

Acknowledgements

Teachers' Guide to Local Culture produced by

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Hmong at Heart exhibition

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About the Author

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Teaching with the Local Culture Field Pack

Please don't feel overwhelmed by the many materials we've provided for you in the Local Culture Field Pack. If you want to use the opportunity to deeply explore local culture, you'll find a lot of ideas, objects, and activities for extended inquiries. If you only want to teach a lesson or two, go to the Quick Start lessons (chapter two of this teacher's guide) that you can teach with only a few minutes' preparation.

In this Field Pack you'll find:

- 2 copies of this *Teachers' Guide to Local Culture*, which includes 8 different Quick Start lesson plans and accompanying objects and activities to support each lesson plan;
- 25 copies of the *Kids' Field Guide to Local Culture*, which includes chapters on seeing local culture, tools and skills for ethnographers, cultural elements, and presenting local culture;
- 1 pack of *Field Tools* to aid in students' study of local culture. The pack contains a tape recorder, a field journal, a camera, a tape measure, and a pair of binoculars;
- 1 video with 4 segments on *Family Rules, Clothing, Storytelling, and Foodways*.
- 6 bags or containers of objects that can be used to supplement the Quick Start lesson plans. Object bags or containers correspond to lesson plan titles and are labeled *Family Rules/Cultural Symbols/Storytelling, Foodways, Rites of Passage/Clothing, Home Remedies and Photo Albums*.

Before you begin, read further to reflect on why the study of local culture is important, check out ideas for using the accompanying kids' field guide, take into account the special values and challenges of teaching local culture to primary grade children, consider such practical matters as field trips and writing, and explore ways of building big projects.

This guide will help you prepare your students to attend the *“Hmong at Heart”* exhibit at your local children’s museum. If your students, even briefly, explore their own family or community culture, they will understand the exhibit more completely.

This guide focuses on cultural elements in the *“Hmong at Heart”* exhibit that students can find in their own families and communities. By exploring their own foodways, ceremonies, stories, music, health customs, or other practices, your students will be better prepared to find similarities and differences with Hmong cultural expressions.

If you are not able to take your students to the *“Hmong at Heart”* exhibit, you can still use this guide to explore local culture. If you want to make connections between your community and Hmong culture, take your students to a web site (csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour) created by a classroom of 4th and 5th graders in Madison, Wisconsin who spent a year studying Hmong communities—including a two-day trip to Milwaukee, Sheboygan, and Green Bay, and a three-day trip to Wausau, Eau Claire, and La Crosse.

To help your students connect to a multiethnic website created by the same classroom the previous year, go to csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour.



Teaching Local Culture



Chapter 1: Teaching Local Culture

Why Study Local Culture?

Culture is about people—including their languages, creations, behaviors, beliefs, institutions, and all their interactions with other people. Everyday life, for children and grownups, is mostly local. When studying local culture, students observe and reflect on their families, friends, neighbors, and nearby strangers.

Local culture is hands-on. Younger students learn more readily from immediate sensory encounters with people, places, objects, and events. In later grades, students will progressively rely on media (texts, photos, videos) to explore cultures distant in time and place.

Local culture is conceptually accessible. Students understand important themes and issues that are connected to their own knowledge and experiences. Nearby examples help students of all ages, but especially those in elementary grades, understand the content of all academic subjects.

Local culture prompts effective language use and the acquisition of language skills. Not only do children first learn to listen and speak at home, but thereafter oral language also always occurs in local settings. Indeed, what scholars refer to as “oral culture” is largely synonymous with local culture. Students learn to write most readily when they draw from local observations and local knowledge.

Local culture encourages integrative projects. Besides the social studies and language arts, the study of local culture can also incorporate the arts (aesthetics, appreciation, documentation), mathematics (collecting and presenting data), and science (environmental science and the confluence of ethnography and natural history). Many or all of the content areas can be connected to each other via local studies and projects.

Local culture is teacher friendly! A few basic tools make the local community accessible in any classroom. With these tools we can teach every standard in the social studies curriculum and connect existing texts and units to local cultural environments.



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The case for studying local culture is precisely stated in the National Council of Social Studies' (NCSS) position statement, "A Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in Social Studies: Building Social Understanding and Civic Efficacy," printed as a supplement in the landmark 1994 document, *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*: "Reflective teachers select and present content to students in ways that connect it with students' interests and with local history, cultures, and issues."

They envision "a systematic effort to increase awareness and validate the diversity found in the community by involving family members or local ethnic or cultural groups, encouraging students to share their cultural knowledge and experiences, and involving students in the community."

The NCSS calls for social studies that are meaningful, integrative, value-based, challenging, and active. Such qualities emerge most efficiently—especially in the primary and intermediate grades—when students develop knowledge, skills, and values in local inquiries. Excellent teachers, of course, prompt their students to acquire both local and global perspectives.

Local cultural knowledge and experience are critical in all ten strands of the NCSS standards. In their overview of how these strands can be taught at the different grade levels, they repeatedly emphasize how elementary school students learn culture through social interactions within families, friendships, classrooms, and local communities. Below we have marked these passages in bold face:

I. Culture

"During the early years of school, the exploration of the concepts of likenesses and differences in school subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, music, and art makes the study of culture appropriate. ***Socially, the young learner is beginning to interact with other students, some of whom are like the student and some different***; naturally, he or she wants to know more about others."

II. Time, Continuity, and Change

"Learners in early grades gain experience with sequencing to establish a sense of order and time. ***They enjoy hearing stories of the recent past as well as of long ago***. In addition, they begin to recognize that individuals may hold different views about the past and to understand the linkages between human decisions and consequences. Thus, the foundation is laid for the development of historical knowledge, skills, and values."



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III. People, Places, and Environment

"In the early grades, **young learners draw upon immediate personal experiences as a basis for exploring geographic concepts and skills.** They also express interest in things distant and unfamiliar and have concern for the use and abuse of the physical environment."

IV. Individual Development and Identity

"In the early grades, for example, observing brothers, sisters, and older adults, looking at family photo albums, remembering past achievements and projecting oneself into the future, and comparing the patterns of behavior evident in people of different age groups are appropriate activities because **young learners develop their personal identities in the context of families, peers, schools, and communities.** Central to this development are the exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals relate to others."

V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

"**Young children should be given opportunities to examine various institutions that affect their lives and influence their thinking.** They should be assisted in recognizing the tensions that occur when the goals, values, and principles of two or more institutions or groups conflict—for example, when the school board prohibits candy machines in schools vs. a class project to install a candy machine to help raise money for the local hospital. They should also have opportunities to explore ways in which institutions such as churches or health care networks are created to respond to changing individual and group needs."

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance

"**Learners in the early grades explore their natural and developing sense of fairness and order as they experience relationships with others.** They develop an increasingly comprehensive awareness of rights and responsibilities in specific contexts."

VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption

"Young learners begin by differentiating between wants and needs. **They explore economic decisions as they compare their own economic experiences with those of others** and consider the wider consequences of those decisions on groups, communities, the nation, and beyond."



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VIII. Science, Technology, and Society

“Young children can learn how technologies form systems and how their daily lives are intertwined with a host of technologies. They can study how basic technologies such as ships, automobiles, and airplanes have evolved and how we have employed technology such as air conditioning, dams, and irrigation to modify our physical environment. From history (their own and others’), they can construct examples of how technologies such as the wheel, the stirrup, and the transistor radio altered the course of history.”

IX. Global Connections

“Through exposure to various media and first-hand experiences, young learners become aware of and are affected by events on a global scale. Within this context, students in early grades examine and explore global connections and basic issues and concerns, suggesting and initiating responsive action plans.”

X. Civic Ideals and Practices

“In the early grades, students are introduced to civic ideals and practices through activities such as helping to set classroom expectations, examining experiences in relation to ideals, and determining how to balance the needs of individuals and the group. During these years, children also experience views of citizenship in other times and places through stories and drama.”

Teaching with the Kids’ Field Guide

Among the resources in the Local Culture Field Pack, the richest is the *Kids’ Field Guide to Local Culture*. You will find abundantly detailed ideas for studying local communities and helpful examples of how to look at cultural expressions.

Like a field guide to birds or flowers, the *Kids’ Field Guide* can be used by many ages, from younger children looking at pictures to adults who read the text. While average to advanced intermediate grade readers can unaided read straight through it, or browse through sections for an independent project, the *Kids’ Field Guide* is primarily intended as a tool for teachers to use with students in their classrooms.

Teachers will find ideas for understanding local culture, strategies for documenting local culture, and many ways of looking at specific cultural elements. The various components can be flexibly combined to fit individual classroom needs—for one lesson, or a unit that covers several months.



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A busy teacher, with little time for preparation, can pull out the class set of the *Kids' Field Guide* and use it to teach one of the Quick Start lessons found at the end of the *Teachers' Guide to Local Culture*. Suppose you want to teach the lesson about rites of passage—have your students open the *Kids' Field Guide* to this section and read about ceremonies such as weddings, graduations, and funerals. If your students are excellent readers, you may give them a few minutes to digest this section before you discuss it; with low readers, it will be more fruitful to go over the text as a whole class. The discussion prompted by this text may be your entire lesson, or preparation for homework and reports the following day. Most of the other Quick Start lessons also have one or more corresponding sections in the *Kids' Field Guide*.

On the other hand, you may want to tailor your own lessons. “Insider / Outsider,” “Different / Same,” and “Tradition / Change” in Chapter 1 (“Seeing Local Culture”) are excellent beginning points for discussing some of the dynamics of local culture.

