World Language Day Activities: Grades 6-8

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ACTIVITY 1

Goals

- Students will analyze an infographic (a visual representation of data) to understand the linguistic and cultural diversity of New York City students.
- Students will make observations, inferences and develop questions for further exploration as they engage in the World Language Day.

Materials

- “How Global is NYCDOE?” Infographic, found in your Google Classroom folder
- Graphic organizer (page 3)

Activity Overview

Explore

Students will analyze the provided infographic with the following guiding questions in mind:

- What do you notice? What do you think? What do you wonder?

Explain

The “How Global is NYCDOE?” infographic shows the linguistic and cultural diversity in New York City classrooms and homes. It is designed to start a conversation about languages and cultures as assets. As you review the infographic, consider:

- What are some of the benefits and opportunities of being in diverse schools, homes, and communities?
- What are some of the challenges of being as diverse schools, homes, and communities?

To learn more about the languages of the world, visit "A World of Languages." How does NYC compare?
Apply

- Consider how you will find the answers to your questions.
- Provide possible solutions to the challenges you identified.

Reflect, Share

- Sum it up! List key words that convey the main idea of the infographic. Then, write a one-sentence summary of this infographic using these words. Share your one-sentence summary with a family member or friend.
- Compare this infographic to your own classroom or neighborhood. Discuss with a family member or friend.

Extend

- Learn more about the languages represented in the infographic. Which countries and regions speak these languages?
- Research the questions that you come up with after reviewing the infographic.
**Graphic Organizer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you notice in the infographic?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you like to know more about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What questions do you have?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**
ACTIVITY 2

Goal

- Students will gain an awareness of linguistic wealth and diversity around the globe.
- Students will understand the benefits of speaking more than one language as a member of a global society.

Materials

- How Languages Evolve (TEDEd video)
- How Many Languages Can You Recognize? (UNESCO video)
- The Benefits of a Bilingual Brain (TEDEd video)
- Infographic on the Creativity and Learning a World Language

Activity Overview

Explore

First, watch this video from TEDEd on how languages change and evolve. You have the option to add closed captioning in English or another language. For some people, there might be a lot of new information about languages, so feel free to watch the video more than once. Following the video, respond to the multiple-choice questions (“Think” section). It might help you remember more about what you learned.

Then, you will watch another video where you will be challenged to see how many languages you recognize. Last, study the infographic to add to your understanding of the benefits of learning a language.

Explain

This activity is to build a shared understanding of the variety of languages in the world, then to focus on the idea of speaking more than one language (being multilingual). You already know that many students in our schools come from homes where people speak a language other than English. What are the benefits of speaking another language? This video will give you more information, and then you can answer some questions.

Apply

Now that you understand that there are many benefits to learning a new language, you can write a 30-second elevator pitch! You want to convince your teacher, principal or other school leader to offer a language-learning program. Write a 30-second pitch so they cannot say “no.” If your school already has a world language program, your elevator pitch is for another school. You have 30 seconds to convince another school to offer the program.

Tips for your elevator pitch:

- Introduce yourself
- State what you want (the opportunity to learn [insert language])
- Explain why [state the benefits]
Closing words of your choice

Reflect, Share

Now that you started learning about languages, do you feel connected to the rest of the world? What do you want to learn more about? Another language? More benefits of learning different languages? Share with your teacher, family members and friends.

Extend

Have you always wanted to learn a new language? Start here with activities at Digital Dialects.

Do you want to “visit” another country or region? Learn about its history, culture, arts and crafts.

- Caribbean Contributions to the United States
- Chinese Crafts
- Lebanese Historical Landmarks
- Mexican Art
- Punjabi Miniature Paintings
- Russian History and Art
- Crafts of Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe

View these images with family, friends, classmates, or on your own. Ask yourself some questions to gain a deeper understanding of the images:

- What do you see?
- How do you feel?
- What do you think about that?
- What does it make you wonder? (From Project Zero)

Find a quote or additional resource about the advantages of multilingualism. Encourage a friend or family member to learn with you.
ACTIVITY 3

Goal

- Students will explore the life of a historical or contemporary figure from another culture.
- Students will use information gathered through the exploration process to write a brief summary of the historical or contemporary figure.

