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Introduction

The primary reason youngsters need to study multiple cultures is to learn how to develop multiple perspectives. This capacity is essential to developing intelligence.

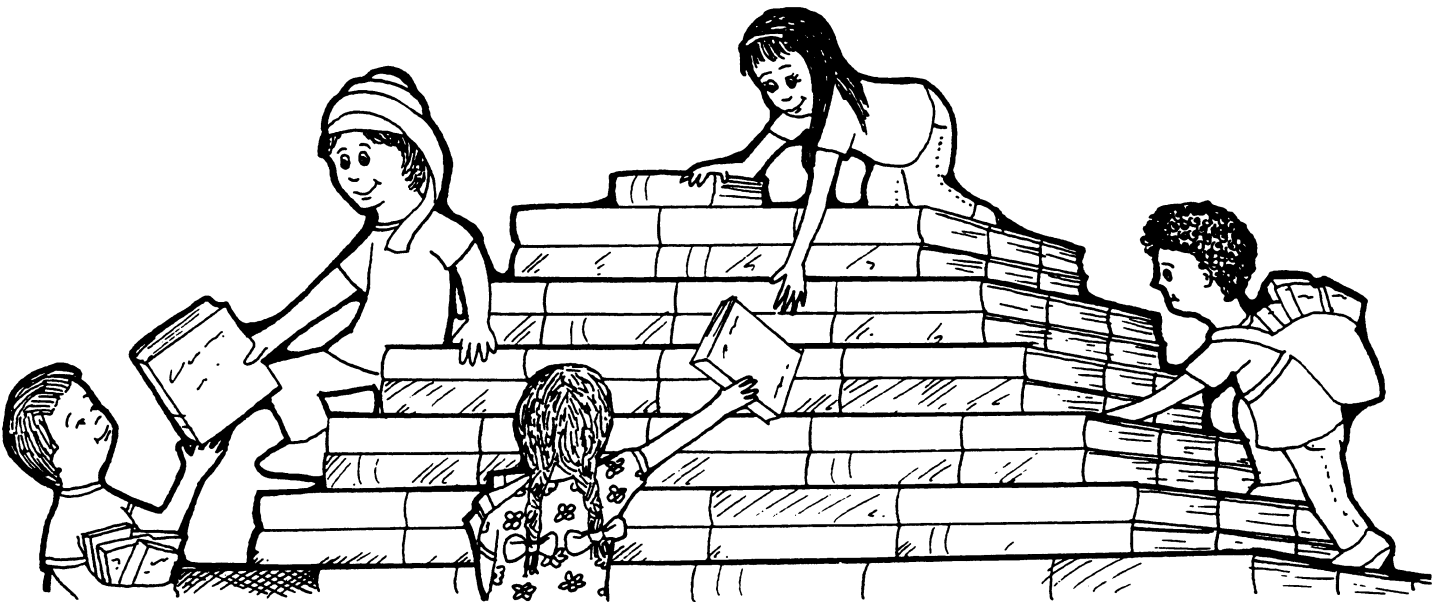
—Edmond Gordon, Professor, Yale University

One great way of studying multiple cultures is through good literature. Reading books that depict people and situations from a variety of cultures will help clarify how we perceive ourselves and others and eventually leads to a broader outlook on how we each approach life. Thus, *Connecting Cultures and Literature* was developed to assist teachers in introducing primary students to the richness of the diverse cultures around us. It presents activities related to literature selections which will enhance multicultural lessons.

The book has been divided into four sections:

- “Who Am I?” which shows the variety of cultures around us, and helps us to think about individual differences and similarities.
- “Being Friendly” which presents people from different points of view and how we interact.
- “Asking Questions” which describes many ways of living: celebrating, worshiping, eating, and communicating.
- “Folktales and Legends” which deals with traditional values and beliefs.

For each literature selection, a brief summary of the book is given, the culture(s) is identified, discussion questions are provided, and connecting activities are described with supporting materials to be used as needed.



People

Author: Peter Spier

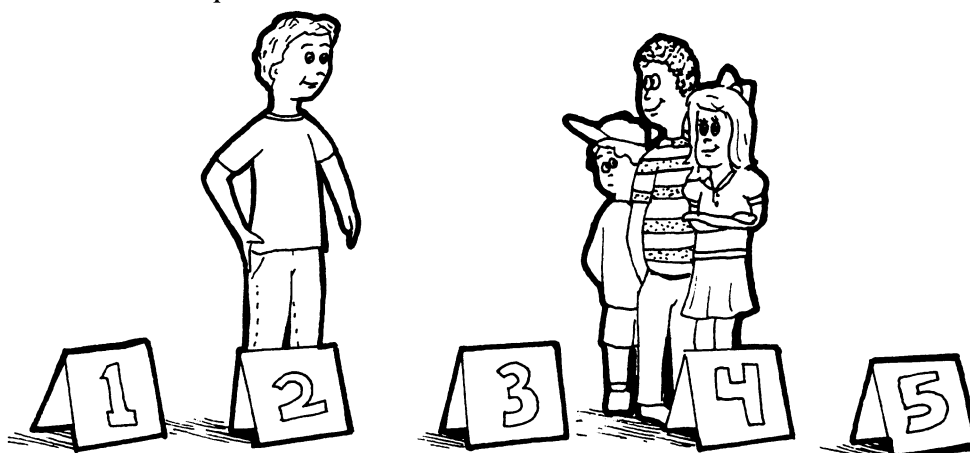
Publisher: Doubleday & Company, 1980

Summary: There are over 4 billion people on earth, and they are all different. This book describes the differences among people and how those differences contribute to an interesting world.