If you want to teach a lesson on writing fieldnotes, choose any or all of the following sections in Chapter 2 (“Tools & Skills for Ethnographers”): “Fieldnotes,” “Observing Places and Objects,” “Observing People,” and “Observing Events.”

Any of the sections in “Cultural Elements” (Chapter 3) can be a springboard for discussions and written assignments. Suppose it’s near Thanksgiving and you’re looking to build a lesson that connects to students’ own holiday experiences. As you leaf through the *Kids' Field Guide*, you’ll find sections on “Seasons,” “Celebrations,” “Cooking,” “Mealtimes,” and “Visiting.”

As you get to know the sections of the *Kids' Field Guide*, and if you want to build longer units, you can pull together multiple related sections. For example, if you want to help your students collect local stories, you might begin by reading “History or Culture?” and “Stories” in Chapter 1; “Interview Questions,” “Performing Listening,” and “Audio and Video Recorders” in Chapter 2; “Storytelling” in Chapter 3; and finish by browsing through Chapter 4 for ideas on presenting the stories collected by your students. You can use these sections to build your own unit, or use them as background information for the Quick Start lesson plan on storytelling.

If you need to quickly cover the social studies standards based on sociology, economics, political science, and psychology, you can build a unit on local institutions, using some of the following: “Cultural Elements:,” “Groups & Identities,” “Relationships,” “Occupations,” “Economy,” “Exchange,” “Power,” “Transportation,” “Health,” “Communication & Media,” “Religion,” “Informal and Formal Learning,” and “Local Knowledge.”



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If you want to take your students on a field trip to a local cemetery, you might begin by reading “Patterns” in Chapter 1; “Observing Places and Objects” in Chapter 2; and “Cemeteries,” “Landscape,” “Rites of Passage & Ceremonies,” and “Aesthetics” in Chapter 3. You might revise the “Rites of Passage” lesson plan in Quick Starts to focus it on funeral ceremonies.

A final note on language level: because we have tried to pack the *Kids’ Field Guide* with lots of information, you can expect a reading level similar to *World Book Encyclopedia*. Most elementary grade students cannot understand everything they read in it, but many love to browse in it, and most intermediate grade students can use *World Book*, with teacher guidance, to complete library research. A small section of the *Kids’ Field Guide* can similarly go a long way in helping students do hands-on field research on local culture.

Local Culture for K-2 Children

Local culture is utilized continuously in the best primary classrooms. It is not a single lesson, nor a text, nor even a social studies unit. Math problems, science inquiries, conversations about reading, and student writings are typically local and connected to the cultures the students recognize in their everyday lives. Every lesson, every field trip, every worksheet resonates with students’ lives. Show & Tell, Student of the Week, and conversations during snack time are just a few of the rituals of primary—and some intermediate—classroom communities.

The multiple dimensions of a primary classroom (spaces, relationships, routines, expressions) are more similar to the neighborhoods children understand than the more stratified and abstract world (schedules, subjects, texts, tests) common in the upper grades. Outside of formal institutions, adults and children alike typically learn informally in small-group settings—by demonstration, hands-on practice, and stories.

Primary grade teachers intuitively understand the necessity of including local content in all areas of the curriculum. They regularly use local references to nearby places, people, and events, and encourage their students to talk and write about their families, friends, and neighbors. Indeed, the practice of primary grade teachers is a model for upper grade teachers to emulate.



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We assume—and hope—that most primary grade teachers will be able to quickly adapt our materials for their younger students. The Quick Start lesson on home remedies, for example, can be easily used with younger children, but the corresponding “Cultural Elements” section about “Health” will be beyond the reading level of all but a few students.

A few classrooms might use the *Kids’ Field Guide* to spark student curiosity—What is this? What does that mean? Most typically, though, it will be read only by teachers who are looking for materials they can modify for their students. A very creative use would be to loan copies of the *Kids’ Field Guide* to parents, and ask them for suggestions of people to invite to your class, and places and events your students can observe on fieldtrips.

One trap to be leery of is the tendency of some elementary school teachers to narrowly focus their cultural studies, local and global, on “food, festivals, and folktales.” Children of all ages enjoy wrestling with new concepts, information, and language. The idea of “Gathering Places” (see Chapter 3, “Cultural Elements,” in the *Kids’ Field Guide*) is within the grasp of kindergarten students; with persistent teaching, they will also grasp “Cultural Change and Tradition.”

A challenge for all teachers—from K-2 to university—is to make a long term concerted effort to understand the school community. Studying street maps, shopping locally, taking repeated walks and drives, and staying attuned to neighborhood news are several strategies. Even more essential is to use at least part of the time at parent conferences to hear the cultural details of students’ lives (play, friends, work, family members, family routines).

The mainstay of the Quick Start lessons is the fieldwork students do in their families and neighborhoods, and then report back to class. This is problematic for most K-2 students. In the “Generic Lesson Plan,” among other strategies, we suggest younger students who are unable to write fieldnotes may instead bring in objects, photos, and oral reports.

It’s not only K-2 students who enjoy fieldtrips, guest presenters, material objects, and other hands-on cultural learning. For younger students, however, concrete experience is essential.



Practical Matters

Some teachers doubt they are sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled to teach local culture. A few rules of thumb can get you through some of the first hurdles.

Trust your adult experience and curiosity. Like most elementary teachers, you are probably not a trained ethnographer. On the other hand, simply by being a functional adult you have far more skills in observing and understanding local culture than the children you teach. You can find your way in your community, literally and figuratively, even when you are lost. You know how to use the telephone yellow pages. You know how to ask for help. You know how to read a lot of non-verbal cues. You know how to be safe.

A teacher of local studies needs to model thinking like an ethnographer. You can do this by observing systematically, enjoying new experiences and perspectives, asking questions that go deeper than obvious explanations, by taking the risk of exploring things with your students you don't already totally understand. The key is to build on your existing interests, skills, contacts, and knowledge.

As a teacher, you know how to work with your students' curiosity; perhaps the challenge is to trust the great value of your own curiosity. From working with people for many years, you know how to ask thought-provoking questions, find people who can help answer your questions, and organize students to engage in inquiries.

In teaching local culture, you trust that you really do have more practical social skills and know more important things about society than your students. You trust you can teach everyday, nearby culture, not just the stuff in books about long-ago and far-away.

Read *The Dynamics of Folklore* by Barre Toelken. Instead of a bibliography with a lot of ideas of books to read, I suggest one book that can significantly alter your understanding of everyday life. Reading a section or two as you have time is a shortcut to thinking more profoundly as an ethnographer.

Help your students become fluent writers. Cameras and tape recorders are very handy tools for documenting local culture, but most classrooms will not be able to make them available for all students doing fieldwork in their families and neighborhoods. We have to rely, then, on writing and sketching as the primary ways students record what they observe.



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Many students, however, are not able to write for an extended period of time. They simply don't have enough practice to be fluent writers. Asked to take notes during an interview or demonstration, they feel overwhelmed. The difficulty of writing gets in their way. Unable to write fluently, many students are unable to pay attention over an extended period of time. A long fieldtrip with non-writing students can easily become chaotic.

The secret is to have the students do a lot of writing everyday in the classroom. It helps for students to distinguish fluency (recording thoughts and observations as quickly as possible) and publication (rewriting these notes with attention to writing conventions). At the beginning of the year, emphasize fluency; as students begin to create materials for others to read, move on to conventions.

Require your students to take a lot of notes—give them a minimum amount of writing for homework and on fieldtrips. I expect my fourth and fifth graders to write at least a page of fieldnotes for their 30-minute homework assignments; on average for all-day fieldtrips, they write more than ten pages of notes. They are proud of how much they can write, and eagerly volunteer to read passages to classmates and others we encounter during our projects.

Writing structures the way students think, and structures classroom inquiries. When students record many details, they see and hear much more. As they re-read their notes, and hear other students reading fieldnotes, they find patterns they otherwise would miss. And these extensive fieldnotes, of course, can form the basis for many media projects.

Go beyond obvious field trips to find ordinary, everyday life. Most classrooms take field trips to places that have prepared presentations such as exhibits or guided tours. While these are often excellent introductions to a field of study, they should not replace the excitement of encountering unrehearsed events. Don't limit your class to only talking to experts, official leaders, or well-known people. Look for people, places, and events as ordinary as your family, the places where you spend time, and the activities you do. See if you can observe typical events instead of something especially prepared for your class.

At the same time, you will want to find people your students will enjoy listening to, typically those who pepper their talk with a lot of anecdotes. Elementary students do especially well listening to people who work with their hands; that way they can watch tools and materials as well as listen to talking.



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An excellent field trip may be to the home of one of your students. While one parent takes a small group of students on a tour of their home, another family member may demonstrate a special skill, while the teacher and a third small group look at family photos. These groups can then rotate so that everyone participates in the same activities. Students enjoy helping make a meal or dessert, playing a traditional family game, or trying out a craft practiced in this home.

Ask the first questions during interviews in your classroom and on fieldtrips.

Interviews usually go much better when initially one person asks questions, ideally the teacher or other practiced interviewer. If students take turns asking questions, they typically bounce around many topics, making it much harder for someone to give a coherent explanation or tell a coherent story—meaning that it also becomes much harder for students to listen well. Furthermore, students may be more intent on asking their own questions than on listening to all the answers.

If the teacher or another adult begins the interviewing, while the students take notes, the interview will likely become more complex, yielding more information. Students can learn interviewing skills by observing your model, instead of learning bad habits from each other. After the interview has passed the halfway point is a good time for students to begin asking questions. In a small group setting you may have students ask questions from the beginning.

