

Multicultural Lesson Plans

Cultures and Customs

Titles of Focus Books: [Wibbly, Wobbly Tooth](#); [Mei Ling's Hiccups](#); [Welcome to the World, Baby](#)

Language Lizard Books Used:

[Wibbly, Wobbly Tooth](#) in Japanese/English

[Mei Ling's Hiccups](#) in French/English

[Welcome to the World, Baby](#) in Yoruba/English

**Lessons can be adapted to use each of these Language Lizard books in any dual language combination

Focus Languages: Japanese, French, Yoruba, English

Grades: 3-4

Topic: Cultures and Customs

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Instructional Unit: Cultures and Customs

The three lessons presented in this unit of instruction have been designed to help students

- learn about different cultures and customs of people around the world and in the United States;
- hear and see new languages and text;
- build an appreciation of the diverse languages present in the world and in the United States;
- learn about other countries, and people similar to and different than themselves; introduce important Social Studies concept such as Culture and Geography;
- build positive relationships among students in the classroom to promote the acceptance of diversity among students as a part of the classroom environment.

The three Language Lizard books used in these lessons include: [Wibbly, Wobbly Tooth](#) in Japanese/English, [Mei Ling's Hiccups](#) in French/English, [Welcome to the World, Baby](#) in Yoruba/English. Each of these titles is available in many other languages, and other language combinations can be substituted for or used in addition to the dual languages presented here.

This unit of instruction is easily aligned with state standards, and national standards in Social Studies and Language Arts. The National Council for the Social Studies Themes that these lessons support include: Culture, People, Places and Environment, Individual Development and Identity, Global Connections and Individuals, Groups and Institutions.

Introduction to the Cultures and Customs Unit:

Teacher directed conversation with students

“There are many different customs and cultures in the world. A lot of cultures have very unique customs and traditions. A tradition is something that is memorized and passed down from generation to generation. Traditions can range from certain meals a family shares together to what you do when you lose a tooth. Traditions are a great way to celebrate your family and culture. You may already be thinking of some of the traditions your family participates in. There are many ways to learn about other people's traditions. One way is reading. Reading can open up many different worlds and expose you to new and exciting things everyday! We will be working with three books regarding three very different cultures and traditions. These stories are also really interesting because they tell the story, not only in English, but in a second language. Language is another aspect of culture. There are many different languages spoken all throughout the world. The stories we will be reading are:

1. [The Wibbly, Wobbly Tooth](#) by David Mills & Julia Crouth
2. [Mei Ling's Hiccups](#) by David Mills and Derek Brazell
3. [Welcome to the World, Baby](#) by Na'ima bint & Derek Brazell

After we read these books we are going to be doing some activities involving cultures and customs. The activities will include learning about the traditions and cultures read about in the books and your own traditions. We will also be researching additional cultures and traditions that maybe no one in the class even celebrates. It is very important to gather this information to know about other people and places in the world.”

After hearing the introduction to the mini-unit, the teacher can help students locate the countries where the focus languages are spoken around the world. As a supplement, the teacher may offer instruction about these countries and the people who live in them currently. He or she may also share with student's information about each of the languages, including presenting how these languages are represented in the United States, in the state where students reside and in the local community.

The teacher may also integrate learning about the languages, countries/regions/areas where the languages are spoken throughout the lessons. The CIA World Factbook Online provides excellent information on countries and people of the world.

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

Following this, students will be broken up into three groups. Each group will be assigned one of the previously mentioned books. They will read the book as a group and all become familiar with the story.

Lesson Plan One: Book Sharing

Goals:

1. Students will understand and summarize their books.
2. Students will share a summary of their book with the class.

Objectives:

1. Students will explain that there are many different cultures and customs in the world.
2. Students will explore a few traditions that may be different than their own through books.
3. Students will be able to give an accurate description of their books to their peers.

Concepts: Customs, Main Idea, Events, Summarizing

1. People have different customs all throughout the world.
2. Books can be summarized using main ideas and key events.

Skills: Summarizing a Book, Presenting Information to the Class

Anticipatory Set: To begin this lesson, teacher will tell the students that today they will be exploring their books further and sharing their stories. Through sharing their stories and listening to the other 2 groups talk, everyone will learn from each other.

Procedures:

1. Teacher will begin the lesson using a KWL chart, recording what the students already Know (K), what they Want to learn through the lesson (W) and finally, at the end of the lesson, recording what students have Learned (L).
2. Teacher will define the words culture (the system of shared beliefs, customs, values, behaviors, and artifacts shared by a society) and custom (accepted or habitual practice; tradition).
3. Teacher will ask students what they know about cultures (could be their own or someone else's).
4. The teacher will fill out the first column of the chart (what the students already know) using the students' responses.
5. Then the teacher will ask the students what they would be interested in learning about cultures.
6. The teacher will fill out the second column of the KWL chart (what the students want to know) using the students' responses.
7. Next, the teacher will break students into their reading groups that they read their stories in.
8. After they are settled, the teacher will explain that they will be re-reading their books with the purpose of retelling it to the class. They will be role playing the main event in the story depicting the tradition that is portrayed through the story.
9. The students will have 20 minutes to go over their story and think of how they will present it.
10. When the 20 minutes is up, the students will come up, one group at a time and share their story. Since all of the students might not be able to play an active part in the role playing, they can be appointed to share the title, author, characters, and other elements of the book.
11. Once all three of the stories are shared, the teacher will ask the students what they have learned about traditions, in general and in specific to the ones in the stories.
12. After hearing the students' responses, the teacher will complete the last section of the KWL chart.

Language Lizard Unit: *Cultures and Customs*

Closure: Teacher will tell students that tomorrow they will be doing a writing piece about some of their own family's traditions and culture. Their homework for the night is to talk to a parent about their family and formulate a few ideas to write about. They should find at least one tradition that is celebrated.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their presentation of their books. Teacher will look for understanding of the book and the concept of the tradition celebrated in it.

Materials: books (see introduction), KWL chart, markers, pencils, paper

Lesson Plan 2: Sharing Family Traditions:

Goals:

1. Students will learn about a tradition or cultural activity celebrated in their family.
2. Students will share that tradition with the class through writing.

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to use their writing skills to write a mini-essay explaining a family tradition.
2. Students will be able to help their classmates by proofreading/editing their partner's work.
3. Students will be able to learn from each other to gain an appreciation of customs and traditions practiced by other families and cultures.

Concepts: All families have different culture and traditions and they are all very important.

Skills: Informative/Creative Writing, Peer Editing

Anticipatory Set: Now that you have all learned a little about other traditions and cultures from the books we read, it's time to learn about each other's. Each student is going to write a short essay about the tradition or cultural concept they discussed last night with their families.

Procedures:

1. Hand out lined paper and have students begin writing their rough drafts. Set the guidelines for length (Introduction paragraph, 2-3 supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph)
2. Write on the board a few things to consider about what to write. (what the tradition is, where it came from, when it began, any foods or activities that are included, how they feel about it)
3. Give the students 40 minutes to work on their rough draft. Tell them to do the best they can do in 40 minutes and allow them to take it home to work on it if they don't feel comfortable with what they have written.
4. When the 40 minutes are up, pair the students up in two's. Pass out purple proofreading pens for the students to make the corrections with. Have the students proofread their partner's essays. Tell them to look for things like full sentences, punctuation errors, run-on sentences, and main ideas. Have them use constructive criticism to help improve their partner's paper.

Closure: Have the students write their final draft for homework. The essays will be displayed and shared during their end of the mini-unit party (celebration of cultures).

Assessment: Students will be assessed on the structure of their essay and will be observed while peer-editing.

Materials: Lined paper, pencils, purple pens

Lesson Plan 3: Researching Where You Came From

Goals:

Students will learn about the country their ancestors came from.

Students will use the internet and textbooks to do research on their country.

Objectives:

Students will be able to identify a country of choice or where their ancestors came from, i.e. Italy, Japan, China, Russia, Mexico.

Students will use the internet and textbooks to do research on their country.

Students will use what they learned about culture and customs to research a country.

Students will create a visual representation about what they learned from their research about their country.

Concepts:

The internet is a useful tool to find information about a topic.