Cultures: All

Pre-reading: Use the strategy called Polar Opposites, which is a series of statements to which students respond by choosing a number from 1 to 5 to show their degree of agreement with the statement. (See page 6.) Read each statement for the students as they make their choices to ensure that they understand the statement. This technique can also be used by making a line with tape or chalk, and directing students to stand by the number that represents their choices.



Post-reading: After reading the book, have students respond to the same Polar Opposites statements to see if there was any change in their views.

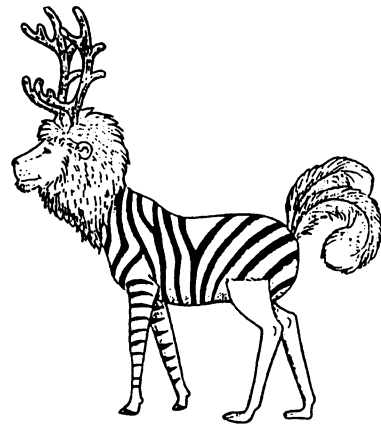
1. Do people have to be alike to be able to get along? Name some examples of ways people who are different can get along.
2. Is it okay to be different? Why or why not?
3. Can you think of some famous people who were not afraid to be different?

Connecting Activities:

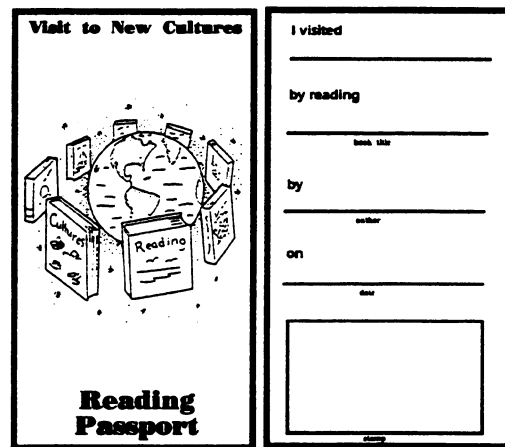
- Have students make individual collages of pictures from magazines that represent who they are. Include pictures and words describing physical appearance, personality, culture, and hobbies.
- Roundtable is a small group activity in which the students make a list on one piece of paper. Each student writes one answer and then passes the paper to the next person, going all the way around the table. Using Roundtable, have students work in groups of 5 or 6 and list ways people are different. (If writing is not possible, then they can verbalize instead.) Then do the same activity, but have them think in terms of how all people are alike.

People (cont.)

- Have groups brainstorm things around us that are a result of influence from another country's culture. Some examples are: foods, such as tacos, pizza, spaghetti; names of people and places, such as Michelle, Mario, Murrindindi; words, such as gesundheit, adios, bon voyage; sports, such as soccer or karate. Make a class book about all the individuals in the class, "We All Look Special." Take a color photo or have each child draw him or herself. Have the students give a detailed description of their physical characteristics to go with the pictures.
- Use magazine pictures to create a person or animal that is unique. For example, a picture of a head could be given new hair and facial features and combined with a different body.



- Make a Visit to New Cultures Passport (page 7) to record each culture the students "visit" through books. In the space provided, stamp or attach a sticker to the bottom of each passport after each new culture has been visited. Students may paste a photo of themselves to the back of the cover to make the passport more realistic.



- Investigate the number of different churches and temples in your neighborhood. Discuss the many religious views there are and how everyone is free to make their own choices about what they believe.
- Make Name Acrostics, page 8. Have each student write one for him or herself and one about a friend. Emphasize to students to use words and phrases that give accurate and unique descriptions of themselves and their friends.
- Write a letter to a pen friend in a different part of the world. Perhaps some students have friends or family in another part of the world who would like to communicate with your class. See page 9 for organizations that would be helpful in setting up pen friends.

Name: _____

Polar Opposites

Circle a number from 1 to 5 to show how you feel about the statement.

It would be better if all people looked the same.

Agree _____ Disagree

1 2 3 4 5

It would be better if all people liked to do the same things.

Agree _____ Disagree

1 2 3 4 5

It would be better if everyone ate the same foods.

Agree _____ Disagree

1 2 3 4 5

It would be better if everyone spoke the same language.

Agree _____ Disagree

1 2 3 4 5

It would be better if everyone dressed the same.

Agree _____ Disagree

1 2 3 4 5