Among the many excellent approaches to take in an interview, consider asking how the person learned the cultural item (skill, story, information, etc.), the detailed components (materials, tools, rules, etc.), the steps of making or doing an activity, and the cultural value of the item (use, aesthetics, tradition, etc.).

Network with others—teachers, classrooms, professionals, and community scholars—engaged in the study of local culture.

Building Big Projects

The most important local culture project is the most ordinary—regularly including local references and content, however brief, in every aspect of the curriculum. Nonetheless, whenever we can find time for bigger projects, student interest sparkles and effort escalates.

Such projects typically are multidisciplinary, depend on collaboration with parents and other community partners, culminate in media presentations of the students'



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work, and both emerge out of and create a new awareness of community. A longer checklist of things to consider can be found at csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/howwedidit/Building_a_Local_Culture_Project.htm

Multidisciplinary undertakings sometimes allow us to make more room in our curriculum for things we want to teach but have little time for, by meeting multiple standards with the same project.

If district standards for the social studies, for example, require you to teach state or U.S. history, with little time to teach local culture, you may need to find that time within the requirements of your language arts curriculum. On the other hand, if your district language arts curriculum is very heavily weighted towards reading instruction—with less time for the listening, speaking, and writing that are especially used in documenting local culture—you may need to find time for developing these language skills within the requirements of your social studies curriculum.

If you're fortunate and have room for both local culture and the language arts needed for studying it, you suddenly have extra instructional time within your curriculum, time you can use to develop an extended project.

Collaboration with parents and other community members can help solve another critical time problem—the extra time it takes for the many tasks of a big project, time teachers often don't have available. For medium-sized projects, some of your parents may be able to accompany you on fieldtrips and help type student writings. For even bigger projects, with more complex tasks, it's wise to develop a planning and implementation team. Such a team can be especially helpful in finding resources: money if needed, expertise, and local people and events for your class to study.

Partners will participate more deeply in our classroom projects if their needs are met. For example, parents may sometimes feel their ideas for improving schools are not heard—they often will volunteer a lot of effort if they feel ownership in a project. Educational non-profits are often looking for teachers to collaborate with—museums, arts agencies, historical societies, university programs, and freelance folklorists may be able to bring many resources to your classroom if they can get the work products, and acknowledgement, to satisfy their funding sources. And local people—businesses, churches, social agencies, and folk artists—often quickly grasp the value of studying and celebrating local culture.



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Such volunteers can be pulled together via group email into planning meetings and shared responsibility for the various tasks of a project. The more teachers share the power of defining a common endeavor, the more people will want to collaborate with you.

Media presentations are usually both a key process and a key end product of a big community culture project. They can be as simple as a display of photos in the classroom or as complicated as an exhibit created with your local children's museum. Many of our ideas on this topic are included in Chapter 4, "Presenting Local Culture," in the *Kids' Guide to Local Culture*.

A crucial time-saving strategy is to let the skills and resources of your volunteer team determine the media. If a parent or community partner has interest and skills in developing a web site, your work as a teacher has been greatly reduced. If a neighborhood association organizes a festival, your class may take on the role of finding a few local presenters (crafts, food, music, storytelling) for this event.

Equally critical is to help your students experience ownership of the presentations. When your students help choose the media, and understand the audience they will be able to reach with it, the quality of their documentation will increase dramatically.

Community inspires, shapes, and emerges out of local culture projects. Curiosity about one's family, neighborhood, and community is the energy that maintains a classroom through many work assignments. Students working together on a common endeavor begin to feel more like a community than students who simply do assignments for a teacher. Their experience of community deepens as they work with community partners in a project that goes beyond school.

When local people see themselves reflected, valued, and adequately represented in your media presentations, they also develop an enlarged sense of community. Cultural documentation truly is a form of community service.



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All of the above ideas come from my knowledge of projects in other classrooms, but even more from experiences in directing projects in my own classroom. In the beginning, my students and I did little more than a few simple homework assignments. As I gained experience, and found more collaborators to work with, our ventures have become more complex. Over the years, my students have made video tapes, helped create museum exhibits, written articles for a student journal, created a book, and networked with global classrooms—all as part of our studies of local culture.

In the past three years, my multiage 4/5 classroom in Madison, Wisconsin has taken three year-long “cultural tours,” studying and touring our county, Hmong communities throughout Wisconsin, and most recently the main street in our school attendance area. For a sample of our work, go to csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour. The following paragraphs, from the front page of that web site, illustrate some of the riches and values of a big project:

“For four days in March 2002, fourth and fifth graders in Mark Wagler’s class at Randall School in Madison traveled 370 miles through farming communities, small towns, and suburbs in Dane County in south central Wisconsin. We visited a cheese factory, a Cambodian Buddhist temple, three farms, and local gathering places. We interviewed folk artists, musicians, and community historians. We played cards at a senior center, listened to gospel singers, and went sledding three times. We talked with a well-driller, an auctioneer, a quilting group, and a fiddle maker.

“This road trip was the climax of a year-long project. Students also documented Hmong culture in Madison, the Dane County Farmers’ Market, a nearby cemetery, and a local synagogue. A world-class jazz bassist, a yodeling cheesemaker, and a maple syrup maker visited our classroom. Equally important, students did fieldwork with their families and neighbors, documenting celebrations, storytelling, foodways, crafts, and family customs. . . .

“Everywhere we experienced remarkable kindness--churches opened their doors for overnight lodging; volunteer firefighters gave us rides on their truck; a butcher provided many kinds of meat for one of our dinners and we were served Norwegian pastries at least four times; a class of fourth graders learned to polka with us and joined us for an evening potluck; and everyone invited us in and patiently answered our questions.

“Our sense of home has expanded from a small community in the center of Madison to include many nearby places. Dane County is much bigger and more delightful than we ever thought.”



Quick Starts



Chapter 2: Quick Starts

Introduction

With twenty minutes' preparation, you can teach a lesson on local culture; any second lesson will only require ten minutes' preparation. First read the "Generic Lesson Plan" below to get an overview of our discussion-fieldwork-report strategy. Then choose from one of the following lessons:

- Photo Albums
- Clothing
- Home Remedies
- Family Rules
- Cultural Symbols
- Rites of Passage
- Storytelling
- Foodways

Please note you may need to adapt the plans to make them appropriate for younger students. Also check in the Local Culture Field Pack for enclosed support materials: media (video or CD) and material objects to introduce lessons, worksheets for students, and a class set of the *Kid's Field Guide to Local Culture*.



Generic Lesson Plan

This generic lesson plan includes general comments—for example, about discussions, homework, and reports—that will not be repeated in the individual lessons. Each lesson will be organized with some or all of the following categories.

Lesson Overview: What will be explored in the lesson.

Level: Unless otherwise stated, written for grades 3-5 with adaptations for K-2. See below for “Adaptations for Primary Grades.”

Objectives: During all lessons, students will:

- learn a variety of cultural expressions in their own families and neighborhoods;
- hear of cultural expressions from students in their classroom; and
- prepare for observing Hmong cultural expressions represented in the “Hmong at Heart” exhibit.

Additional objectives will be stated for individual cultural elements.

Materials: Look for any of the following in the Local Culture Field Pack:

- student worksheets/assignments, found at the back of this *Teachers’ Guide*, to be duplicated for each student;
- video tape and CD; and/or
- cultural objects.

Consider using, also, any objects or media you have on hand at home or in your classroom.

Kids’ Field Guide to Local Culture: Class sets of the *Field Guide* are included in the Local Culture Field Pack. Skim this field guide, and if possible read the first chapter, “Seeing Local Culture.” Words and concepts explained in the field guide will usually not be explained again in this teachers’ guide. Relevant sections in the field guide can be used either for teacher preparation or by students while working on the lesson. **Key sections will be in bold type.** The chapter number of each section is given in parenthesis.

“Hmong at Heart” Context: Connections between this local culture lesson and the “Hmong at Heart” museum exhibit.



Hmong Cultural Tour Website: Web pages about Hmong culture that connect to this lesson; the Hmong Cultural Tour, (including seven Wisconsin cities), was a year-long fieldwork project by a 4th and 5th grade classroom, co-sponsored by the Madison Children’s Museum.

Dane County Cultural Tour Website: Web pages about local culture that connect to this lesson; most of these pages are not about Hmong culture; another year-long fieldwork project by a 4th and 5th grade classroom.

Procedure: Most lessons include three parts: a class discussion (10+ minutes), a homework assignment (20+ minutes), and reports from homework and a second class discussion (20+ minutes) the following day. The homework assignments may sometimes be done in class instead of at home, or even omitted, so the entire lesson can be completed in one session.

Assignment / Discussion: Begin the first class discussion by presenting an example of the cultural element to be explored in this lesson. This may be a physical object (from the Local Culture Field Pack or one you bring from home), visual and aural images (photos, video, or CD from the Field Pack, or one of the Hmong or Dane County web pages), or an example (story, custom) that you tell orally. Explore with students multiple facets of this example. Depending on the kind of item, this may include:

- patterns,
- tools and materials used in making,
- skills and knowledge displayed,
- cultural group represented,
- function,
- occasions of use,
- aesthetics, meaning, and other values.

Prompt students to tell other examples from their families or neighborhoods. Briefly explore with students similarities and differences among student and teacher examples. Be prepared to illustrate with further items from your own experience. Continue only long enough to make sure students understand the idea, while they still want to give more examples. At the end of discussion, explain the homework assignment.

