

# Multiple Culture, Multiple Identities

## Overview

When people talk about themselves, it is clear that they identify with not just one, but many cultures. This activity creates a space for dialogue in which students share information about the cultures they feel they belong to. Students will realize that they identify with a variety of cultures and that they make choices about when and where they express these identities.

## Concepts

Cultural diversity, belonging to multiple cultures, multiple identities, roles and relationships within a culture.

## Objectives

- ▶ Identify which cultural groups students relate to.
- ▶ Draw conclusions about their diverse roles in different cultures and settings.
- ▶ Figure out reasons why we play multiple roles in society.

# Contents at a Glance

Standards and Assessment . . . . .	3
National Science Education Standards . . . . .	4
Standards for the English Language Arts . . . . .	5
Curriculum Standards for Social Studies . . . . .	6
Teacher Strategies . . . . .	10



# Standards and Assessment

## Standards

The materials in this unit are closely correlated to the National Science Education Standards, Standards for the English Language Arts, and Curriculum Standards for Social Studies. A listing of the standards follows. A check mark indicates the standards that are addressed.

## Assessment

This unit provides tasks that can be used to assess students' understanding of the information presented. Use the following questions to assess each student's reasoning, responses, understanding, and interaction.

- How well did the student use his or her observation skills?
- How well did the student demonstrate an understanding of the information provided?
- How well did the student communicate the observations he or she made?
- How well did the student explain concepts and ideas to other students?
- Was the student able to use evidence to support his or her conclusions?
- How well did the student complete the tasks outlined?
- How well did the student participate in all aspects of cooperative work?

# National Science Education Standards

GRADES K-4

National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, National Research Council

Science as Inquiry	
Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry	✓
Understanding about scientific inquiry	
Science in Personal and Social Perspective	
Characteristics and changes in populations	
Types of resources	
Changes in environments	
Science and technology in local challenges	
History and Nature of Science	
Science as a human endeavor	

# National Science Education Standards

GRADES 5-8

National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, National Research Council

Science as Inquiry	
Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry	✓
Understanding about scientific inquiry	
Science in Personal and Social Perspectives	
Populations, resources, and environments	
Science and technology in society	
History and Nature of Science	
Science as a human endeavor	
Nature of science	

# Standards for the English Language Arts

GRADES K-8

National Council of Teachers of English

Students read to build an understanding of texts, themselves, and the cultures of the United States and the world.	✓
Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions of human experience.	
Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.	
Students employ a wide range of writing strategies to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.	
Students apply knowledge of language structure, conventions, and figurative language to create, critique, and discuss texts.	
Students conduct research; generate ideas and questions and pose problems; gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources; communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.	
Students use a variety of technological and information resources to gather and synthesize information.	
Students develop a respect for diversity in language use.	

# Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

GRADES K–4

National Council for the Social Studies

<b>Culture and Cultural Diversity</b>	
Explore and describe similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns.	✓
Give examples of how experiences may be interpreted differently by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference.	✓
Describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture.	
Compare ways in which people from different cultures think about and deal with their physical environment and social conditions.	
Give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups.	
<b>Time, Continuity, and Change</b>	
Demonstrate an understanding that different people may describe the same event or situation in diverse ways, citing reasons for the differences in views.	✓
Demonstrate an ability to use correctly vocabulary associated with time such as past, present, future, and long ago; read and construct simple timelines, identify examples of change; and recognize examples of cause and effect relationships.	
Demonstrate an understanding that people in different times and places view the world differently.	
<b>People, Places, and Environments</b>	
Construct and use mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size and shape.	
Interpret, use, and distinguish various representations of the Earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs.	
Use appropriate resources, data sources, and geographic tools such as atlases, databases, grid systems, charts, graphs, and maps to generate, manipulate, and interpret information.	
Locate and distinguish among varying landforms and geographic features, such as mountains, plateaus, islands, and oceans.	
Describe and speculate about physical system changes, such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle.	

# Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

continued

GRADES K-4

Describe how people create places that reflect ideas, personality, culture, and wants and needs as they design homes, playgrounds, classrooms, and the like.	
Examine the interaction of human beings and their physical environment, the use of land, building of cities, and ecosystem changes in selected locales and regions.	
Explore ways that the Earth’s physical features have changed over time in the local region and beyond and how these changes may be connected to one another.	
<b>Individual Development and Identity</b>	
Describe personal connections to place—especially place as associated with immediate surroundings.	
Identify and describe ways family groups and community influence the individual’s daily life and personal choices.	
<b>Individuals, Groups, and Institutions</b>	
Identify roles as learned behavior patterns in group situations such as student, family member, peer play group member, or club member.	✓
Give examples of and explain group and institutions influences such as religious beliefs, laws, and peer pressure, on people, events, and elements of culture.	
<b>Production, Distribution, and Consumption</b>	
Give examples that show how scarcity and choice govern our economic decisions.	
Distinguish between needs and wants.	
Describe how we depend upon workers with specialized jobs and the ways in which they contribute to the production and exchange of goods and services.	
<b>Science, Technology, and Society</b>	
Identify and describe examples in which science and technology have changed the lives of people, such as in homemaking, childcare, work, transportation, and communication.	
<b>Global Connections</b>	
Explain ways that language art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements may facilitate global understanding or lead to misunderstanding.	
Explore causes, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as pollution and endangered species.	

# Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

GRADES 5–8

continued

<b>Culture and Cultural Diversity</b>	
Compare similarities and differences in the ways cultures meet human needs and concerns.	✓
Explain how information and experiences may be interpreted by people of diverse cultural perspectives.	✓
Explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, traditions, beliefs, values and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture.	
Explain why individuals and groups respond differently to their physical and social environments and or changes to them on the basis of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs.	
<b>Time, Continuity, and Change</b>	
Demonstrate an understanding that different scholars may describe the same event or situation in different ways but must provide reasons or evidence for their views.	
Identify and use key concepts such as chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity.	
<b>People, Places, and Environments</b>	
Elaborate mental maps of locales, regions, and the world that demonstrate understanding of relative location, direction, size and shape.	
Create, interpret, use, and distinguish various representations of the Earth, such as maps, globes, and photographs.	
Use appropriate resources, data sources, and geographic tools such as aerial photographs, satellite images, geographic information systems (GIS), map projects, and cartography to generate, manipulate, and interpret information such as atlases, data bases, grid systems, charts, graphs, and more.	
Locate and describe varying landforms and geographic features, such as mountains, plateaus, islands, rain forests, deserts, and oceans, and explain their relationship within the ecosystem.	
Describe physical system changes such as seasons, climate and weather, and the water cycle and identify geographic patterns associated with them.	
Describe how people create places that reflect cultural values and ideals as they build neighborhoods, parks, shopping centers, and the like.	
Examine, interpret, and analyze physical and cultural patterns and their interactions, such as land use, settlement patterns, cultural transmission of customs and ideas, and ecosystem changes.	



Curriculum Standards for Social Studies continued	GRADES 5–8
Describe ways that historical events have been influenced by, and have influenced, physical and human geographic factors in local, regional, national, and global settings.	
Observe and speculate about social and economic effects of environmental changes and crises resulting from phenomena such as floods, storms, and drought.	
<b>Individual Development and Identity</b>	
Describe personal connections to place – as associated with community, nation, and the world	✓
Describe the ways family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and institutional affiliations contribute to personal identity.	✓
Identify and describe ways regional, ethnic, and national cultures influence individuals' daily lives.	
<b>Individuals, Groups, and Institutions</b>	
Demonstrate an understanding of concepts such as role, status, and social class in describing the interactions of individuals and social groups.	✓
Analyze group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture.	
<b>Production, Distribution, and Consumption</b>	
Give and explain examples of ways that economic systems structure choices about how goods and services are to be produced and distributed.	
Describe the role of specialization and exchange in the economic process.	
Explain and illustrate how values and beliefs influence different economic decisions.	
<b>Science, Technology, and Society</b>	
Examine and describe the influence of culture on scientific and technological choices and advancement, such as in transportation, medicine, and warfare.	
Show through specific examples how science and technology have changed people's perceptions of the social and natural world, such as in their relationship to the land, animal life, family life, and economic needs, wants, and security.	
Seek reasonable and ethical solutions to problems that arise when scientific advancements and social norms or values come into conflict.	
<b>Global Connections</b>	
Describe instances in which language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements can facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding.	
Explore causes, consequences, and possible solutions to persistent, contemporary, and emerging global issues, such as health, security, resource allocation, economic development, and environmental quality.	

# Teacher Strategies

## MATERIALS

Provide each student with a small shoebox or paper lunch bag so they can create a “cultural chest.” Supply pencils, markers, crayons, and other materials for decorating the cultural chests.

## PROCEDURE

1. Explain to students that they will be creating cultural chests, and that inside their chests they will place three items that in some way describe the social or cultural groups they identify with. Students should bring in objects that speak to their ethnicity, religion, age, etc. They should select objects that are powerful and meaningful to them. Some examples might be photographs, pieces of art, books, letters, family recipes, or CDs.
2. Ask students to decorate the outside of their chests with pictures, drawings, words, or phrases that describe how they think other people or how society sees them and their culture.
3. Have students share their cultural chests in class. Divide them into groups, assigning the job of recorder to one student and “discussion leader” to another student. The students should identify the objects they brought and the meanings behind them. Where are the objects from? How did they acquire them? Why are they meaningful? Where do they display them or keep them? What do these objects say about the students and the cultures they identify with?
4. Bring students together as a class and ask that each recorder share the experiences of the group. Find out what they learned about each other. What were some similarities in objects chosen? What cultures do students feel they

belong to? Is there a great deal of diversity in the class?

5. Ask students to think about when and where they associate with each of the cultures they chose. For example, there might be moments when students identify themselves by their ethnic background, and other times by their gender. When are these occasions? How do they feel about these different roles? What are the contradictions between how people see themselves and how others see them?

## NEXT STEPS

1. Consider turning an area of the classroom into a mini-museum. If you have recently visited a local natural history museum, talk with students about the exhibition—both its content and process of how it was created.
  - ~ *What was the story of the exhibition?*
  - ~ *How was the story told?*
  - ~ *What jobs are required to create an exhibition?*
2. Ask students to use the Internet to collect images of the countries represented. Let their family members participate too.
3. Display and present the wealth of information the class has learned about culture and identity. Have students visit each culture chest and examine its contents.
4. Consider inviting students’ family members and their community members or leaders to experience the exhibition as an opportunity to share the diversity and range of perspectives in your classroom.