

America, A Home for Every Culture

How have the mosaic of cultures in the U.S. contributed to the unique, diverse country it is today?

Grades 3-5 Lesson: America, A Home for Every Culture

Grade Band: 3-5

Arts Subject: Music, Visual Arts

Other Subject: Geography, History, World Cultures

SUMMARY

In this 3-5 lesson, students will create a class recipe book demonstrating the diverse flavors of their cultures. They will explore how various cultures have contributed to making the United States the unique and diverse country that it is today. Students will share the history and origin of a traditional family recipe with the class.

PREPARATION

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify words that became part of the English language as a result of immigrant groups settling in America.
- Describe how foods differ from nation to nation by creating a class “Multicultural Family Recipe Book.”
- Express understanding of the value of diversity in a poem or drawing.

Recommended Materials

Editable Documents: *Before sharing these resources with students, you must first save them to your Google account by opening them, and selecting “Make a copy” from the File menu.*

- [My Recipe and My Family Member](#)
- [Slide: My Recipe and My Family Member Biography](#)
- [Criteria for Success: Recipe & Biography](#)
- [Face To Face](#)
- [A World of Words](#)

Websites

- [Music of African Immigrants](#)
- [Music of Celtic Immigrants](#)
- [Music of Jewish Immigrants](#)
- [Instruments of the World](#)
- [Definition of Culture](#)

Additional Materials

- example cookbook
- poster world map or [digital world map](#)



Teacher Background

Teachers should be familiar with various immigrant populations of the U.S. and review the [definition of culture](#). Prior to the lesson, pre-cut [A World of Words](#) “Closed Sort” for small groups and place the cards in an envelope or a sandwich bag. Familiarize yourself with cookbooks and customary ways of writing recipes. *Note: Prior to this lesson, it is recommended to do a lesson that recognizes the culture and heritage of class members.*

Student Prerequisites

Students should have an awareness that the U.S. is a nation of immigrants.

Accessibility Notes

Modify handouts as needed and allow extra time.

INSTRUCTION

Engage

1. Present the world map and ask students to name nations with which they are familiar.

Ask students: Who do you know that has immigrated to the U.S. from a different nation?

2. Ask what languages are spoken in those countries and point out that they brought their languages with them to the United States. There are more than 6,500 languages in the world, and over 350 languages are spoken in the United States, according to data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau between 2009-2013. If the class includes students who can speak other languages, ask them to share a word or phrase in that language (counting to 5, hello, my name is...etc.). Check for similarities between languages.

3. Introduce the term “loanword,” which refers to words taken directly from one language and used in another. Examples include “ballet” (French), “pajamas” (Hindi), and “karaoke” (Japanese). Point out that English speakers in the U.S. took up words brought to the U.S. by immigrants, as well as Native American words, and we now have words from all over the world in our American English dictionaries. Bear in mind that the vocabulary of the English language included large numbers of words of French, Germanic, Latin, and Greek origins when it first came to the United States, and that world conquest and trade on the part of English-speaking peoples are responsible for more loanwords than immigration. Still, immigrants certainly enriched American English with their languages, and continue to do so today.

4. Divide into small groups for a “Closed Sort” activity using the “[A World of Words](#)” handout. Give students the words and origins in an envelope (already cut out). Have them work collaboratively to sort the words into the country of origin. Facilitate through each group, asking students to explain their rationale.

5. Reveal the sort results and have each small group count how many they were able to identify. Have a class discussion about the results of the activity.

Build

1. Listen to examples of music brought to the United States by immigrants.

[Music of African immigrants](#) - A Smithsonian collection of clips from recent immigrants from various African nations.

[Music of Celtic immigrants](#) - A webcast of a Library of Congress musical program on Irish immigration.

[Music of Jewish immigrants](#) - Several video clips from a Klezmer band, playing a style of music particularly associated with European Jewish immigrants to the U.S.

2. Discuss the instruments students heard or saw in the performances. Explain that different instruments are used in the music of different countries and continents. Use the [Instruments of the World](#) resource to explore instruments from each continent. On chart paper or an interactive board, write “Musical Instruments” on the left-hand side and “Place of Origin” on the right-hand side. Discuss how in the same way that languages were brought over to America, so were the musical sounds of various ethnic groups.