An alternate strategy for intermediate students is to begin by having students read (individually or as a class) one or more relevant sections of the *Field Guide*, then guide



discussions as above. Although the *Field Guide* is not intended for primary students, K-2 teachers can use it to get ideas for a lesson, give it to a high reader, and have students look at the drawings in the “Cultural Elements” chapter.

Homework: These lessons are designed to help students study culture in their home environment; among their families, friends, and neighbors. While students can share cultural expressions they already know without doing fieldwork, they will have much more to report if they do interviews and observations at home.

You might prefer to have your students write all their fieldwork notes in a spiral notebook: students will then be able to refer back to their notes, and you’ll save time by not copying forms. A related homework strategy—which promotes longer, more detailed, and more reflective writing—is to give students multiple prompts on a theme, and encourage them to explore one or more in depth, with no expectation of answering each (see assignment for Foodways lesson).

While some of the Quick Start lessons are built around written homework (doing interviews, observations, and self-inventories to document Home Remedies, Rites of Passage, Storytelling, and Foodways), others use surveys (Family Rules), drawing (Cultural Symbols), and bringing objects from home to school (Photo Albums and Clothing).

Some students will insist neither they nor anyone else at home knows anything about a particular cultural element. Require them in that case to either interview someone else (grandparent, family friend, neighbor), possibly over the phone, or write a fictional story about this cultural element, full of the same kinds of details that other students will be recording from their fieldwork. If you will be doing a number of interviews as part of an extended local culture project, you may want to have students and parents fill out a list of people to interview—family, neighbors, and friends that students may call anytime to complete a homework assignment.

If homework is not an option for a particular lesson, consider having students fill out the homework worksheet at school, based on their existing knowledge. If you need to adapt the worksheet to fit this context, you can find digital copies of assignments and forms at our website (csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/howwedidit/assignments.htm).

Reports / Discussion: The day after students have completed their homework assignment, they report on what they learned at home. (If the worksheet was completed in the classroom, the reports can be done immediately after the worksheet has been



filled out). If the homework was to bring objects from home, first set up the “classroom museum”—a temporary exhibit of student materials—and rotate students through the displays before sitting down together to discuss these cultural objects.

During the reports, draw out themes that will deepen student understanding. For example, help students look for similarities and differences among their families. Depending on responses, probe for patterns based on ethnicity, occupations, age, gender, region, religion, family size, etc. You might sometimes ask, “Who has a similar example?”

From time to time, make brief references to practices in your own family, especially when you are able to identify with a student who feels vulnerable after describing a cultural item that seems unusual to other students.

At the end of the discussion, remind students to look for this cultural element when you go to the “*Hmong at Heart*” exhibit; tell them you will discuss their observations after returning from your field trip to this exhibit.

Adaptations for Primary Grades: These adaptations will also be useful for some teachers of students in grades 3-5.

Obviously, the time spent for each lesson will usually be shorter for primary classrooms.

Primary teachers would do well to augment the physical objects found in the Local Culture Field Pack with other objects found at home or school. These objects do not need to be ethnic or otherwise unique—what is important is that they represent your family or other local cultural groups. For example, it takes only several minutes to grab objects suggesting foodways: kitchen tools, recipes, serving dishes, food items.

If you want your first or second graders to talk with parents about cultural elements, send a short letter home to parents, explaining the assignments. Students with a variety of writing skills will need a variety of options for reporting their fieldwork:

- students fill out at least part of a form,
- parents write out brief answers on the homework form,
- students use stick figure drawings,
- interview recorded on audio tape sent to school,
- physical objects (including photos) sent to school to be used in report, or
- students report orally.



Quick Starts

Another strategy is to skip the homework component and collapse the three-part, two-day lesson into a single discussion. You might also ask your students to draw representations of a cultural element, based on your classroom discussion, and make a quick bulletin board display of drawings of this cultural element.

Extensions:

- Classroom interview with a parent or other guest;
- Class field trip;
- Begin a chart where students list all expressions of the target cultural element discovered while reading (read aloud, independent reading, assigned texts);
- Students write poetry and fiction about a cultural element;
- Present student work: bulletin board, class newsletter, web site, video, or booklet.

Other curriculum extensions will be given for individual cultural elements.



Quick Starts

Photo Albums

Lesson Overview: Families remember and represent themselves with oral stories and physical objects including photos. In fact, a very common form of family storytelling happens while looking together at photo albums. This lesson can be extended to consider other family keepsakes, home videos, slide shows, local archives where photos and other artifacts are stored, and other media used to represent families and local communities.

(Please note that the web pages referred to in this lesson are not of photo albums, but describe archives, a home video, slide show, and a community cable TV station. Of course, the entire Hmong Cultural Tour and Dane County Cultural Tour websites show a new kind of “photo album.” Families, educational agencies, and businesses now create web photo galleries for distant family members, friends, students, and customers).

Level: Written for grades 3-5; easily adapted for K-2.

Additional Objective: Students will:

- learn how families use photo albums to remember and represent themselves.

Materials:

- Photo album, with laminated 8 by 10 enlargements of some of the photos;
- “Photo Albums” assignment/worksheet, found at the back of this *Teachers’ Guide*, designed to be duplicated for 3-5 students.

Kids’ Field Guide to Local Culture: Stories (1), Background Research (2), Relationships (3), Groups and Identities (3), Family (3), Memory (3), **Keepsakes and Heirlooms** (3), Communication Media (3), **Representations and Interpretations** (4)

“Hmong at Heart” Context: USA Home: Living Room: Photo Album and Family Entertainment Center.

Hmong Cultural Tour Website:

- Hmong Archive at Chippewa Valley Museum
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/EAUCLAIRE/museum.htm)
- Vaughn and Pang Yang Vang’s Trip to Thailand
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/GREENBAY/thaitrip.htm)
- Sue Bassett on Refugee Camps
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/MADISON/suebassett.htm)



Dane County Cultural Tour Website:

- Kids 4 TV (csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/sunprairie/Kids4/4kids.htm)

Assignment / Discussion: Begin by asking a few questions:

- How does your family remember people, places, and events?
- What objects in your house have stories connected to them?
- Does your family use photos to remember?
- What is the oldest photo your family has?

Now hold up the photo album from the trunk and quickly leaf through a few pages as you explore with students the purposes and uses of photo albums—to protect photos, to arrange photos so they tell a coherent story (albums about specific topics, such as weddings and trips), to store photos where they can be found and viewed easily, to show albums to family, friends, and other guests, etc. Use sensitive language so that students who have envelopes or boxes of photos feel included. Questions might include:

- Who takes pictures in your family?
- Who takes care of photos in your house?
- Where do you keep your photos?
- When does your family take photos out to look at them?
- How would your family feel if you lost all your photos?

Now either place the enclosed laminated 8 by 10 photos in the chalk tray as a way of showing all photos at once, or hold up single photos to explore.

- What stories do these photos tell?
- How do these photos represent this family?
- What photos would you select to represent your family?

Take the time to help students understand the term “represent” since it is the key to the homework assignment. Get your students excited about looking through many photos before selecting a few to bring in to class.

Homework: The enclosed worksheet succinctly describes the process for students. Remember to give each student enough 3 by 5 file cards to write captions for the photos. You may reduce the number of photos if you have insufficient display space (desk tops and table tops) in your classroom, or use your LMC to create your temporary photo gallery.



Quick Starts

If you teach in a community where some families have few photos, consider asking students to bring in only one photo (See “Adaptations for Primary Grades,”). A gentle way to help students with no photos is to offer that anyone can instead bring in an object that represents their family, which you will photograph. That way every student will feel equally included.

Reports / Discussion:

Find a way to arrange the photos and circulate your students so that everyone slowly and systematically looks at every photo and reads every caption. When your class is seated again, have them reflect on the photos and captions:

- What did you learn about your classmates’ families by looking at these photos?
Give one example.
- Did several students bring in similar photos? What patterns or themes did you notice?
- Which photo that you brought in best represents your family?
- What weren’t you able to tell about your family with the photos you brought in?
- What photo did you wish you had?

Adaptations for Primary Grades: Have each student bring in a single photo. Make photocopies of these photos and create a bulletin board display of family photos. As a class, help each student write a caption that identifies what is important about their photo.

Extensions:

- Discuss the use of home videos; perhaps have a few students bring in home videos for the class to view;
- Bring in other objects for display, to create either temporary one-day classroom exhibits, or a semi-permanent classroom museum;
- Find a family member, or someone else in your community, who has a slide show to present to your class;
- Take a field trip to a local archive (museum, library, newspaper) to view photos that represent your community;
- Begin a photography project to document local families and neighborhoods.



Clothing

Lesson Overview: Clothes are at once practical and symbolic. This lesson introduces the variety of clothing used by different groups and for different occasions.

Level: Written for grades 3-5; easily adapted for grades K-2.

Additional Objective: Students will:

- explore how clothing (and adornment) is used to identify with groups;
- learn the variety of clothes worn by classmates for different occasions.

Materials:

- Tennis shoes;
- 3 minute video, "Clothes Encounters of the Room 202 Kind;"
- "Clothing" assignment/worksheet, found at the back of this Teachers' Guide, designed to be duplicated for 3-5 students.

Kids' Field Guide to Local Culture: Enjoying Variety (1), Different / Same (1), **Clothing** (3), **Adornment** (3), Groups and Identities (3)

"Hmong at Heart" Context: Laos: Clothing/Costumes; Thailand: Clothing; USA: Hmong New Year.

Hmong Cultural Tour Website:

- Hmong Fashion Show
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/greenbay/fashion.htm)
- Sewing and Basket Making
(<http://csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/lacrosse/sewbasket.htm>)
- Needlework and Clothing at Hmong/American Friendship
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/milwaukee/needlework.htm)

Dane County Cultural Tour Website:

- No web pages entirely focused on clothing, but a large variety of ethnic and occupational clothing is shown in hundreds of photos.



Assignment / Discussion: Hold up the pair of tennis shoes from the Local Culture Field Pack and begin to “unpack” the cultural meanings associated with them:

- What are these? What are they used for?
- What do these shoes tell us about the person wearing them?
- Who might wear them? Who wouldn't wear them?
- When and where would these shoes be worn?
- Who made these shoes?
- How many of you sometimes wear tennis shoes?
- What other shoes do you currently have?
- What other shoes do other family members wear?
- What shoes did your ancestors wear?

Next create a list of the different kinds of clothing found in the homes of your students. Accept their categories, but also prompt them with questions to find categories they may not have thought of:

- Who sometimes changes clothes after school—or has work clothes for doing housework or yardwork?
- Do you have any fancy clothes? When and where do you wear them?
- What is something you wear that you think almost nobody else in our class wears?
- What groups—occupational, recreational, ethnic, religious—do you or other members of your family belong to that involve special clothes?

Now watch the enclosed 3-minute video, “Clothes Encounters of the Room 202 Kind.” Ask questions such as:

- What clothes do students in this class wear that you also wear?
- What do you know about these students, just from looking at their clothes?
- If we made a video about our classroom, “Clothes Encounters of the Room ___ Kind,” what would we include that they didn't include?

If possible, watch the video again, asking your students to try to figure out what homework students in Room 202 must have done in order to prepare for making their video.

Homework: The worksheet follows directly from and uses most of the same categories as the video. You may also skip this worksheet and ask students to bring in objects of



Quick Starts

clothing from as many different categories as possible. Or, combine these ideas into two evenings of homework—the first to take an inventory of clothing at home, and the second to select items to bring in to the classroom.

Reports / Discussion: Whether students return with worksheets or with objects of clothing, the key to this follow-up discussion is to help students see how items of clothing are used for diverse practical needs, and as symbols of cultural identity.

If students bring in objects of clothing, decide how you want to exhibit them: table tops with cards or oral descriptions while students are wearing or holding the objects. If students report orally from their worksheets, it will be fruitful to have students tell what they found in several, but not all of the categories. Best would be to explore several aspects in depth.

You might guide their inquiry, for example, into the functions of uniforms—durability, cost, ease of identification, team identity, etc. Ask questions such as:

- Why do traffic officers wear uniforms and police detectives don't?
- Is a suit and tie a uniform?
- Are tennis shoes, shorts, and T-shirt a uniform?

Even more powerful would be to examine ethnic, regional, and religious traditions:

- What clothes do you wear that are most similar to the clothes worn by your ancestors?
- What clothes do you wear that are most unique—that people of other backgrounds probably don't wear?
- What clothes do you wear that make you feel very special?

If you will not be teaching the lesson on “Rites of Passage,” this could be a good time to pull out the headgear for ceremonial events found in the “Rites of Passage” object bag in the Local Culture Field Pack (a wedding veil and a graduation mortarboard). These items are worn only once or several times in a lifetime, and therefore are far more symbolic than practical.

Adaptations for Primary Grades: The questions in the above sections are far too complex to be covered in a short time with primary students. Hands-on experiences are the key, with only a few questions during shorter discussions. There are many ways to introduce such experiences: students bring in clothes, students bring in photos of clothes, parents model clothes, other classroom visitors bring in clothes, a family potluck at which every one wears their most unique clothes, or fieldtrips to specialty stores that sell uniforms or ethnic clothing.



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Consider organizing a dress up party. Ask parents to send in older clothing that your students may try on, slightly larger clothes that can be worn over their school clothes, preferably items that reflect a variety of groups and occasions. But even simpler ideas can also be effective. Come to school one day in your own unique clothing, and a second day wear a second distinctive “outfit.” The value of these experiences will only surface clearly, however, with discussions that help even younger students discover deeper meaning in ordinary phenomena. So adapt some of the above questions to the level of your students.

Extensions:

- Create a parallel series of lessons to explore hair, jewelry, and other adornment;
- Investigate the aesthetic and financial choices exercised in buying clothes;
- Look at the tools, skills, materials, and designs used in making clothes;
- Enumerate, in great detail, the processes of doing laundry.



Quick Starts

Home Remedies

Lesson Overview: Everybody has home remedies, the health strategies we use before or instead of going to health practitioners. These remedies are typically learned informally, but may also be learned from physicians and medical texts. While some students will know remedies they don't believe in, the purpose of this lesson is to explore current health practices among classroom families.

Additional Objective: Students will:

- learn that families use informally learned remedies as well as remedies that come from medical practitioners.

Materials:

- Hiccup kit;
- "Home Remedies" assignment/worksheet, found at the back of this *Teachers' Guide*, designed to be duplicated for 3-5 students.

Kids' Field Guide to Local Culture: Enjoying Variety (1), Different / Same (1), Local Knowledge (3), and **Health** (3).

"Hmong at Heart" Context: Laos: Shaman's altar; USA: Planning the family garden; Personal Account Station 2.1: The Shaman.

Hmong Cultural Tour Website:

- Visiting Homes at Bayview
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/madison/visitinghomes.htm)
- Thai Vang: Shamanism
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/madison/thaivangsh.htm)
- Dr. Bee Lo, Naturopathic Medicine
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/lacrosse/beelo.htm)

Dane County Cultural Tour Website:

- Bayview Shaman
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/madison/bayview/bayviewshaman.htm)

Discussion / Assignment: Begin the first class discussion by telling students how your family responds to a specific symptom. Choose one of the items in the "Home



Quick Starts

Remedies” worksheet found at the back of this *Teachers’ Guide*. For example, I introduce this lesson by telling a story about gargling with salt water for a sore throat. After students tell remedies their families use to cure a sore throat, I move on to other ailments.

Homework: Students complete form on “Home Remedies.” Probably will take at least 30 minutes if students get input from parents or older siblings. Not necessary to complete all items: families may not have a home remedy for every symptom, or may have discussed other symptoms in great detail and were not able to discuss this remedy in allotted time frame.

Reports / Discussion: If the worksheet was completed in the classroom, the reports can be done immediately after the worksheet has been filled out. Only discuss one ailment at a time, so that students can compare the variety of remedies among their families. For example, make sure you are finished with remedies for headaches before moving on to hiccups.

Sometimes ask, “Who has a similar remedy at home.” Because repeating identical remedies becomes boring, you might ask, “Who has a different remedy for this?” If the discussion lags you might ask, “Who has a remedy that you think no one else uses?”

Adaptation for Primary Graders: Bring from home kitchen items such as salt and baking soda, common herbs such as garlic, and a few vitamins. Ask students, “For what health problems does your family use this?”

While doing the worksheet as homework adds depth for older students, simply exploring the categories on the worksheet is totally adequate for K-2 students.

Extensions:

- Explore with students the variety of professionals their families go to with health concerns (doctors, nurses, dentists, chiropractors, mental health therapists, acupuncturists, herbalists, faith healers, etc.);
- Help students comprehend the great variety of health beliefs and practices in our country;
- Create a homework assignment to explore strategies for staying healthy (diet, exercise, sleep).



Family Rules

Lesson Overview: Students enjoy hearing family rules from households of other students, making this an easy lesson to teach. This lesson is designed to explore basic political science (power, decision making), family dynamics, and diversity.

Additional Objective: Students will:

- learn rules used in classroom families, and the consequences for breaking the rules.

Materials:

- “You’re Grounded!” video;
- Refrigerator list of family rules;
- “Family Rules” assignment/worksheet, found at the back of this *Teachers’ Guide*, designed to be duplicated for 3-5 students.

Kids’ Field Guide to Local Culture: Self Inventories (2), Surveys (2), **Power** (3), and Family (3).

“Hmong at Heart” Context: Laos: Hmong names and clan structure.

Hmong Cultural Tour Website:

- Conflict Resolution
(<http://csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/greenbay/presentations.htm>)

Discussion / Assignment: Begin by holding up a sample “refrigerator list” of family rules.

- What is this?
- Are family rules ever written down in your family?
- How do you know something is a rule if it isn’t written down?

Next show “You’re Grounded!”, a one-minute video created by fourth and fifth grade students. Help students verbalize the family rule explored in the video (“You must be home on time unless you have called and gotten permission to stay longer”). Ask questions such as the following:

- What consequences would you get if you break this rule?
- What is the purpose of this rule?
- Will you have this rule for your kids when you are a parent?



Move on to other rules and other ways of looking at rules, preparing students for completing a homework assignment on family rules. In this preliminary discussion, keep the talk lively by only calling on two to four students before moving on to another rule or theme.

Enlarge the scope of the conversation by asking questions that arise from the discussion and move it to new dimensions.

- Do you help make any of your family's rules?
- What rules do your parents follow?
- What rules do you break without getting consequences?
- Are those really rules if there are no consequences?
- What rules did you have when you were younger that you no longer have to follow?
- What new rules will you have when you become a teenager?
- Do rules change for reasons other than growing older?
- What rule do you especially like?

