

## Somali Ethnic Studies Lesson 1, Unit 2: Culture

### What is Culture?

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Subject:** Somali Ethnic Studies

**Duration:** one 55-min. class period

**Essential Question:** How do the three P's of culture — product, practice, and perspective — shape our understanding of cultural identity, particularly in the context of Somalia? How do Somali habits of language, religion, worldview, tribalisms, oral traditions, nomadism versus pastoralist lifestyles, patrilineal kinship, and concepts of “xheer” (for example) shape Somali society?

#### Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to define culture as a product, a practice, and a perspective.
- Students will be able to provide examples of each component from historical and contemporary contexts, focusing on Somalia.
- Students will be able to analyze how cultural elements impact identity.

#### Standards:

- **Geography**

**Culture:** Investigate how the sense of place (or “sense of being” in Somali culture) is impacted by different cultural perspectives.

**Benchmark:** Investigate one’s multiple identities based on location, place, culture and in relation to others. **(9.3.17.1)**

- **History**

**Causation and Argumentation:** Integrate evidence from multiple historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument or compelling narrative about the past.

**Benchmark: U. S. History Era 8: Civil Rights Struggles** – Explain the difference between an immigrant and a refugee. Describe various immigrant migrant and refugee groups, focusing on Hmong, Somali, Indian, Ethiopian, and Latinx people who have come to the United States. Examine different responses to immigration and the growing diversity of the United States. **(9.4.21.15)**

- **Ethnic Studies**

**Identity:** Analyze the ways power and language construct the social identities of race, religion, geography, ethnicity, and gender. Apply these understandings 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:** Describe and analyze examples of how religions develop and change over time in response to differing social, historical, and political contexts, including, but not limited to Shamanism/Animism, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Indigenous religious traditions in Africa and the Americas, and African diasporic religions. **(9.5.23.6)**

**Materials Needed:**

- [Video/slideshow of Somali culture](#)
- Chart paper for group work
- Markers and large sheets of paper for group presentations
- Exit ticket scrap paper
- Copies of [Somali Culture Crossword Puzzle](#), as extension activity
- [“Do Your Part”](#) rubric for assessment

**Lesson: What is 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
10 mins.  DOK 1 DOK 3	<p><b>Introduction: (“Ignite”)</b></p> <p>Show a brief video or slideshow of various cultural aspects from Somalia (food, music, art).</p> <p><b>Discussion Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What do you recognize?</li> <li>■ How do these elements represent Somali culture?</li> </ul>	Slide #1, #2, #2, #4 (has 2-min. video embedded)
10 mins.	<p><b>The 3 “Ps” of Culture: (“Chunk”)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Define product, practice, and perspective vis a vis the components of culture. (May be easiest to start with American practice, related product, and perspectives undergirding it.)</li> </ul>	Slide #5  Slide #6, #7, #8, #9

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also note the meaning of “Dhaqan” – the Somali word for "culture" or "tradition," representing the comprehensive way of life, values, and customs of the Somali people. It connects individuals to their ancestral heritage, encompassing oral traditions, social norms, customary law (“xeer”), and identity and refers to that which is inherited, practiced, and transmitted.</li> <li>• Use a visual aid (like a graphic organizer) to capture the definitions and examples.</li> </ul>	
5 mins.  DOK 2	<p><b>Iceberg Model: (“Chew)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explain observable vs. non-observable aspects (e.g., food vs. core values).</li> <li>○ Ask students questions about their own cultures.</li> </ul>	Slide #11 (#10 can be skipped if time is limited)
15 mins.  DOK 2  DOK 3	<p><b>Group Activity</b></p> <p><b>Small Group Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Divide students into three small groups.</li> <li>○ Ask that each group have a note-taker</li> <li>○ Assign one group for each area/”P”. For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The <b>Products</b> group could analyze a “basbaas” (hot chili sauce) or a “diric” (typical female clothing) – what materials, trade routes, and histories are embedded in this product?</li> <li>○ The <b>Practices</b> group could look at wedding traditions or communal food preparation&gt;</li> <li>○ The <b>Perspectives</b> group could explore "What is honesty?" grounding it in a specific Somali proverb (maahmaah) to give it texture. For example: "Speak the truth, nothing surpasses truth." How does this compare to how honesty is framed in American culture?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Markers and large sheets of paper.</p> <p>Differentiation per student abilities. (Note-taker; speaker, etc.)</p> <p>Slide #13</p>
10 mins.	<p><b>Presentations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have each group share their discoveries with the class.</li> <li>○ Encourage other students to ask questions or add their observations.</li> </ul>	Slide #14 + #15

DOK 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ask “Where do we find ideas for products, practices, and perspectives?” (Students may answer: folktales, films, magazines, newspapers, TV shows, websites and online media, theater and dance, sports events, music and music videos, brochures &amp; advertisements, photos and art.)</li> </ul>	
5 mins.  DOK 4	<p><b>Exit Ticket Reflection (“Review”)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have students think of their multiple identities based on location, place, and culture.</li> <li>○ Ask them to list at least three of their identities on the exit ticket. (Start with a teacher example, e.g. Minnesotan teacher from Minneapolis of Nordic ancestry.) These exit tickets can be kept private – just shared with the teacher – if that seems best for the students.</li> </ul>	Slide #16

**Assessment:**

- Participation in group discussions and presentations assessed through [“Do Your Part”](#) rubric.
- Quality and depth of exit ticket responses.

**Differentiated Extension Assignment:**

- **Challenge:** Have students write a short essay (1-2 pages) on how the three P's of culture influence students' own cultural identities, incorporating examples from their own lives, OR
- **Less Challenging:** Have students complete a [crossword puzzle](#) on terms introduced in the lesson.