3. Discuss four American instruments brought by immigrants: the accordion, fiddle (violin), saxophone, and banjo (believed to be based on the oud). Show the accordion, for example. Discuss what it looks like, its shape, how it is played, whether the sound is high or low, etc. Play the accordion sound again. Have a student read the caption at the bottom and identify the place of origin. Ask students whether they’ve heard the instrument played in the United States, or if they associate the instruments with any particular kind of music. Students may recognize the accordion as an instrument used in Cajun or Tejano music, or as an instrument used to play polkas.

4. Have students write the names of instruments on sticky notes and add them to the world map. This could be restricted to the instruments discussed, or students might know of other instruments. Cross-check the accuracy of instruments’ origins before placing them on the map.

Apply

1. Recall the countries visited on the world map and brainstorm with the class all of the different local restaurants that may serve traditional food from those countries. Discuss with students the benefits of having a variety of foods in their very own neighborhood.

2. Tell students that we all have culture and culture is what makes you and your family special. Explain that we may have similar cultural traditions and beliefs, but may also discover differences which make our community so wonderful.

3. Ask students to “turn and talk” to a peer and discuss foods their family makes on special occasions or a home-cooked meal they enjoy together. After the “turn and talk” ask students to share and describe why a particular food is important to their culture.

4. Share with students a favorite meal from your cultural heritage and give students the opportunity to share theirs. Tell the students that the class is going to create its own recipe book. Use an example cookbook to show students how a cookbook is organized. Notice that recipes are often divided by the type of ingredients (meats, vegetables, fruits) or the kind of dish (breakfast, desserts, drinks).

5. Provide students with a printed copy of the [My Recipe and My Family Member](#) handout or assign a digital version using the [Slide: My Recipe and My Family Member Biography](#). Refer to the “My Recipe” page. Explain they are going to choose a favorite family recipe that represents their cultural heritage. Compare the handout with the example cookbook.

6. Refer to page 2, “My Family Member Biography”, of [My Recipe and My Family Member](#). Explain to students that they are going to take a picture, use a picture that they already have (with parental permission), or draw a picture of the family member who either usually cooks the particular meal or is the originator of the recipe. The student will then write a brief biography of the family member.

7. Brainstorm questions that can be asked of the family member: *Where was the person born? How did they get the recipe? How has the recipe changed over time? When is the dish made and served? Is the dish associated with a particular holiday?*

8. Give the students a few days to complete the assignment at home using the [Criteria for Success: Recipe & Biography](#) handout as a reference.

9. Have students present their family recipe and the family member’s biography. Post the pages around the map and connect the recipes with their country of origin using yarn and map pins.

10. Compile all the pages to create a digital recipe book to share with families or on the school website. Decide with the students what the title for your class cookbook should be. Also, decide how to design the cover and choose a student to create it. Share it on the school website or print out a copy for the class library.

Reflect

1. Read the Anita E. Posey poem, [“Face To Face”](#) to the class. (This poem was originally printed in the following book: Alexander, Rosemary, ed. Poetry Place Anthology. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1999.)

2. After reading the poem, discuss with students the writer’s desire to learn about other cultures. Remind students that this unit has allowed the class to learn about different cultures represented in the United States. Refer to the map with its notes showing all the places represented by the food and words you’ve studied.

3. Assess students’ knowledge by preparing a response to the poem, either in the form of an original poem or a drawing. Add student responses to the map display.

Extend

1. Have students find out where their family members originated from and in what year they came to the United States. Students will share this information with the class. On a small world map, to be displayed in the classroom, students can write their family name on an index card and place it on the country of their cultural heritage.

2. Have students learn how to say hello in various languages by visiting [Say Hello in 100 Languages](#) and [Greetings](#).

3. Have students work in cooperative groups to research the history of an ethnic dance and music from the cultures discussed. Have students present a brief history and perform the dance.

4. Have students create an imaginary multicultural restaurant. Create its name, its appearance, and its menu. Provide students with presentation software to pitch their restaurant idea.

5. Have students work in cooperative groups to create a mural that depicts children from around the world, showing symbols of holidays, traditions, customs, and clothing.

Credits

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Sources

Baer, E. *This is the Way We Eat Our Lunch: A Book About Children Around the World*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1995.

Freedman, R. *Immigrant Kids*. New York: Puffin Books, 1995.

Maestro, B. *Coming to America: The Story of Immigration*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1996.

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