

WithOnePlanet

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Introduce

Lesson 1
Student worksheet
Defining culture

Years 7 to 8



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Climate change education
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Defining culture

Lesson 1: – Student worksheets

Activity 1: Defining culture

Q1: How do we define culture? Do some research into what a definition of culture is and write down the definition and the source the definition came from.

Q2: Where did you get your information from, and how reliable do you think that information is?

Q3: Together with your teacher, write down your class definition of culture, based on your research.

The culture of a community, area, state or country is not homogeneous (i.e. it is not all the same). Culture is one of those things that can be viewed differently by different people. We can view the same culture differently depending on where we live, who our family is, who our friends are, where we go to school, and a number of different other factors.

There is a story that is told across Asia, which originated in India. This story illustrates how the same thing can be viewed very differently depending on how we look at it.

Read the following story and then answer the question below.

*There was once a wise man who wanted to teach three men an important lesson.
He asked them all to put on a blindfold and then feel an object and describe what they felt.*

The wise man brought them all alongside an elephant.

*He put the first man at the elephant's trunk, the second man at the elephant's middle,
and the third man at the elephant's tail. He asked them all to describe what an elephant felt like.*

*The first man said, 'An elephant feels long and round. It is constantly moving back and forth.
It is quite thick, but I can put my arms around, and it feels bumpy.'*

*The second man said, 'An elephant is wide and doesn't move much.
It is a wide expanse of bumpy skin and I can't put my arms around it.'*

*The third man said, 'The elephant swishes back and forth, like it is trying to swat flies.
I can hold it in my hand.'*

*The wise man brought the three men together and said, 'You were all describing the same animal,
but your descriptions were very different things. Many things in life are like this.*

*Our perception of things depends on where we are standing, and we can all have very different
views and perceptions of the same thing.'*

Q4: In groups, discuss the story and write down how you think the story might relate to the way we view culture.

Activity 2: Cultural brainstorm

Your teacher will pass out some blank cards to the class. Once you have your card:

- > Write down a word or short sentence that shows something that is important to you in your culture. There is no right or wrong thing to write. It is your choice what is important for you.
- > Once you have written down your word or short sentence, move around the room until you find some other people who have the same or similar topic to you. This will be your group.
- > In your group, discuss your topic and think about why this is an important part of your culture for you.
- > Prepare a two-minute presentation for the class about your topic, including why it's an important part of your culture.

Activity 3: Can we judge other cultures?

When we grow up in a particular culture, it seems to us that the culture is the most normal thing in the world. Sometimes we even try to change other people's cultures so they are more like ours.

Divide into two groups. One group will be the 'Apples group', and the other group will be the 'Oranges group'. Your teacher will hand you a card that will outline your group's core beliefs. Familiarise yourself with the information on your card. Your teacher will then put you into discussion groups, with some apples and some oranges in each group. Have a discussion with the people in the group about your core beliefs, and try to convince the other people in the group that your core beliefs are the right ones. Once you have had the group discussion, come back and have a discussion as a class and answer the following questions.

- > Divide into small paired groups (2, 4 or 6 groups). Your teacher will give an 'Apples' card to one group in each pair and an 'Oranges' card to the other group in each pair. Familiarise yourselves with the cards, and then attempt to convince the other group in your pair (Apples or Oranges) that your way is the correct way.
- > Once your groups have had this discussion, come together as a class and address the five questions below.

Q1: Did convincing the other group about your core beliefs work? Why/Why not?

Q2: Were you convinced about other people's core beliefs? Why/Why not?

Q3: What parallels to the Apples/Oranges groups can you see in Australia today?

Q4: What parallels can you see in the world today?

Q5: Do you think we can judge another cultural group if we don't understand their culture? Why/Why not?

Activity 4: A summary and a plan

Think about the topics you have covered in this lesson, and answer the following questions.

Q1: What do you already know about people and culture?

Q2: What else would you like to find out about people and culture?

Q3: What are some of the ways you might be able to research the answers to your questions?