Homework: Exploring family rules as a homework assignment deepens the content of this lesson. Students will be able to hear the perspectives of parents and siblings, learn which rules their parents had in their childhood, and recall rules they have forgotten.

On the other hand, students already know many rules, and will be able to complete this worksheet without assistance. One way to help them recall is to prompt them to scan their memories for rules they have for different times of the day and for specific events:

- getting ready for school,
- riding in a car,
- visiting relatives,
- playing with friends,
- watching TV.

Equally fruitful is to have them think of rules for different places:

- living room, bed room, kitchen,
- neighborhood, friend's home, place of worship



Quick Starts

Reports / Discussion: Many kids think their parents are stricter (or more lenient) than other parents. Listening to rules reported by other students helps them develop a more accurate image of local parenting. A bit of humor is crucial for this discussion. The teacher’s role is to prod student awareness, not to pass judgment on rules and other forms of family culture.

Teacher questions guide students to deeper understanding. Ask them why a rule in their family is different from rules in other families (ethnicity, religion, personality, tradition, etc.) and affirm the value of differences.

Depending on the information students already have, help them wonder about Hmong family rules. What rules do they think are the same as in their family, which might be different? What historical and social circumstances could lead to different rules—cultural origins? experiences in refugee camps? the strangeness of a new culture? large families? clans?

Adaptation for Primary Graders: Better to probe a few rules, a few themes, than to exhaust younger students with long discussions. Have several brief conversations instead of one long one. Role playing and drawing are useful, as with other cultural elements.

Extensions:

- Explore classroom rules, team rules, church rules, traffic laws, language rules, game rules, etc;
- Role play rules, using the model of the “You’re Grounded!” video;
- Explore housework, also enforced by parents (see “Housework” worksheet found at the back of this Teachers’ Guide).



Cultural Symbols

Lesson Overview: What symbols would your students use to represent their family's culture? This lesson guides students in portraying their families through visual images. These images give students a first impression of other families.

Level: This visual lesson works well with both primary and intermediate students.

Additional Objective: Students will:

- represent their families with visual images.

Materials:

- Photos and captions of potholders;
- "Cultural Symbols" assignment/worksheets (2 pages, front and back sides), found at the back of this *Teachers' Guide*, designed to be duplicated for 3-5 students, but with additional explanations can be used by K-2 students.

Kids' Field Guide to Local Culture: Observing Places and Objects (2), Groups and Identities (3), **Aesthetics** (3), **Home Interiors** (3), Crafts (3), and **Representations and Interpretations** (4).

"Hmong at Heart" Context: Paj ntaub maps of spaces; Laos: Paj ntaub.

Hmong Cultural Tour Website:

- Needlework and Clothing at Hmong/American Friendship
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/milwaukee/needlework.htm)
- Hmong Fashion Show
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/greenbay/fashion.htm)
- Sewing and Basket Making
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/lacrosse/sewbasket.htm).

Dane County Cultural Tour Website:

- Potholder Project—47 potholders made by 4th and 5th graders to represent their families (csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/madison/potholder/potholder.htm); the project is briefly described in a memo to parents (csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/howwedidit/Potholders_Description.htm).



Discussion / Assignment: If your students have access to the Internet, begin by having them view cultural symbols made by other students (csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/madison/potholder/potholder.htm). Alternately, create a visual display of the “Potholder” photos included in the Local Culture Field Pack.

Ask students to give impressions of the families represented in these images, not only the obvious objects and activities displayed, but also the underlying values, cultural groups, relationships, etc. Explain the word “represent.” Help students understand that one image cannot tell us everything about a person or group.

Ask them what images they would use to represent their family—and to tell, in detail if possible, what that image would tell others about their family. Encourage them to begin a mental list of possible symbols.

Homework: Complete only first side of worksheet—sketching six images in the six boxes—before second discussion. The longer students take to consider options, the deeper their representations will be. Ideally they will physically walk through their home, a hands-on experience of the many items they could sketch.

If a homework assignment is not practical, lead them in a guided imagery—while their eyes are closed, ask them to take a mental walk of their home. At each stage, prompt them to notice items they may have missed. “What do you see outside your front door?” “When you open the front door, what do you notice first?” Encourage them to look at items displayed on the walls, focus on older objects, and notice what people are doing.

Reports / Discussion: In small groups, have students view each other’s worksheets. Next tell students to be prepared to tell the whole class about just one of their drawings. Tell students the purpose of this discussion is to prepare them for making a final drawing—so that they expect to make some revisions in their selected image. Write the following criteria on the blackboard:

- represents family culture,
- recognizable image,
- simple/bold design,
- fills most of the space.



Beginning with the first volunteer, examine their selected image, exploring with this student ways of improving the image. It is not necessary to spend a long time with each student nor necessary to review every student's selection.

The final drawing can be made in the classroom, ideally on square paper. Ask students to write a one or two-sentence caption for their image. In a review of the finished products, ask students what they have learned about each other. Help them, also, to see the limits of drawing too many conclusions from a single representation. "What else do we need to know about her/him that is not included in this drawing?"

Extensions:

- Make a second final drawing, enlarging the classroom display;
- Repeat the assignment, this time looking for images that represent the local community;
- Use other forms of expression (poetry, physical objects, photographs) to represent local culture;
- Definitely display student work! If work is excellent, consider presenting it to a larger audience--display in school LMC, local library or business, web site, or CD;
- Make potholders or a quilt based on the student drawings.



Rites of Passage

Lesson Overview: Weddings, funerals, and similar events bring together many cultural elements—such as food, clothing, music, crafts, stories, extended families, religion. This is an excellent lesson to prepare for the “*Hmong at Heart*” exhibit.

Additional Objective: Students will:

- explore the forms and functions of rites of passage ceremonies.

Materials:

- Wedding veil, graduation mortarboard, and other ceremonial objects;
- “Rites of Passage” assignment/worksheets, found at the back of this *Teachers’ Guide*, designed to be duplicated for 3-5 students.

Kids’ Field Guide to Local Culture: Rites of Passage & Ceremonies (3), ***Celebrations*** (3), ***Time*** (3), ***Cemeteries*** (3), ***Religion*** (3), ***Exchange*** (3).

“Hmong at Heart” Context: Laos: Wedding preparations; Thailand: Funeral; Personal Account Station 1.2: Love and Music.

Hmong Cultural Tour Website:

- Fuechou Thao on Hmong Funerals
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/madison/fuechouthao.htm)
- Attending Dhia Thao’s Funeral
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/madison/funeral.htm)
- Presentations at United Hmong Community Center: Marriage
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/greenbay/presentations.htm)

Dane County Cultural Tour Website:

- Madison Forest Hill Cemetery
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/madison/MadisonCemetery/foresthill)
- Hmong Ceremony and Society
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/madison/bayview/bayview)

Assignment / Discussion: Begin a discussion about either weddings or funerals. Ask students what is included in this event, and record their responses on the blackboard under three lists: All or Most of Us, Some of Us, A Few or One of Us. While the kinds of music (e.g. a polka dance) may be listed under “A Few or One of Us,” the use of music



in weddings would be listed under “All or Most of Us.” Especially explore ceremonial language (e.g. wedding vows) and gestures (e.g. exchange of rings).

If your students have access to the Internet, very vivid accounts of a Hmong funeral can be found at csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/madison/funeral.htm. This web site can spark a similar discussion of varieties of funeral practices.

Expand the discussion by asking, “Are there other ceremonies that celebrate stages in our lives?” Explain the term “rites of passage” to intermediate grade students. List such responses as baptisms, confirmations, bar and bhat mitzvahs, graduations, and open houses. It might be useful, in some classrooms, to distinguish celebrating a birth (a once only ceremony, such as baptism) and celebrating birthdays (annual parties).

Create another list of features to look for in any rite of passage: special times, places, decorations, clothing, words, gestures, music (and dances), foods, beliefs, and gifts.

Homework: Encourage students to focus on weddings and funerals for their homework, since these are the ceremonies highlighted in the “*Hmong at Heart*” exhibit. Since some students have never been to a funeral or a wedding, they will need to interview parents or other family members, write about other rites of passage, or do a report based on a book or web site (such as the sites listed above).

Reports / Discussion: As students report, one ceremony at a time, tease out deeper layers of cultural understanding. Look especially for repeated patterns, aesthetics, beliefs, values, changing traditions, and attending rite of passage ceremonies where one feels like a stranger.

Adaptation for Primary Graders: Rites of passage are complex events, best understood by primary students by focusing on a smaller hands-on component. A field trip to a cemetery or bridal shop is ideal. Another idea is to write to parents, asking if they could send in wedding albums or photos.

Extensions:

- Field trips to a wedding, funeral, or other rite of passage, while difficult to arrange, would be extremely educational for a lucky classroom;
- A survey of wedding ceremonies in various religious and secular traditions;
- Book and web site inquiries into rites of passage in distant times (history) and places (geography).



Storytelling

Lesson Overview: This lesson explores oral storytelling as an art form. Students live in a world of stories, hearing many stories every day, but usually are not aware of the deeper patterns and cultural functions of storytelling. This is an excellent introductory lesson for students engaged in documenting local culture, since the stories they will hear from family members and neighbors reveal and explain other cultural elements. Because of the wealth of the enclosed materials, consider spending more than two days on this lesson.

Additional Objectives: Students will:

- explore the dynamics of oral storytelling;
- discover cultural elements revealed in oral stories.

Materials:

- CD of stories by Dale Muller, Halsey Rinehart, and Ray Schlump;
- “Ouch! Family Stories About Accidents;”
- “Storytelling” assignment/worksheet, found at the back of this *Teachers’ Guide*, designed to be duplicated for 3-5 students.

