humility, including the willingness to listen to, and learn from, diverse perspectives.
- Curiosity about people and places beyond your own experience
- Diplomacy, i.e. the ability to negotiate and manage complex relationships in a way that leads to acceptable solutions, reasonable compromises, and rational decisions.
- Broad knowledge base, and a respect for academic and scientific processes.
- Strong communication skills.

Do you think *you* are ready to be an effective leader in a global society? Think about the beliefs *you* may currently have about a different culture or cultures. *How did you come to hold those views?*

Young people, of course, are usually raised within a family or community structure that holds certain beliefs. In some cases, those beliefs may perpetuate certain misperceptions and stereotypes – however well-intentioned the families’ efforts may be in holding those viewpoints. And, certainly, we are all influenced by traditional and social media, which could be tainted by bias, misinformation, or outdated information.

Perhaps you hold certain views about another religion. . . or an ethnic group . . . or a particular cultural practice.

But consider if or how those views might evolve if you did independent research, using objective and evidence-based data.

⁵ Boix-Mansilla, Veronica, et al. “Leading with the World in Mind.” *Leading with the World in Mind-PDF*, Harvard Graduate School of Public Education, pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Leading%20with%20the%20World%20in%20Mind.pdf.

Consider if or how your views might evolve if you had a deeper understanding of history and civics, and the world affairs that contribute to and shape individual cultures.

TIP: The following question should be asked and/or adapted at the instructor's discretion, taking into consideration the classroom dynamic and sensitivities pertaining to race, culture, identity, stereotypes, and current events.

QUESTION: What would it take to *persuade you to change a negative view you have* of a particular culture or cultural practice, and become more culturally curious?

A.) Possible answers include:

- Conducting research from respectable and objective sources to provide evidence-based information.
- Talking to an expert who has respected and verifiable academic knowledge of the subject.
- Participating in cultural experiences based in the arts, food, or sports, as a way to become more acquainted with aspects of the culture.
- Meeting more diverse people in social situations, particularly those that may be based on shared interests, e.g. a soccer club.
- Meeting diverse people in more controlled social and academic situations, in which trained facilitators led conversations about cultural diversity and cultural awareness.

Lesson I – CONCLUDING REMARKS

We've covered quite a few big topics today, and I hope you'll continue to think about these topics in preparation for our next lesson, as we delve deeper into the **Cultural Iceberg Model**.

Please read the assigned homework in preparation for that lesson. As you read it, *look around at your own corner of the world* and see if you can identify any external, i.e. **visible**, aspects of diverse cultures in our community.

Then, **complete the *Features of Culture Worksheet*** at the link provided. Be prepared to participate in a classroom discussion in which you compare and contrast your responses from that worksheet.

Lesson I - HOMEWORK

READ: Edward T. Hall's Cultural Iceberg Model

https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/125/iceberg_model_3.pdf

COMPLETE: Worksheet- Features of Culture

<https://files.peacecorps.gov/uploads/wws/lesson-plans/files/bridges.features.a.pdf>

LESSON II –LECTURE – (60 minutes total)

Supplies: Internet connection; SmartBoard or ability to project instructor's screen on overhead; computer and Internet access for students to complete a Small Peer Team activity.

For homework, you were assigned a reading about the Cultural Iceberg Model.

QUESTION: How, if at all, do you think the concepts of the Cultural Iceberg Model can be applied to build cultural awareness and cultural competence; and develop a better understanding of diverse viewpoints, customs, and belief systems? *Defend your answer.*

A.) Possible answers include:

- Create awareness and possible better understanding of internal factors that influence a culture's behaviors, belief, and values and thought patterns.
- Provide a framework in which to consider internal and external factors that contribute to a culture.

For homework, you also had to complete the **Features of Culture worksheet**. We will now work in Small Peer Teams to compare and contrast the answers you provided. Then, we will reconvene as a large group and share our discoveries.

As you may recall from the **Luminari video** we watched in our last class, **developing cultural curiosity and building cultural awareness requires having *courageous conversations***.

I understand that it may be challenging to question *your own long-held beliefs*, and to listen to viewpoints with which you may strongly disagree.

I want you to remain focused on the goal of having respectful dialogue, listening to diverse viewpoints, and trying to understand – without judgment – why others hold certain beliefs.

That kind of conversation does, indeed, require **courage** – but I believe you are up to the task. Let's get started.

