

RESOURCE LIBRARY
ACTIVITY : 30 MINS

Cultural Diversity in the United States

Students learn about several different metaphors that have been used to describe cultural diversity in the United States. Then they choose a metaphor that represents today's diverse cultural landscape.

GRADES

6 - 8

SUBJECTS

Geography, Human Geography

OVERVIEW

Students learn about several different metaphors that have been used to describe cultural diversity in the United States. Then they choose a metaphor that represents today's diverse cultural landscape.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/cultural-diversity-united-states/>

DIRECTIONS

1. Build background about cultural diversity in the United States.

Tell students that Kenneth Prewitt, former director of the U.S. Census Bureau, has said of the United States that "we're on our way to becoming the first country in history that is literally made up of every part of the world." Ask: *What do you think he meant?* Prompt students to think about how many people they know that were born in the United States and how many were born elsewhere and came to the United States to live. Make sure they understand that Prewitt was referring to how many people have come from other countries to the United States to live.

2. Introduce common metaphors describing cultural diversity in the United States.

Remind students that a metaphor compares two things without using the words *like* or *as*. Introduce three metaphors that people commonly use to describe cultural diversity in the United States. As you discuss each one, say: *The United States is a ...*.

- melting pot: implies that immigrants change to fit the society of their new home
- salad bowl: implies that immigrants retain their cultural identity in their new home
- kaleidoscope: implies that both the immigrants and society adapt and change

Explain that all three metaphors highlight the important role immigration has played in U.S. identity and culture. Tell students that the metaphors change as cultural diversity in the United States changes. Ask: *Which metaphor do you think is most accurate right now?* Encourage students to share their opinions and the reasons for them.

3. Have students freewrite about cultural diversity.

Have students choose one of the metaphors and freewrite for 5 minutes about what the metaphor means to them.

4. Brainstorm a new metaphor that best describes cultural diversity in the United States today.

Have students brainstorm new ways to describe cultural diversity in the United States today. Encourage them to choose other nouns that they think are a better fit in our changing world. Discuss students' ideas.

TipEnglish Language Learners (ELL)

Similes, metaphors, and idioms are difficult for English language learners. Avoid them when possible. If they are an integral part of the content, provide additional time and support for these students as you move through the activity.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- Human Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- describe cultural diversity in the United States
- explain how that cultural diversity has changed or is changing

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Writing

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Remembering
- Geographic Skills
 - Asking Geographic Questions

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM STANDARDS

- Theme 1:

Culture

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

- Standard 10:

The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Human migration is the movement of people from one place in the world to another. Human patterns of movement reflect the conditions of a changing world and impact the cultural landscapes of both the places people leave and the places they settle.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- [Human Migration Then and Now](#)
- [Introduction to Human Migration](#)

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
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Term	Part of Speech	Definition
cultural diversity	<i>noun</i>	variety of different cultures in a specific area.
immigrant	<i>noun</i>	person who moves to a new country or region.
immigration	<i>noun</i>	process of moving to a new country or region with the intention of staying and living there.

For Further Exploration

Websites

- [UNESCO: Cultural Diversity](#)
- [National Geographic: The Genographic Project](#)