Materials

Digital:
- Malala Yousafzai Biography
- The Story of Malala Yousafzai (CNN Video)
- UN Interview with Malala Yousafzai

Printable:
- Malala’s Story, RIF Reading Passage
- Malala’s Story, RIF Reading Passage (Easier)

Activity Overview

Explore

Today, you will learn about a historical or contemporary figure who has had an impact. There are some suggested resources above, but you are welcome to select a different figure of your choice. The only requirement is that they are from another country or culture since today is World Language Day. As you explore the suggested figure or figure of your choosing, consider these questions:

- What impact did this person have within their community? Country? World?
- What are the details of their life that you want to record and remember?
- What do you learn about the person’s culture?
- How does it make their life experience the same or different from your own?

Explain

Depending on the selected resource, you will read (and if available, watch a video) about the figure. The goal is to learn as much as you can about the person and their impact. The purpose of your learning is to be able to write a short summary that you can share with classmates or family members.

Apply

How you record what you learned is up to you, but the best first step is to write 1-2 paragraphs about the person. Then, you might want to use a digital tool to share what you learned. For example, you can record your paragraph with a voice recorder or create a presentation with pictures and talking points using Microsoft PowerPoint or another presentation tool.
Reflect, Share

In addition to sharing your summary, you should reflect on this famous quote from Malala: “One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world.” After learning about Malala or the figure of your choice, what is your reaction to this quote? How does it inspire you? After you share your summary with classmates, family members, ask them what this quote means to them.

Extend

Consider using the Biography website to learn more about your historical figure.

ACTIVITY 4

Goal

- To learn about a community leader or a community member, family or friend of the family’s cultural experiences.
- To learn details about a different culture through the life experiences of an individual.

Materials

- Handout 1 - Formulating Questions
- Handout 2 - Self-Evaluating Questions

Activity Overview

Explore

Watch and study this video on Effective Cross Cultural Communication to get started.

Explain

In order to explore and understand more about culture through life experiences, you will conduct an interview with one of the following:

- a community member
- a community leader
- a family member
- a friend of the family

Apply

Step 1: Use handout 1 to help you formulate a set of initial questions that you will use to conduct the interview.

Step 2: Use handout 2 to evaluate your questions and help you in deciding the final set of questions you will use for the interview.

Step 3: Choose someone and conduct the interview.

- Choose a setting with little distraction.
If the subject is a family member who lives with you, then you can conduct the interview in person, otherwise you will conduct a remote interview via phone or video conference.

- Explain the purpose of the interview: “This interview is an assignment from my school. The purpose is to learn more about my culture or a different culture through your life experiences. I have worked in formulating a set of questions that I think will help me learn more about your life experiences and therefore your cultural background...”

- Address terms of confidentiality.
  
  “I want you to know that the information you share with me will be shared with my teachers and classmates only. Let me know if there is something you would prefer not share and I will do my best to respect your request.”

- Explain the format of the interview.
  
  “This interview will take place via phone, video conference, number of question, etc...”

- Indicate how long the interview will take.

- If available, use an electronic device (such as your smart phone) to record the interview.

- You will have to submit to your teachers your final revised handout 1 with the responses from your subject.

Reflect, Share

Look at handout 2. Choose two questions from questions 32 – 35 to write a short reflection of your experience and how you felt throughout the interview process.

Extend

Write a “thank you” letter or email to your subject and briefly summarize one or two things you learned about them through the interview process.
HANDOUT 1

Formulating Questions [Activity 4]

Think about your interview subject. What are some questions you would like to ask?