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Lesson II – SMALL PEER TEAM ACTIVITY

Step 1: The instructor will divide the class into small peer teams of 3 – 4 students each, depending on class size.

Step 2: The instructor will make the following announcement and provide the following instructions to the teams:

As you discuss the content of the worksheet with other members of your peer team, keep in mind:

- The worksheet asked you to think of “common” examples that reflects the culture of the United States of America.

You have given *your* honest perceptions, but they are only *perceptions*. Even though we all live in the same country, we may have very different *perceptions* of its cultures

- **Consider and think critically about answers that may seem very different, and even contradict other team members’ answers.**
- **Listen, learn, question, and discuss the variety of answers given by your team members without judgment. Your goal is to *understand a diverse viewpoint, and the factors that shaped it, not to argue or change that person’s mind*.**
 - To do that, keep in mind **the qualities of effective global leaders**, which we discussed in our last class:
 - Self-awareness, i.e. understanding why you hold certain beliefs
 - Humility, including the willingness to listen to, and learn from, diverse perspectives.
 - Curiosity about people and places beyond your own experience
 - Diplomacy, i.e. the ability to negotiate and manage complex relationships in a way that leads to acceptable solutions, reasonable compromises, and rational decisions.
 - Broad knowledge base, and a respect for academic and scientific processes.
 - Strong communication skills.
 - Peer team members should remain focused on holding a respectful conversation focused on discussion and discovery.
 - When viewpoints diverge, questions can be asked that focus on:
 - Whether key historical or world events contributed to a particular perception
 - Evidence-based data, academic sources, etc., influenced a particular perception
 - **Proceed with caution:** Whether *personal* and/or *familiar* experiences contributed to a particular perception.

Step 3: Peer teams will compare and contrast the answers on their completed Features of Culture worksheets. The instructor will oversee the process to ensure discussions remain respectful, and focused on learning.

Step 4: The class will reconvene as a large group and ENGAGE IN A REFLECTION DISCUSSION about the Small Peer Team assignment.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Reflect upon the **similarities** you discovered in your group's answers about features of U.S. culture.
 - Can you articulate *why* you all seemed to share similar perceptions on those particular features of culture?
- Reflect upon the **difference** you discovered in your group's answers about features of U.S. culture.
 - Can you articulate *why* perceptions seemed to be different on those particular features of culture?
- How difficult was it – if, in fact, it was difficult at all – to ***listen without judgment*** to a perception that was very different from your own?
- What questions did you ask to help you learn more about what contributed to a person's perception when it was markedly different from your own?
- What *additional information* would you need to more fully understand the perceptions that were very different from your own, *e.g. more historical knowledge of a culture, better understanding of economic factors, more academic study of internal factors that contribute to a belief, etc.*?
- Given this brief chance to hold a conversation that is about *discovery* rather than *debate*, how do you think young people can contribute to a safe environment in which all cultures can develop freely, and diverse perspectives can be heard without judgment?

Lesson II – CONCLUDING REMARKS

There is no “assignment” that will conclude this lesson, because building cultural awareness and developing cultural competencies is a *lifelong process*.

I will only ask that you continue to cultivate **cultural curiosity**, and think about ways in which you can intentionally honor that curiosity in your life, in the interest of building skills that will contribute to a more peaceful and just world.

REFERENCES

“All Different, All Unique: Young People and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.” *Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, Culture Sector* Section for Youth, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO, unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000134556.

Boix-Mansilla, Veronica, et al. “Leading with the World in Mind.” *Leading with the World in Mind-PDF*, Harvard Graduate School of Public Education, pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Leading%20with%20the%20World%20in%20Mind.pdf.

“Cultural Awareness-Glossary of Key Terms, Online PDF.” *Labor Occupation Health Program*, National Institutes of Health, www.niehs.nih.gov/news/events/pastmtg/hazmat/assets/2007/wtp_2007ntec_wruc_latino_tips_glossary_508.pdf.

Culture Is Like an Iceberg, Peace Corps, www.peacecorps.gov/educators/resources/culture-iceberg/.

“The Cultural Iceberg Model.” *Beyond Culture*, by Edward T. Hall, Anchor Books, 1989. Accessed online at https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/125/iceberg_model_3.pdf

“Global Education Program.” *World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh*, www.worldpittsburgh.org/global-education-initiative/.

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BENCHMARKS AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Craft and Structure:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5

Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

<https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/introduction>

Applied Strands:

CULTURE

PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS