

Living In A Material World

Let's indulge in a little introspection, shall we? (Admittedly, indulging in introspection is not quite as fun as indulging in chocolate, but still.) In this activity, you're going to think about culture as it relates your favorite topic: you. Because it's all about you, isn't it?

Well, it's all about you *and* HuG class. Which is why there are some constraints on what you'll write about yourself here. Namely, you're going to focus on your culture in the context of your family, your community, and other cultures. I want you to think about:

- the difference between material and non-material culture
- how you obtain culture
- what influences your culture.

Identifying, analyzing, and comparing aspects of your culture and that of your classmates' will help synthesize this lesson and prepare you for that cultural rite-of-passage, the Unit 3 Celebration of Knowledge in HuG class.

Step One

Choose **five of your family's customs** to tell me about and record them in your HuG Passport. For each of the customs, write down the following:

- When do you do them?
- Why do you do them?
- Do you remember being *taught* any of these customs?

Give me a **full paragraph (5-7 sent minimum)** describing each custom.

For example (you can't use this one for your assignment), if your first family custom is talking really loudly during movies at the theater, you might begin with:

- We do it when we see a movie in the movie theater.
- We do it because we're really excited about what might happen during the movie and want to share our predictions with each other.
- We don't remember being taught to shout during a movie; we just started doing it so we could reply to and keep up with our siblings and parents.

Your turn!

Step Two

Next, I want to know if you have any customs related to a **specific region of the world**. In your HuG Passport, address how each of the following customs you have might relate to different regions:

- Are there traditional foods your family eats that come from a region of the world that you are tied to in some way? (Either by having lived there or by having relatives/ ancestors who lived there?)
- Clothing styles?
- Languages spoken?
- Religion practiced?

(P.S. The area of the world that your customs come from might be the area you currently live in, so don't discount customs that are all around you, like a [traditional Yinzer accent](#).)

For example (you can't use this one for your assignment), here's how you might answer a few of those questions:

- I adore cheese, which makes sense because my ancestors were known for making gourmet goat cheese on a remote mountain in the Pyrenees. When my ancestors came to America, they brought their favorite goat and taught future generations of Garcias the craft of cheese-making.
- I wear fuzzy hoodies and clogs because we live in the Bay Area. It may be boring, but it's so, so comfy.
- I speak English, pig Latin, and student, which is good because we spend a lot of time on the intertubes with y'all, and e-way ink-thay ou-yay eak-spay ose-thay anguages-lay oo-tay.

Okay-hay, now you. Note at least **at least two customs**, and write about them each in a **full paragraph each (5-7 sent minimum)**.

Step Three

Finally, in your HuG Passport, tell me about any cultural practices related to any specific groups you belong to. (Yep, groups have cultures, too.) Here are some possible groups to get you thinking:

- Are you in a band?
- A sports team?
- Any extracurricular activities?
- A group of friends you hang out with on a regular basis?
- The folks you play online video games with instead of doing your homework?
- You're a student at KHS!

As you're writing, consider what customs your group has. For example:

- Anything you do before a performance/game?
- Any specific clothing you must wear?
- Anything that new members to the group have to learn as they become part of the group?

Note **at least two customs**, and write about them in, you guessed it, **a full paragraph each (5-7 sent minimum)**.

Step Four

Hey, nice job. You're so good at talking about yourself.

Now, write a **three-paragraph explanation** (that's about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pages), depending on how much you really have to say about your habits) explaining how the characteristics you wrote about are part of your culture. This reflection—though it may seem overly personal—is going to help you prepare for the unit exam by reinforcing some big unit concepts. And that's why we're here, right? Well, that and the food. We were told there'd be food.

Don't know where to start? Try starting by answering these questions:

- Do you have similar customs, even if those come from groups that seem different?
- Are you in similar groups, but those groups have different customs?
- Are any of these groups or customs related to a region you live in?