



Civil Discourse: Getting to Know You

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

NAEA Art Standards

VA:CR1.2.IIA

Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

VA:CR2.1.IA

Engage in making a work of art or design without having a preconceived plan.



Learning Objectives

- Explore community and culture by examining an image or work of art
- Explore their community and culture through an artist's eyes
- Define and discuss values and norms
- Create a work of art that represents their culture and experiences

Essential Question

How do we define who we are? What is culture and how do we express it? What topics/ideas are significant to our lives? What topics are relevant and necessary to human relationships?

Media

- Examples for intro: *Our Town* by Kerry James Marshall, or something similar that invites everyone into a unifying experience about community and culture.
- White 8 x 10 paper, colored pencils, markers, and other art supplies as deemed appropriate for your class.

Part I: Reading an Image

As students walk into the room, the media that the students will be talking about should be on display. This item should be easy to interpret, but also have layers of meaning that encompass what it means to be in community, to have culture, and to have shared experiences. Students will use what they say in the discussion as a jumping-off place to talk about their own culture and their own experiences.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY

Ask students the following:

Journal Prompt: What do you see? Think about the words, images, colors, and placement of objects. What do you think the image means? How does it relate to who we are in our community? How is it something totally different?

Part II: Establishing Values and Norms

CLASS ACTIVITY #1

Preview the unit goals and objectives, segue into why it is important to have class values and norms before continuing a unit centered on civil discourse through the lens of literature.

Display the following: Class Values: What Do We Value as a Class?

Answers can include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Personal property
- 2. Honesty
- 3. Freedom of information
- 4. Manners
- 5. Loyalty
- 6. Family

Let students have time to discuss the definitions and/or importance of each.

Say: How can we use what we value to create our class norms? Norms are the standards we set to communicate how our class functions going forward.

Display the following:

Class Norms: Class norms foster our ability to learn. What do you want to see in this classroom? How should we act?

Answers can include, but are not limited to:

- Mutual respect for one another.
- You must say what you are thinking, otherwise we don't know what you mean.
- Open-mindedness . . . try to understand what is being discussed; don't sit there and tune out something that is "wrong."
- Everyone should be mentally present during discussion; don't zone off; do participate and pay attention.
- Good attitudes: don't be a whiner, don't let the stuff outside of this room affect our classroom.
- Criticize ideas and beliefs and not the person themselves.

Once class values and norms have been established, share in such a way that other classes that are completing this same unit can see all the values and norms for each class. This can be done through chart paper, on slides, or in whatever way would work in your classroom.

CLASS ACTIVITY #2

Now that values and norms have been established the class can discuss the image from the warm-up activity. Record the students' thoughts and ideas. This can be done by creating a word web on a large piece of paper or using technology (like Padlet or Jamboard) to create a list of concepts and ideas around culture, community, and our shared experiences.

Use the answers the students give for the second question (How does this work relate to you and your experiences?). Students may say that it is the opposite or similar to their own experiences. Both answers are valid and worthy of discussion.

Part III: The American Quilt Cordel

Students will create a hanging work of art that represents who they are and their cultures and values. This activity has been modified from the book *Reading Challenging Texts: Layering Literacies through the Arts*.

WARM-UP ACTIVITY

Step One: Say: Called *Literatura de Cordel*, or "string literature," cordels originated in northeastern Brazil, where they display stories and poems on street corners and market places. We are going to create a cordel about our place and identity in [insert your community].

Students should think/pair/share or write and discuss the following:

Why should we study other cultures and what does this teach us?

How do artists and designers create works of art or design that effectively communicate?

Say: We will spend the rest of class on a project that we will work on throughout the week, with the intention of sharing next week.

Pass out the white paper and make the art supplies available.

Say: On one side of this paper you will draw, paint, collage, etc., words and images that show your community and culture. On the other side of this paper, you will write a paragraph explaining a little bit about yourself, the culture you represent, and the community you are a part of. You will also explain the art you have created. There is not a wrong way to create this piece. We are all capable of creating art. Feel free to use pictures from home, scrapbooking supplies, and the supplies available.

Note: the art should stay one dimensional and on an 8 x 10 sheet of paper so that it can be easily hung or laid flat to be examined later.

Students will turn in this activity at the end of the first week of the unit, so the teacher has time to hang the images (like Brazilian cordels in the room). This display will help with the presentation piece, which is **Step Two** of the Quilt Cordel.



CLOSING THE LESSON

These questions can be asked at the end of class to bring the topics of today's lessons together:

In communicating about an image or work of art, what did you learn about your own culture and community?

What do you value? What do we value?

What norms are needed for honest and open communication?

Who are you? What represents you and your community?