Skills:

Using technology to research a topic; using the internet for research; creating a visual representation of researched material, ie. poster, brochure

Anticipatory Set:

Students will review what they learned about the definitions of culture and customs. They will get into small groups, and talk amongst themselves about their homework assignment. They will tell the other group members the country they selected to research and why. Teacher should walk around room to make sure students are explaining why they chose that country.

Procedures:

1. Gather students together as a whole class again and begin a class list of all the countries that the students are planning to do their research on. Make a list on the board. There shouldn't be more than four to a selected country to have more variety in the class and in the presentations.
2. Discuss with students the information they will be researching at the computer lab and library and what needs to be included in their final visual representation: a drawing/map of the country, the language(s) spoken there, any specific clothing worn, size of country in square miles, approximate population size, special foods prepared there, traditions/customs associated with the country, games played there (children's games as well as professional sport) and any other interesting facts. Students should use the whole period to take notes.
3. After research in computer lab and library, have students work at their desks with a partner who has the same country or by themselves to create a visual aid of their country. Explain to students that they will present their research and why they chose that country at the Cultural Celebration at the end of the week after the unit is over. Allow a good 40 minutes to an hour for students to complete the visual. Provide students with a variety of materials to complete their form of visual. Students may have to take work home to complete.

Closure: Cultural Celebration (see "Culminating Activity" below)

Assessment: Students will be assessed via observation of how they work together during their research. Students' visual aids of their countries will be assessed at Cultural Day during their presentations.

Materials: chalk, chalkboard, chart paper, markers, computers with internet, poster board, construction paper, crayons, glue sticks, etc. (materials to use on visuals)

Culminating Activity: Cultural Celebration

As an ending to our unit on different cultures around the world, we will have a cultural celebration ("Celebration around the World"). During this day, the students will present their research and visuals on their countries to their classmates and parents/guardians that have joined us. Also during our celebration, students will taste the ethnic foods from around the world made by volunteers with the help of the students. Students will also be able to play games from around the world that they learned about during the unit. Students who found special games that people play in their country will be able to demonstrate the game to the class so we can all play.

Students may volunteer to read [Wibbly, Wobbly Tooth](#), [Mei Ling's Hiccups](#) and/or [Welcome to the World, Baby](#) to the guests.

Attached is a letter that should be sent home to the parents/guardians to let them know about the cultural celebration party we will be having in our class.

Language Lizard Unit: *Cultures and Customs*

Dear Parents/Guardians of Room _____,

Since our class has been studying various cultures and traditions of different countries, we decided to have a party to celebrate what we've learned. The students have named our party "Celebrations around the World" which will take place on _____ in our classroom, room ____ at _____ p.m. We want to have samples of specialty foods from around the world and also play games and participate in traditions from different countries.

Since there are so many unique countries to study, the students have selected countries in which their ancestors came from or ones that they were particularly interested in. At our Celebration, the students will present the research they found and the visuals they made on their country. You will be amazed at what the students have created!

In order for our "Celebrations around the World" to occur, we need your help. Since we want to taste the foods around the world, we need volunteers to make foods from various cultures. I have formulated simple recipes from our selected countries for volunteers to make, if you need any suggestions. Also, I personally need your help decorating our classroom for our special event. If you are willing to volunteer to make something, decorate, or help at the actual event, that would be greatly appreciated. I think this will be a great hands-on experience for the students to better understand some of the cultures of around the world. Plus, it will be so much fun!!

I would like to extend the invitation to all parents/guardians to join us in our celebration. You will enjoy listening to the students talk about the countries they research and the visuals they created. I'm sure they would love to have you there, as would I.

Sincerely,

Miss Alessandro

Please return this slip A.S.A.P. but no later than _____ if your child is participating in "Celebrations around the World."

Name of Child _____

Food Allergies (If Any) _____

Check whichever applies (if any):

I would like to volunteer at and/or with "Celebrations around the World". Here is what I am willing to do for the event: _____

I am not able to volunteer at "Celebrations around the World" but would like to donate what I can. (Miss Alessandro will let me know what is needed soon before the celebration.)

Signature / relationship to child

date

Comments: