

Theme

When Cultures Meet

Story Title

A New Home

Writing Lesson

Informational Text/Rule Book

National Writing Standards

2 Understanding the Human Experience; 4 Communication Skills; 5 Communication Strategies; 12 Applying Language Skills

6-1 Trait®

Organization, Word Choice, Conventions

Art Making and Meaning Question

Artist's Intention

Why did the maker want it to look that way?

Objectives

Students will:

Observe that artworks from different cultures sometimes represent deities worshipped in those cultures.

Recognize how the school culture they live in may seem strange and overwhelming to a new student.

Select certain traditions, beliefs, or practices that are unique to their school.

Compose a rulebook that explains the traditions, beliefs, language, and practices in their school.

Preparation

Prepare copies, transparencies, or use images from ArtsConnectEd Supplement, or from other sources, that reproduce artworks that show cultural influences on the artist. Make copies of the story, *A New Home*. Select how you wish to have the story read to the students. They may take turns. You may read the story to them or make a recording of the story ahead of time and play it to the students as they read along.

Make an overhead of the guidelines for writing a descriptive paragraph.

Activities

- 1.) Ask the students if they have ever been to a new place and felt lost, anxious and uncomfortable? Was it difficult to understand the language and the culture?
- 2.) Explain that it is similar to trying to play a game for the first time with a group of people who are experts at the game. However, with a game you get a list of rules that explain the object of the game.

- 3.) Show art images, explain to the students that history has many examples of times when one group of people took over or conquered cities and communities where other groups of people lived. The dominant people imposed their rules, customs and beliefs on the less powerful people. To survive, the less powerful culture had to assimilate a lifestyle similar to the dominant culture. Have the students identify the different cultural images they see in the examples of artwork. Artworks 4, 6, and 8 are all artistic representations of different deities worshipped in different cultures.
- 4.) Have the students read "A New Home." Have the students discuss the story and relate the characters' experiences to their own similar experiences. Break the students into groups and have them brainstorm a list of rules that would have helped Mawri's family better understand their new home. Gather the students together and write down their ideas on the board.
- 5.) Ask the students to select the most important rules listed on the board and explain why they feel they are important. Have the students defend their reasoning using specific examples from the story. Why do school officials and parents think these are valuable rules?
- 6.) Show students examples of rules from a variety of games including board games, card games, and sporting games. Read through the different rules and point out examples in which the book explains the reasoning behind the rule. Clarify that these explanations assist the player in recognizing the significance of the rule and puts the rule into context.
- 7.) Instruct the students that they will be writing their own rulebook to help people understand all the "ins" and "outs" of their school environment. When they write a rule they must explain why the rule is important.

Resources

Erickson, M. (2005). *Art making and meaning: Understanding through questions*. Tucson, AZ: CRIZMAC.

Sebranek, P. Kemper D. & Meyer, V. (2005). *Write source: A book for writing, thinking, and learning*. Wilmington, MA: Houghton Mifflin.