

Unit Essential Questions:

1. What is cultural erasure and how does it impact communities?
2. Who should tell our stories, and why does it matter?

Lesson 7: Cultural Visibility Project

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Time Frame: Multiple periods

Materials: Slideshow, , Cultural Visibility Project directions, Identity Wheel, Cultural Tree (From lesson 4, template attached here)

This project can be assigned at either the beginning of this ethnic studies unit, or at the end. During this project, students reflect on their personal identity and culture.

Note that “culture” here is loosely defined, and people can belong to more than one culture. For example, one’s ancestral culture may come to mind, but also the culture of their group of friends, their religious community, or their extended family can be included. Often, students belong to many communities, and each of those communities have cultural differences.

The different elements of a students’ identity, whether that be related to gender, age, education, or family, or even activities and hobbies, are attached to culture. For this project, we recommend encouraging students to focus on the elements of their identity and culture that they truly relate to, or find interesting. Students may not want to focus on their family’s food, language, or spiritual traditions, and instead want to focus on a sport culture they partake in, or even an online community or culture. This is fine and encouraged.

ENGAGE

Teacher Directions:

Ask students to return to their “**Cultural Tree**” from lesson 4.

Provide students with a copy of the **Identity Wheel**, attached to the bottom of this lesson, and complete it.

Looking at both their wheel and tree, ask students the following:

1. What are two parts of your culture or community that you would like to know more about?
 - a. le. Food, language, religion, arts, music

EXPLORE

Teacher Directions:

Assign students **the “Cultural Visibility Project”**, attached to the bottom of this lesson.

Provide students time to complete the project. We recommend providing students 1 week to complete step 2, and then another few days to complete the rest. Some of the steps will be completed outside of class.

ELABORATE

Provide students an opportunity to share their findings.

EVALUATE

Teacher directions:

Allow students to share their **“Cultural Visibility Projects”**

As a class, discuss the essential questions explored in this unit:

1. What is erasure and how does it impact communities?
2. Why is it important for communities to tell their own stories?

VOCABULARY

Reclaim: retrieve or recover (something previously lost, given, or paid); obtain the return of.

Resilience: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Revitalize: imbue (something) with new life and vitality.

SOURCES

Identity Wheel, Cultural Tree, Redbud Resource Group

MATERIALS

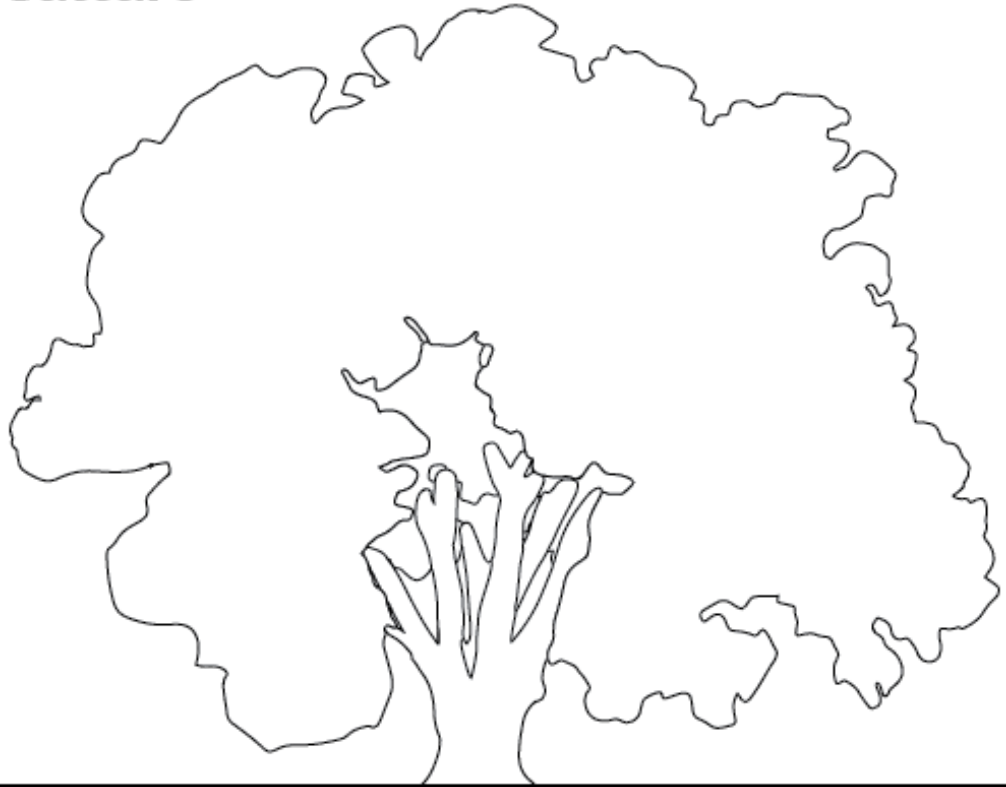
Identity Wheel



Cultural Tree

Explicit Culture

Style/Fashion
Food
Art & Music
Holidays
Language



Interpersonal Culture

Manners
Work Ethic/ Beliefs
Personal Space
Emotional Response
Relationships



Implicit Culture

Fairness
Spirituality
Relations to Nature/ Animals
Cosmology
Kinship/ Group Identity

Cultural Visibility Project

Note: You will need your cultural tree (**lesson 4**) and your identity wheel (**warm up**) in order to complete this assignment. If you did not complete a cultural tree, [a template is attached to this lesson.](#)

Introduction: Every person and community experiences different levels of cultural visibility. The type of visibility a culture or community has may reflect the amount of power or influence that culture has over society in general. In this assignment, you will collect examples of cultural visibility that align with aspects of your identity. You will then reflect on the type of visibility your culture has, and whether or not that visibility is positive. You will then make a plan for creating more positive visibility for one aspect of your cultural identity.

Step 1: Choosing Your Focus

Look at your identity wheel and/or culture tree. Choose a part (or parts) of your identity that are especially important to you, or that you are interested in learning about.

Step 2: Personal Culture Data Collection

As you live your life for the next _____ days, look for examples of your chosen cultural/identity characteristic in your community. Make a list of what you find.

You may notice:

1. Public figures whose identity aligns with an aspect of your own identity.
2. Advertisement, marketing, or other entertainment materials that feature representations of your identity/cultural characteristic.
3. Products that feature representations of your identity/cultural characteristic.
4. Places where your identity or cultural practices are welcomed.
5. Places where your identity or cultural practices are obviously unwelcomed or excluded.
6. Places where you do not feel comfortable expressing your identity or culture.

Step 3: Data Sorting

Once you have your list of examples, divide them into the following categories:

1. Positive representations/ contexts
2. Negative representations/ contexts

Step 4: Data Analysis

Reflect on your data using the following questions:

1. Describe the amount of visibility your identity/culture has in your community.
 - a. Are certain elements of your identity/culture that are more visible than others?
 - b. Where is your identity/culture the most visible? The least visible?
2. Why do you think your identity/culture has this level of visibility?
 - a. Research specific historical/political contexts that determine your level of visibility.
 2. Does your identity/culture experience mostly positive or mostly negative representations in your community?
 - a. Research specific historical/political contexts that determine the quality of visibility.

Step 5: Visibility Examples

Conduct research to find at least one person or movement aligned with your identity/culture who is working to create positive visibility.

1. What is their name?
2. How does their work improve visibility? This can include being engaged in a specific political, artistic, and environmental movement.
3. How can you, or others, support their work?

Step 6: Self reflection

1. In what ways do you hope to create positive visibility of your identity/ culture within your community?
2. In your opinion, what does positive visibility look like?
 - a. Consider behaviors, values, and beliefs.
 2. What do you think the impact could be of creating positive visibility of your identity/ culture within your community?