Kid’s Field Guide to Local Culture: History or Culture? (1), **Stories** (1), Interview Questions (2), Performing Listening (2), Audio and Video Recorders (2), Memory (3), and **Storytelling** (3).

“Hmong at Heart” Context: Personal Account Stations.

Hmong Cultural Tour Website:

- Tou Ger Xiong, Hmong Comedian
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/madison/tougerxiong.htm)
- Chong Pao Xiong, Storyteller
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/locations/greenbay/storyteller.htm)
- Stories are found on many other endpages.

Dane County Cultural Tour Website:

- Black Earth Fire Department - Fireman Stories
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/blackearth/FireDepartment/firemanstories1.htm)
- Stoughton Opera House with Storyteller Doug Pfundheller
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/stoughton/OperaHouse-Doug/dougphundheller)
- Storyteller Lenny Anderson
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/deerfield/LennyAnderson/lennyanderson)
- Stories are found on many other endpages.



Assignment / Discussion: As with other cultural elements, there are multiple ways of introducing storytelling. Here are details for two of them.

1. Tell your class a story that is often told in your family. Explain why this story is often told, who typically tells it, and some of the occasions when it is told. Now lead them in a series of inquiries about storytelling in their families:

- Who tells the best stories in your family?
- What makes these excellent stories?
- What kind of stories does he or she tell?
- Who makes ordinary events seem funny?
- Who knows your family's history?
- Who makes up the best bedtime stories?
- What story is most often told about you?
- When and where do you tell stories in your family?

In order to have more students engaged in the conversation, and to introduce more aspects of storytelling, ask students to not tell entire stories in this beginning discussion, only a sentence or two of summary. Tell them that during the next lesson they will be able to tell, read, or play tapes of entire stories. Holding them back from telling complete stories during this session will allow your class not only to hear more voices, but also to see images from more families.

2. Play one or more stories told by Dale Muller, Ray Schlump, and Halsey Rinehart (on CD in the Local Culture Field Pack), three traditional good talkers who lived most of the 20th century in rural southwest Wisconsin. After each story, ask questions to prompt discussion of both the form and content. Sometimes it's a good idea to play the story again after your discussion.

- **Halsey Rinehart, "Working on Sunday:"** Explore the people, places, problems, and sayings that structure this story.
- **Halsey Rinehart, "Walnut Shells, Black Powder Shells:"** What does this story tell us about World War I? How does the storyteller use images, voice, and repetition to express emotion?
- **Dale Muller, "Mule Team Tries to Run:"** What problems does Dale encounter—and how do these problems shape this story? What unusual expressions give flavor to this story? What do you learn about farming a generation or two ago?
- **Dale Muller, "Center of the Universe:"** How does repetition shape this story about Dale's granddad? What makes Bear Creek the center of the universe?
- **Ray Schlump, "Help Me Let Go:"** These two stories were told five years apart by the same storyteller. Are they the same story? Is either story true? What makes the stories funny?
- **Ray Schlump, "Hank the Grouse:"** What details help you to see Ray's community? Who is more important, the grouse or the neighbors? Did Ray and the grouse understand each other?



Quick Starts

One challenge for students will be to make sense of references to different cultural environments. But it's precisely that challenge which makes these stories such powerful learning tools—the stories reveal many cultural elements. It may be fruitful to ask,

- What don't you understand when your grandparents or older neighbors tell you stories?
- How do their stories help you to understand them better?
- Are older people often better storytellers? Why or why not?

See also "Adaptations for Primary Grades"—the video described in this section is usable for all elementary grade levels.

Homework: Explain the "Storytelling" worksheet found at the back of this *Teachers' Guide*. The purpose of this assignment is to help students not only hear and tell stories, but also to think about storytellers and storytelling events. The secret is to have students think in advance about their favorite stories. That way it will be much easier to go home and ask a parent, "Tell me the story about. . ." It may well take at least two days of homework if you want your students to listen to stories told by parents or grandparents, and especially if you want them to write out one or more of these stories.

Reports / Discussion: Have students play tapes, read stories they have written down, or tell stories from memory. After each story, ask one or more questions that prompt deeper understanding. Trust yourself to respond intuitively with appropriate questions. For one story, you might focus on voice, dialogue, inflections, and sound effects. After another story you might ask,

- What pictures did you have in your mind as you listened to this story?

A story told from memory might be perfect for this prompt:

- What facial expressions and gestures did she use?

Still other stories are ideal for questions about cultural elements:

- How does his family celebrate marriage?
- What beliefs about health did you hear in her story?

Each question you ask helps the teller feel honored, and helps the listeners realize there's more to storytelling than first meets the ear.



Quick Starts

Adaptations for Primary Grades: The short stories in the enclosed video, “Ouch! Family Stories About Accidents,” are an excellent story starter for younger students. You will find your students begging to tell their own experiences as soon as you turn off the video. Preview this video to make sure these stories are appropriate for your class.

You can similarly begin classroom storytelling sessions about other topics—e.g. embarrassing moments, getting lost, encounters with wild animals, pranks, dreams, getting in trouble, scary events—by telling one or two personal stories.

Use some of the ideas described above to help you draw out student understanding of these stories and the occasions and skills for telling them.

Extensions:

- Students collect family and neighborhood stories about specific cultural elements or other topics that connect to ongoing units, projects, or classroom conversations— choose from hundreds of possible ideas, such as stories about local history, unusual guests or hosts, learning how to read, trips, accidents, or embarrassing moments.
- Each student transcribes one or more stories. These stories are then published in a classroom booklet, video, or web site.
- Each students prepares to orally perform a story they have collect. After initial performances in class, find an audience for another round of performances (such as a nearby senior center, library, or classroom, or at a family potluck).



Foodways

Lesson Overview: Foodways are basic to a culture, overlapping with many other elements. A single aspect, say a recipe, can easily be grasped by students. Combine the components—raising, preserving, shopping for, preparing, serving, eating, celebrating and decorating with, and giving food—and you have a complex system of tools, materials, skills, processes, economics, recreation, events, stories, aesthetics, beliefs, and traditions. This lesson can be taught in a day, or extended for many weeks!

Level: Written for grades 3-5; easily adapted for grades K-2.

Additional Objective: Students will:

- learn one foodway component in depth, or discover how many components combine into a thick cultural web.

Materials:

- Foodways objects;
- “What’s Cooking? Family Food Traditions,” video of foodways presentations by 4/5 graders;
- “Foodways” assignment/worksheet, found at the back of this *Teachers’ Guide*, designed to be duplicated for 3-5 students.

Kids’ Field Guide to Local Culture: Farming (3), ***Gardening*** (3), ***Cooking*** (3), ***Mealtimes*** (3)

“Hmong at Heart” Context: Laos: Hearth, Gardening/Farming, Rice Pounder, Grain Storage, Feeding/tending livestock; Thailand: Rice House, Daily rations; USA: Planning the family garden, Chest freezer, Hmong garden.

Hmong Cultural Tour Website:

- Theme: Foodways, 8 different web pages
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/themes/keeptraditions.htm)

Dane County Cultural Tour Website:

- Theme: Foodways: 14 different web pages
(csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/DaneCountyTour/themes/themes2.htm)



Quick Starts

Assignment / Discussion: Before deciding how you want to teach this lesson, read the 16 prompts in the enclosed Foodways worksheet. Each of these has been used as the assignment for one evening’s homework. If you choose to create such a longer unit, you will need to expand the following notes into a more in-depth exploration of each prompt. The following notes assume you will introduce all of these themes in a two-day lesson.

As you “unpack” the enclosed physical objects, explore the themes listed in the Generic Lesson Plan:

- patterns,
- tools and materials,
- skills and knowledge,
- cultural group represented,
- function,
- occasions of use,
- aesthetics, meaning, and other values.

Look for the same themes as you view all or part of the enclosed video, “What’s Cooking? Family Food Traditions.”

Have different students read aloud each prompt in the enclosed homework assignment sheet. If you were asking students to write about each prompt, you would need to delve into each, explaining in depth with rich examples. A much briefer explanation is sufficient if you give students a choice of writing about one or more of the topics—it’s all right if not every student understands how to respond to each prompt.

Homework: Different prompts require different fieldwork techniques: self-inventory, observation, interviewing, drawing, and studying material objects. Tell students they won’t be able to write about each topic in the time allotted for their homework. Tell them it will be easier, and more valuable for others, if they explore just several prompts in depth instead of trying to write a sentence or two about each.

Reports / Discussion: The key to this lesson is understanding the interrelating aspects of foodways. One strategy is to have volunteers read their entire homework report, with discussions following each report that focus on understanding a large range of family traditions. Or, have multiple students briefly report on one prompt, interspersed with discussion, before moving on to another prompt.



Adaptations for Primary Grades: Segments of the “What’s Cooking?” video will work well for younger students. If you decide to assign homework, give them only one prompt. Probably the easiest would be to bring in foodways objects.

Cook with your students!

Extensions:

- Students try to find how many of the cultural elements in the Kids’ Guide have at least some connection to foodways;
- Take a field trip to a farm, community garden, or ethnic restaurant;
- Students bring in recipes—create a math lesson on reducing or increasing the amount of each ingredient;
- Scan your newspaper for a number of days to find local news or features about foodways;
- Have a family potluck!



