

Somali Ethnic Studies Lesson Plan 6, Unit 2

Day 1: The Role of Elders in Somali Culture

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject: Ethnic Studies

Duration: 2 class periods

Essential Question:

How do **elders** influence conflict resolution and social order in Somali culture, and what role do **women** play in this traditional framework?

Learning Objectives:

- Students will understand the breadth of elders' roles as negotiators, peacemakers, counselors, and clan representatives in Somali culture.
 - Students will be able to identify the factors that determine who is considered an elder, including age, socioeconomic status, authority, and recognized titles.
 - Students will understand the functions of "Xeer" and be able to grasp how it operates as a customary law system, including its principles of consensus-building and restorative justice.
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Standards:

- **Ethnic Studies**

Identity: Analyze the ways power and language construct the social identities of race, religion, geography, ethnicity, and gender. Apply these understanding to one's own social identities and other groups living in Minnesota, centering those whose stories and histories have been marginalized, erased, or ignored.

Benchmark: Investigate the connection between language and power and how it has been used for and against various racialized and ethnic groups. **(9.5.23.3)**

Resistance: Describe how individuals and communities have fought for freedom and liberation against systemic and coordinated exercises of power locally and globally. Identify strategies or

times that have resulted in lasting change. Organize with others to engage in activities that could further the rights and dignity of all.

Benchmark: Compare and contrast the liberation struggles of people in different regions of the world that have fought for self-determination, liberation, and the empowerment of disenfranchised and/or marginalized groups. **(9.5.24.1)**

Materials:

- Googleslides to support lesson plan.
- Space for a circle of five chairs, surrounded by space for about 20 students to stand.
- Notebooks and writing utensils for Fishbowl activity

Lesson Plan: The Role of Elders in Somali Culture

Note: “DOK” throughout refers to Dept of Knowledge questions (Level 1: recall; Level 2: skills and concepts; Level 3: strategic thinking; Level 4: extended thinking)

Estimated Time	Content	Materials
5 mins.	<p>Essential Question and Learning Targets (“Ignite”)</p> <p>Have students read the learning targets aloud, then the essential question: How do elders influence conflict resolution and social order in Somali culture, and what role do women play in this traditional framework?</p>	<p>Slide #1</p> <p>Slide #2</p>
5 mins. DOK 1 DOK 3	<p>Warm-Up/Video on Somali Elders and Peace-Keeping in Minneapolis</p> <p>Ask students what stood out for them in the video? Was anything surprising to them?</p>	<p>Slide #3 (with embedded video)</p>
10 mins.	<p>Overview (“Chunk”)</p> <p>Discuss the significance of elders, highlighting their roles as negotiators, peacemakers, counselors, and clan representatives.</p> <p>Explain how Somalis seek guidance from elders and the criteria for being considered an elder.</p> <p>Describe the problem-solving role of elders using “Xeer”, emphasizing its characteristics and principles.</p>	<p>Slides #4-#10</p>
20 mins.	<p>Role-Play Fishbowl (“Chew”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take the scene from the earlier video: a young person 	<p>Circle of 5 chairs. Space for</p>

<p>DOK 3</p> <p>DOK 3</p>	<p>throwing firecrackers at police.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask who is willing to play the role of: fire-cracker thrower, elder, clan chief, female leader, police. Ensure that those students are willing to really act the parts! ● Have the five key players in the center of the circle, with the rest of the class standing around them. ● Aiming for restorative justice, have the perpetrator explain what they did, and have the elders confer with each other and with the perpetrator, to find a path to community peace and restoration. As a teacher/facilitator, help to keep the process moving toward resolution. ● Once the role play has concluded, ask the fishbowl observers to offer their insights on what they saw transpire, including whether women seemed to offer different strategies or new approaches. ● Ask whether they seemed to face resistance in their role. 	<p>remainder of students to encircle the sitting group.</p> <p>Notebooks and writing utensils for students encircling actors.</p>
<p>15 mins.</p>	<p>Exit Ticket/Question Preparation for Guest (“Review”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask students to think about the roles of elders in community peace-keeping. Have them develop a question for the following day’s guest on their roles. ● Share the questions aloud, listening for repetition, and develop a plan for the following day’s interview of a guest speaker. 	

Session 2: Elder Guest Speaker

Materials:

- Comfortable chair and water bottle for guest
- Exit tickets/questions from previous class session.
- T-charts for students' note-taking

Note: "DOK" throughout refers to Dept of Knowledge questions (Level 1: recall; Level 2: skills and concepts; Level 3: strategic thinking; Level 4: extended thinking)

Estimated Time	Content	Materials
5 mins.	<p>Introduction of Session ("Ignite")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return exit ticket questions to students. • Introduce the guest speaker, highlighting their background and connection to Somali culture and the role of elders. • Remind the students that these interview questions and answers will serve as the foundation for the interview subject's profile in a booklet. 	Comfortable chair for guest, with water bottle.
15 mins.	<p>Guest Speaker ("Chunk")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have the guest speaker share their experiences and insights on the role of elders in Somali culture. ○ Encourage them to discuss any personal stories or examples related to "Xeer", peacemaking, and gender dynamics. 	
20 mins. DOK 1-4	<p>Question and Answer Session ("Chew")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invite students to ask questions of the guest speaker, facilitating an engaging discussion. ○ Ensure that students are listening, so that questions are not repeated. ○ Encourage follow-up questions. ○ Ensure that students are using their T-chart as a graphic organizer for capturing notes from the speaker's answers to questions. 	<p>Students' T-chart sheets for note-taking.</p> <p>Differentiation based on questions posed according to student strengths.</p>
15 mins.	<p>Writing Reflection Gallery Walk ("Review")</p> <p>Provide students with reflection prompts related to the previous session and guest speaker discussion, asking</p>	Large sheets of paper containing questions, posted on

<p>DOK 1 DOK 2 DOK 4</p>	<p>questions – and posting them on large sheets of chart paper so that students can add their answers, then tour the pages to see what others gathered from the interview.</p> <p>Questions could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What new insights did you gain about the role of elders in Somali culture? ○ How do the concepts of “Xeer” and compensation shape community dynamics? ○ In what ways can the emerging roles of women as clan chiefs impact traditional practices? <p>Have students write their reflections individually, focusing on their understanding and personal connections to the topics discussed.</p> <p>Then have students “tour” the gallery of responses, reading others’ thoughts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● End with a large group sharing of memorable “take-aways”. 	<p>walls.</p>
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Assessment:

- Participation in class discussions and group activities, using “[Do Your Part](#)” rubric.
- Quality of written reflections submitted at the end of the reflection writing session (assessed according to [rubric](#).) This also offers an opportunity for students to serve as anonymous peer reviewers of each other’s work.

(NOTE to educators: Please keep your eyes out for student-written sample(s) of a beginner, developing, at grade level, and advanced version of the writing to include with this lesson).