Use the categories below as guidance to formulate your questions. Leave the questions open-ended when possible so that the person who is being interviewed can expand upon their answers. It is important that you ask follow-up questions to bring out all of the important details.

Remember, stories told by your subject will make your experience rich. You should aim for a minimum of 20 questions. In the next step of this activity, you will have the opportunity to review other questions that you might want to add to your list. Below are some examples to help you.

Demographics

Think about questions on name, age, background, gender, occupation, and childhood.

Example: What is your name and who gave it to you?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Family

Think about questions on spouse, parents, children, and place of origin.

Example: Where is your family originally from?

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Culture

Think about questions on country, language, politics, religion, holidays, sports, clothing, and food.

Example: What did you grow up eating?

1. 

2. 
3.

4.

5.

Education

Think about questions on elementary school, middle school, high school, college, or technical school.
Example: What is something you remember about your experience in school?
1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Career

Think about questions on jobs, work experience, and industry.
Example: What was the first job you ever had?
1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Hypothetical Scenarios

Have fun with these questions! Understand your subject better by creating hypothetical scenarios and asking them to respond.
Example: If you won the lottery, what would you do with the money and why?
1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
HANDOUT 2

Self-Evaluating Your Questions [Activity 4]

A. The following list of questions are just suggestions. Compare them to the questions you generated in Handout 1 and decide if the questions on this list are the same, similar, or different from your list.

B. Then, decide on your final list of 20 questions. You can add, delete or combine your own questions to this list to generate your final list.

1. What is your full family name?
2. From what country did your family emigrate?
3. When did your family arrive to this country?
4. Where did your family first live when they came to America?
5. What kind of work did they do when they first came here? Describe the work.
6. What kind of things do they remember most about your parents and grandparents? (character, personality, attitudes, family stories, etc.)
7. When and where were you born? Who are your parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, etc.?
8. Where did you grow up? Describe the place.
9. Who or what was the most important to you in your early childhood?
10. What kinds of chores did you do?
11. When and where did you go to school? What were the names of the schools that you attended? Do you have any special memories of grade/grammar school? Describe the classroom, teachers, rules, lunch, report cards, recess, etc.
12. What do you recall about the holidays in your early childhood?
13. Is there anything else about your early childhood that you would like to share? (stories, memories, friends, etc.)
14. What is the most important thing that your parents or elders taught you?
15. What was the name of your high school? Describe any special memories you have including school activities (plays, sports, clubs, music, etc.)
16. Did you have any jobs when you were a teenager? If so, describe them.
17. What kind of clothes did you wear?
18. What kinds of transportation did people use?
19. How would you compare your teen-age years to those of today?
20. How is your life different from mine when you were the same age? How are things the same?
21. What things worried you? Of what were you afraid?
22. Was there someone that you looked up to or had as a hero? Who were they? Why were they important?

23. What “wounds” (taunts, harassments, hurts) did you experience that have turned into strengths?

24. When did you get married? Are marriage ceremonies different in your culture?

25. Do you have children? How many? What are their names? Are the names you gave them common in your culture?

26. What family and cultural traditions are important to you?

27. What kind of behavior is considered best? What is not okay to do in your culture?

28. How did you choose your job?

29. What were some of the occupations where women were not common? What were some occupations where men were not common?

30. Did you like the work you chose?

31. What cultural activities are you involved in? (church, community groups, sports, etc.)

Reflection

32. What words of wisdom rooted in your culture would you like to pass on to me?

33. What expectations do you feel your cultural community has for its young people regarding responsibility toward the community?

34. What were your biggest challenges in your life? Have you overcome them? How?

35. What was the hardest decision you ever made in your life?

Hypothetical Scenario

If you had to choose between two good job opportunities, one that you love but with a lower salary and one that you don’t like so much but with a higher salary, which one would you choose and why? Elaborate.

If you win the lottery, what would you do to support your culture?