



Lesson 1: Identity

How Does My Identity Shape My Experience in America?

Activity 1: Who Am I?

How do we start to understand different life experiences?

Objective:

Students will begin to understand their own connection to our shared culture.

Procedure:

- ✓ Distribute notebooks or blank paper to each student to create his/her own journal for upcoming assignments.
- ✓ Take digital images of each student and have him/her paste it in the journal.
- ✓ As questions arise during this unit, have your students write them at the bottom of their journal page. Let them know that the questions will be addressed later in the unit.
- ✓ Have your class define the word culture. Write all possible answers on the board. Example: Culture can be defined through languages, dance, food, customs and social norms.
- ✓ Create a class definition for culture and have the students write it in their journals.
- ✓ Have your students answer the following identity questions in their journals:

What is the color of your hair and eyes?
What is your shoe size?
How many people live in your home?
What is your favorite food?
What is your favorite color?
What is your favorite place to visit?
What is your favorite TV show/video game or book?
What is your favorite subject in school?
In which activities, sports or hobbies do you participate?
Is this who you are?

Grade Level: 4th

Time: 60 minutes

Materials:

Notebook or loose paper stapled together

Concepts Covered:

Write for detail.

Understand elements of journal writing.

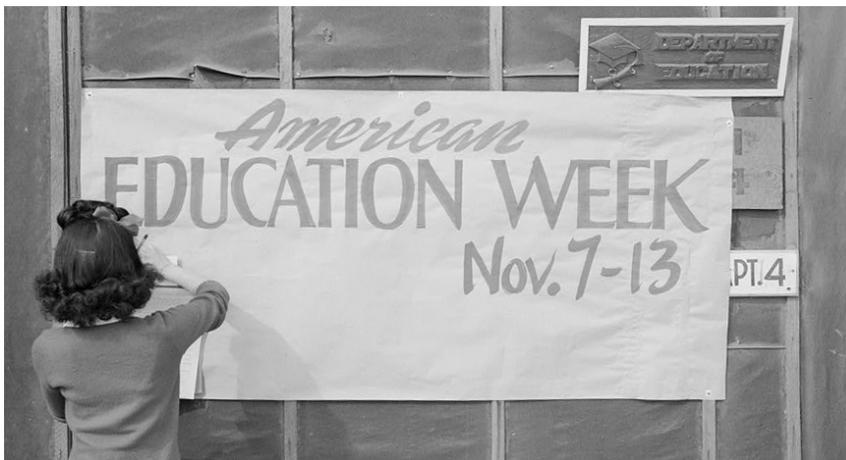
Support observations with specific details.

CDE Standards:

4th Grade

English/Language Arts: Writing

2.1.a 2.1.d



Education Week at Manzanar, Ansel Adams 1943

Activity 1: **Who Am I?**

How do we start to understand different life experiences?



Manzanar Children's Village, Dorothea Lange 1942

Procedure (continued):

- ✓ Divide class into groups of two. Have the students describe their partners and journal their descriptions. Then have the students ask their partners if they've described them correctly. Suggested questions are:

*What do you know about his/her home?
 What do you think his/her favorite food is?
 What is his/her favorite activity/hobby?
 What do you think his/her future career will be?*

- ✓ Ask your students if they feel the answers provided by their classmates describe who they are. Do these answers define their culture?
- ✓ Discuss personal identities versus perceived identities.

Assessment:

1. Successful completion of journal assembly.
2. Culture defined and written in individual journals.
3. Ensure that each student has documented the questions and answers for the assignments.
4. Teacher assessment of group activity.

Extension:

1. Ask your students to list some indentifying traits that all people share (i.e. feelings, sleeping, etc.)



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Activity 2: What is Your Family Story?

How do we start to understand different life experiences?

Objective:

Students learn about their own identity through their family/home stories.

Procedure:

- ✓ Have students write the following directions and questions in their journal:

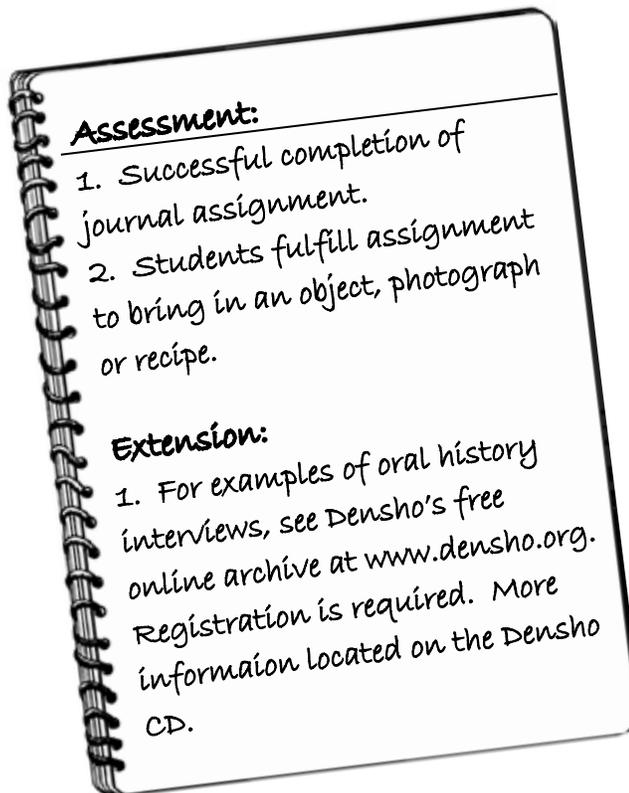
Ask a family member/guardian to describe you and journal the answer(s). Did he/she describe you as you would describe yourself?

Have your family member/guardian tell a story about why your family/home is "special". Write the story in your journal and, if possible, write down characteristics of your family's/home's culture.

*Pick out an object, photograph, or recipe from home that represents your family's story/identity and bring it to class. **

Do you feel that your family/home story defines who you are? Do you feel the object, photograph or recipe defines who you are?

*Remind your students not to bring anything valuable to class and to be sure to get permission from their parent/guardian to bring the item to school.



Grade Level: 4th
Time: 60 minutes
Materials:
 Student journal
 Object, photograph
 or recipe from home

Concepts Covered:

Write for detail.
Understand elements of journal writing.
Support observations with specific detail.

CDE Standards:

4th Grade English/Language Arts: Writing
 2.1.a 2.1.b 2.1.d

History/Social Science
 4.4.4



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Activity 3: What is a Shared Past? How do we start to understand different life experiences?

Objective:

Students understand why the past is important.

Procedure:

- ✓ Ask students to break into groups and describe why their items from Lesson 1 Activity 2 represent their family/home story or history.
- ✓ Have the group brainstorm answers to the following questions:
 - What stories do the objects tell?*
 - What does the object and/or story have to do with the individual's identity or who they are?*
 - Does this item represent the culture of the individual's family/home and identity?*
 - What are the variety of cultures and identities represented in the assortment of objects?*
- ✓ Bring the discussion back to the class to discuss and answer the following questions:
 - What stories do the objects tell and what role do they play in who we are?*
 - Why is it important for you to know about the past?*
 - What can we learn from the past?*
 - What can we learn about ourselves from the past?*
 - Why is it important to know about cultures?*
- ✓ Ask students to volunteer to share objects with the class. Discuss how these objects represent America's identity. What other objects symbolize America? Examples:
 - American flag*
 - Football*
 - Corvette*
 - Mount Rushmore*
 - Baseball*
 - Apple pie*
 - Statue of Liberty*

Grade Level: 4th
Time: 60 minutes
Materials:
Student journal
Object, photograph
or recipe from home

Concepts Covered:
Work cooperatively
in a group.
Support observations
with specific details.

CDE Standards:
4th Grade
History/Social Science
4.4.3 4.4.4

Assessment:

1. Participation in the group activity and class discussion. Sharing one's object and discussing others' objects.

Extension:

1. Have students imagine their house is on fire, and they can only save one item. What would it be? Something for yourself? Something for your family? Why?



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Activity 4: KWL

How do we start to understand different life experiences?

Objective:

Students reflect on what they learned.

Procedure:

- Ask students to journal and answer the questions listed below. Use the KWL chart (located in Additional Resources section) as an example or have your students create their own KWL charts in their journals.

What did you **know** about your identity?
 What did you **know** about the identities of America?

What did/do you **want** to know about your family history?
 What did/do you **want** to know about the variety of cultures and identities in America?

What did you **learn** about your culture?
 What did you **learn** about the identities that shape America?

- This information is shared with the entire class.

Assessment:

- Participation and contribution in the class discussion.
- Successful completion of journal assignment.

Lesson 1: Wrap Up

- Discuss the following questions with your class:
 - What can we learn from the past?
 - What can we learn about ourselves from the past?
 - What can we learn about others through their objects and stories?
- Ask your students if they have any other questions, including any they have written in their journals.

Grade Level: 4th
Time: 20 minutes
Materials:
 KWL chart (optional)
 Student journals

Concepts Covered:
Assessment of students' background knowledge.
Anticipation of what students expect to learn.
Evaluation of what they have learned.
Filling out charts.

CDE Standards:

4th Grade
English/Language Arts:
Reading
 2.3 2.4 2.5
Writing
 2.3a 2.3b
History/Social Science
 4.4.3 4.4.5