

# Lesson: Cultural Expression Project - A Journey of Your Choosing

## Materials Needed:

- A notebook and pen or a digital document for taking notes
  - Access to the internet for research
  - Access to a local library (optional, but highly recommended)
  - Materials for your final project (this will depend on what you choose to create - e.g., art supplies, cooking ingredients, a camera, etc.)
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## Lesson Goal:

This lesson is designed to be a personalized exploration. Instead of memorizing facts, you will choose a culture that sparks your curiosity, research aspects of it that you find fascinating, and then create a unique project to express what you've learned. The focus is on the joy of discovery and creative application.

## Introduction: Spark Your Curiosity (15-20 minutes)

Let's begin by thinking about the vast and beautiful tapestry of human cultures. What comes to mind?

Watch one of the following short videos to get inspired. Don't take notes; just absorb the sights and sounds.

- **For Visuals & Atmosphere:** Search on YouTube for "Rick Steves' Europe: Art" or "Planet Earth: Jungles" (to see how environment shapes culture).
- **For People & Traditions:** Search for "Great Big Story" and browse their videos on different cultural traditions around the world.

After watching, jot down any places, images, sounds, or ideas that stuck with you. Is there a country you've always wanted to visit? A type of food you love? A style of art that fascinates you? This is the starting point for your journey.

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## Step 1: Explore & Choose Your Culture (30-60 minutes)

Now, let's turn that spark of curiosity into a destination. Your task is to choose **one culture** to focus on for this project. It can be the culture of a country, a region, or even an indigenous group. The only rule is that it must be one you are genuinely interested in learning more about.

Use the list you made earlier, or explore these high-quality resources to find a culture that calls to you:

- **Google Arts & Culture:** A fantastic resource to virtually explore museums, cultural sites, and stories from around the world.
  - **National Geographic - Culture & History:** Offers articles, photos, and videos on a wide range of global cultures.
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- **Your Local Library:** Browse the travel, history, and cookbook sections. Sometimes holding a physical book is the best inspiration.

Once you have chosen your culture, write it at the top of a fresh page in your notebook. For example: "*My Cultural Focus: The Maasai people of Kenya*" or "*My Cultural Focus: The Gullah Geechee culture of the American Southeast*" or "*My Cultural Focus: Modern Japanese City Life*."

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## Step 2: Research & Discover (2-3 hours, can be spread out)

This is not about writing a report. This is a discovery mission! Your goal is to find at least **three interesting aspects** of your chosen culture to explore more deeply. Your research should be guided by your own questions.

### Guiding Research Questions (pick a few, or create your own):

- What does a daily meal look like? What are the most important ingredients or dishes?
- What role does music or dance play in the community?
- What are the core values of the family or community?
- What is a significant holiday or festival, and how is it celebrated?
- What are the traditional art forms or crafts (e.g., pottery, textiles, painting)?
- What stories, myths, or legends are important to this culture?
- How does the local environment or geography influence the way people live?

As you research, take notes in a way that works for you. You could create a mind map, a list of bullet points, or even sketch what you are learning. Remember to save links or note your sources!

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## Step 3: Create & Express (Time will vary based on project)

Here is where you get to be creative! Your task is to create something that expresses what you have learned and found most interesting about your chosen culture. The goal is to *show* your understanding, not just tell it.

Choose **one** project from the list below. These options are designed to appeal to different learning styles and interests.

### Project Ideas (Choose one that excites you!):

- **For the Kinesthetic/Hands-On Learner: The Culinary Artist**  
Research a traditional recipe and cook it. Prepare a "Tasting Menu Card" that explains the dish, its key ingredients, and its cultural significance. Take photos of your process and the final dish.
  - **For the Visual Learner: The Museum Curator**  
Create a "Virtual Museum Exhibit." This could be a digital slideshow (using Google Slides or PowerPoint) or a physical poster board. Curate 5-7 images (art, objects, people, places) and write a short caption for each one explaining what it is and why it's important to the culture.
  - **For the Auditory/Linguistic Learner: The Storyteller**  
Create a short (5-10 minute) "podcast" episode. You can record this on a phone. In your episode, tell a story you learned from the culture, or describe the three most fascinating things you discovered as if you were hosting a travel show. You could even incorporate some of the culture's
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music in the background.

- **For the Read/Write Learner: The Travel Blogger**

Write a compelling blog post titled "Three Things You Didn't Know About [Your Chosen Culture]." Combine engaging writing with photos or links to videos to bring your discoveries to life for a reader.

- **For the Artistic Learner: The Inspired Artist**

Create a piece of art inspired by the culture's traditional styles, colors, or patterns. This could be a painting, a collage, a piece of pottery, or a textile design. Write a brief "Artist's Statement" explaining how your piece was influenced by your research.

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## **Step 4: Share & Reflect (30 minutes)**

The final step is to reflect on your journey. You can share your project with a friend or family member, or simply review it yourself.

### **Answer these reflection questions in your notebook:**

1. What was the single most surprising or interesting thing you learned during this project?
2. Which part of the process did you enjoy the most (the research, the creation, etc.) and why?
3. How has this project changed or deepened your understanding of the culture you chose?
4. What new questions do you have now? What would you want to learn next?

This reflection is the most important part of the assessment, as it shows how you've connected with the material and grown through the process. Wonderful work on your cultural exploration!