Photo Albums

- Look at as many **family** photos as possible.
- Select 10 to bring to school that **represent** a **variety** of cultural elements. Make sure a parent gives **permission** to show these photos in our classroom.
- If you *can't* find enough photos, make some drawings that show your family in the past and present, for a total of 10 photos and drawings.
- For each photo (or drawing), write a very brief description that identifies the time, place, people, and activity—and tells how this photo **represents** your family's culture.
- Then, *using your very best handwriting*, copy this information on 3" by 5" file cards.
- Bring photos and cards to school on _____
We will create a gallery of family pictures.



Clothing

Describe different kinds of clothing you have at home: what the clothes look like, where you got them, and how, when, and why your family uses these clothes.

Everyday clothes for school and home _____

Dressing up for special events: suits, ties, dresses, jewelry _____

Traditional, ethnic, religious clothing _____

Clothes of parents, ancestors _____

Clothes from other countries _____

Uniforms: teams, Scouts, choir _____

Costumes: Halloween, drama, make-believe _____

Clothes for special activities: work, sleeping _____



Name _____

Home Remedies

Interview a parent or grandparent to see what methods they have used to treat the following conditions. Describe when and how to use the remedy, and from whom your parents or grandparents learned the remedy.

Cold _____

Sore throat _____

Cough _____

Fever _____

Injuries, bruises, sprains _____

Stomachache _____

Ear ache _____

Headache _____

Hiccups _____

Insect bites _____

Itches _____

Others (other conditions, additional information) _____



Quick Starts

Family Rules

Rules & Responsibility	Strict Rule	Mild Rule	Gentle Rule	Rule for Sibling
Be Respectful				
Brush teeth				
Clean your own room				
Come home at required time				
Do homework before watching T.V.				
Do homework each night				
Don't play with balls in the house				
Don't play with matches				
Don't talk with your mouth full				
Eat all food on your plate				
Get to school on time				
Hats off indoors				
Help with dishes				
Knock before entering closed rooms				
Look both ways before crossing the street				
No biting people				
No elbows on the kitchen/dining-room table				
No fighting				
No interrupting				
No jumping on furniture				
No listening in on phone calls				
No lying				
No name calling				
No PG-13 movies				
No R-rated movies				
No prank phone calls				
No reading at meal times				
No screaming or yelling in the house				
No shoes on furniture				
No spitting in the house				
No stealing				
No swearing				
No talking back to parents				
No talking to strangers				
No teasing				
No violent T.V.				
Parents must know where you are				
Pick up after yourself				
Practice music, dance, etc.				
Put dirty clothes in laundry/hamper				
Take care of your own pets				
Turn off lights that are not in use				
Wear a helmet when biking				
Wear your seat belt				



Name _____

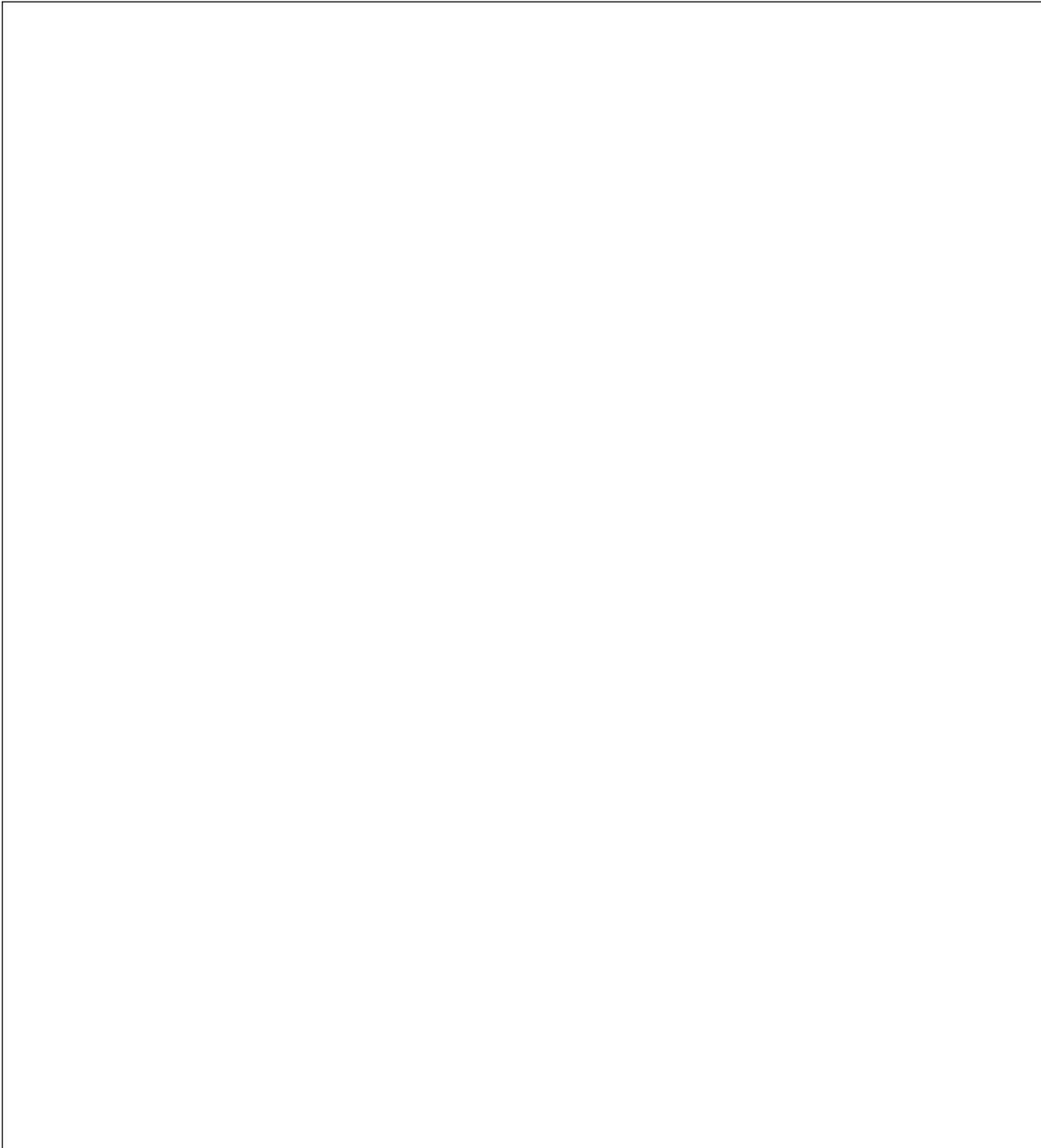
Cultural Symbols

1. Take a mental walk through your home, noticing objects and activities, ordinary or unique, that represent your family's culture. Quickly sketch six.

2. Next choose one symbol from the previous page that fits the following criteria:

- represents family culture,
- recognizable image,
- simple/bold design,
- fills most of the space.

Then redraw it to fit the space below, leaving about one inch at each edge.





Name _____

Storytelling

Family stories may be humorous or serious, about things that happened long ago (family history) or just recently, told to entertain (such as embarrassing events or pranks) or to remember important events (like how your parents met, or how your family has dealt with a big challenge). What family “characters” does your family tell a lot of stories about? What stories do they tell about you?

In your notebook, or on this page, first make a list of some of the most important stories in your family. These are the stories your family tells most often, the stories your family tells at family gatherings, the stories your family tells to friends as a way of describing what kind of people you are.

For each story, note who usually tells it and the occasions when it is told—such as dinnertime, bed time, visits with grandparents, family reunions, birthdays, and holidays.

STORY (a few key words)	USUAL TELLER	OCCASION
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

Continue list on back on this page!

Next, either:

- Write out **word for word** one or more of your favorite family stories, exactly how someone tells it in your family, if possible transcribe from a tape recording.
- Or, **summarize** (giving the main things that happen) a number of favorite family stories.



Quick Starts

Foodways

- What distinctive foods did your parents, grandparents, great-greats eat? How do these foods reflect your ancestors' origins—region, ethnicity, religion, etc.
- What foods do you eat that your ancestors didn't? How is your food made differently than your ancestors made it?
- Describe getting food from your own farm or garden, or from other farmers or gardeners. May include farmers' markets, farm stands, U-pick, farm shares, or grocers who sell local farm products. Give details about how the food is raised.
- How does (or did) your family preserve and store fresh or extra food?
- Describe shopping for food. Which items do you buy from which stores/places? How often do you shop at these places? Who shops for groceries? What foods do you always keep on hand? What food do you seldom buy? Why?
- Tell how to make several of your family's favorite dishes.
- Write a detailed account ("play-by-play") of what happens in your kitchen while food is being prepared.
- Draw how your table is set for breakfast, a typical dinner, a very special meal.
- What makes a good meal? How should it be served? Who should be there? Who cooks, sets the table, serves, carves meat, entertains guests, does dishes?
- Write about beliefs about food: keeps you healthy, good when you're sick, brings good luck, blessings, ceremonial values.
- Explore the use of food as decoration or with decoration. Include color, shapes, representations.
- Write about holiday foods. Begin with Halloween and Thanksgiving.
- Tell how your family uses food as gifts and other exchanges.
- What does food mean? What is it for--community, decoration, love, nutrition, pleasure? When does your family eat "slow food" or "fast food?" What food should be eaten separate or mixed? Which foods are only for certain meals?
- Describe cooking tools: cookbooks, recipe boxes, utensils, pots/pans, etc.
- Talk with your parents about different things you could bring to a classroom potluck. Besides food dishes, what else could you bring to represent your family's foodways? Consider utensils, table cloths and table decorations, songs and blessings, family customs, photos, etc.