

Facing History and Ourselves
and
Memphis Public Schools

Identity and Community

AN INTRODUCTION TO SIXTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES



Facing History and Ourselves is a nonprofit organization based in Brookline, Massachusetts, with regional offices throughout the United States and the United Kingdom and emerging partnerships across the globe. For more than 30 years, Facing History has challenged teachers and students to connect the complexities of the past to the moral and ethical issues of today. Students explore democratic values and consider what it means to exercise one's rights and responsibilities in the service of a more humane and compassionate world. They become aware that "little things are big"—seemingly minor decisions can have major impact and change the course of history. For more about Facing History, see the last page of this publication and visit our website at *www.facinghistory.org*.



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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES

Through professional development seminars, resource books, study guides, conferences, and Web activities, Facing History and Ourselves provides educators with models for creating a unit or a course that integrates significant historical content with a tested methodology to engage students in thinking about the lessons of the past for the present and future. Facing History and Ourselves is distinguished from other organizations through its focus on pedagogy, its strong connection to scholarship, and its long-term relationships with its teachers. This comprehensive approach results in high-quality materials and strategies for the classroom and support for teachers, including the ongoing follow-up they need. The approach engages young people in studying their history and heritage in a way that makes the lessons relevant to the choices they face in their everyday lives.

Young people are growing up in a world tested by conflict and rife with extremism. As shepherds of the next generation, it is our responsibility to give them the tools to think critically, understand the connection between history and ethics, and understand how the lessons of history can help guide them through the moral choices they face in the present and future. Facing History is well positioned to reach junior and senior high school students with these essential lessons and to support their teachers in providing a high-quality learning experience.

The language and vocabulary emphasized in Facing History's materials are tools for entry into the study of history. When students study concepts such as identity, membership, legacy, denial, responsibility, and judgment, they understand complicated history as a constellation of individual and group choices and behaviors. By focusing on participation, Facing History students learn that the events of history were not inevitable but were instead determined by the conscious choices of individuals and groups, and that the brave and moral acts of small numbers of people can grow and reverberate into powerful forces that influence the course of history. Democracies are fragile enterprises and can only remain vital through the active, thoughtful, and responsible participation of their citizens. Education for global citizenship means encouraging students to recognize that their participation matters. Facing History and Ourselves helps teachers and students explore particular moments in history and in our own lives with the hope of finding ways to strengthen our communities in order to prevent violence and injustice.

High-quality education for all children should be framed within the perspective of what we at Facing History and Ourselves have called "head and heart." It is an education that balances cognitive understanding and skill acquisition with the capacity for empathy, courage, and compassion that marks the determination to stand up for human rights in the present and future. Our students are at heart moral philosophers, seeking to express themselves in productive ways so they can both engage with and shape the worlds they inhabit. In order to be participants in society, students need the habits, skills, and knowledge that will allow them to discover who they are, what they believe, and how to make an impact. For our democracy to thrive and for it to be truly compassionate, equitable, and just, young people need help developing their burgeoning moral philosophy—their unique voices—in complex, academically rigorous, and personal ways.

Students come to us with already formed notions of prejudice and tolerance. As they move through childhood and adolescence, their issues take deep hold: overarching interest in individual and group identity and concern with acceptance or rejection, conformity or nonconformity, labeling, ostracism, loyalty, fairness, and peer group pressure. Our pedagogy must speak to newly discovered ideas of subjectivity, competing truths, and differing perspectives, along with a growing capacity to think hypothetically and an inclination to find personal meaning in newly introduced issues. We must teach students to make distinctions among events and to see connections without making facile comparisons and imperfect parallels. In order to make sense of the present and future, students need an opportunity to find meaning in the past. We can trust them to examine history in all of its complexities, including its legacies of prejudice and discrimination, resilience and courage. This trust encourages young people, and their teachers, to develop a voice in conversations with their peers as well as in the critical discussions and debates of their communities, their nation, and the world.

FACING HISTORY IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

Facing History and Ourselves has had a long-standing relationship with the Memphis community. Indeed, the city of Memphis has served as one of the inspirations for Facing History. Margot Stern Strom, Facing History's founder, grew up in Memphis and consistently writes about how her experiences growing up there have shaped her commitment to democracy, civic participation, and equity. In 1992, Facing History's relationship with Memphis was formalized by the establishment of a regional office in the city. Since that time, Facing History has collaborated with the Memphis community on projects ranging from bringing world-renowned speakers to Memphis for public forums to publishing a serialized memoir of a Holocaust survivor in *The Commercial Appeal* to mounting exhibitions such as *Choosing to Participate*. As of the writing of this text, Facing History is involved in nearly 500 public and private schools in the southeast, providing professional development and curricular materials to educators and administrators. We also have a significant presence in Memphis-area institutions of higher education.

Facing History has enjoyed a particularly robust relationship with the Memphis city and Shelby county school systems. By 2009, every sixth, seventh, and eighth grade social studies course in both the city and county school systems will include a Facing History unit. The unit *Identity and Community* introduces sixth grade students to important social studies concepts and builds a vocabulary around themes such as belonging, membership, and democracy. In the seventh grade, students study the steps leading up to the Holocaust as a way to learn about how groups and individuals make decisions that can result in hate and violence or that can promote peace and justice. The eighth grade Facing History unit, *Choices in Little Rock*, focuses on the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. At the high school level, students can continue to explore Facing History's themes of participation, democracy, and genocide prevention by taking a Facing History elective course. Facing History program staff in the Memphis office also facilitate student leadership groups, organize student symposia, and lead civil rights tours for students.

ABOUT THIS UNIT

Rationale: Why teach about identity and community?

Why begin a sixth grade social studies course with an exploration of identity and community? The answer to this question may seem obvious. First, identity and community are central themes in the minds of young adolescents. As your students begin a year in a new school (or at least in a different classroom), many wonder about who they want to be in this new space and what it means to be part of a group. The lives of early adolescents are centered around peer groups and mutual relationships. The Facing History curriculum has been developed to support and challenge students who are beginning to see themselves as unique individuals with a desire to belong.

By beginning the year with themes that resonate with students' moral and social development—themes such as identity, membership, and belonging—teachers engage students not only in studying themselves but also in studying peoples of the past. Facing History teachers have found that students have a deeper understanding of particular historical moments when these moments are connected to universal themes that resonate with students' lives. Questions such as “What does it mean to be a member of a community?” and “How does our perspective shape the way we view others?” are as applicable to analyzing the social world of young adolescents as they are to understanding civilizations throughout world history. The ancient Chinese, Greeks, and Mayans were concerned about belonging to a family, tribe, or nation just as students today care about their membership in certain cliques or groups. When students create a class contract in Lesson 10, they participate in a process that preoccupied emerging civilizations thousands of years ago—the process of establishing norms and laws.

Encouraging students to think critically about issues of identity and community is not only an effective way to engage them in the study of world history; it also provides a way to build a class culture that supports learning. The activities in this unit have been developed to promote a sense of community because students are best able to share ideas, take risks, and help each other when they feel a sense of belonging and safety in the classroom. The first several lessons provide meaningful ways for students to introduce themselves to their peers. The process of learning about their classmates can break down stereotypes and help build relationships. For example, students who may have assumed they did not have anything in common with their peers may learn that they share an interest in the same music or that they have been through a similar experience. The second half of the unit focuses on what it means to be part of a community. Through discussing various examples of inclusion and exclusion, students develop an understanding of belonging that they can apply to their own relationships within the classroom.

For more than thirty years, Facing History has supported teachers in developing a respectful classroom climate where students feel comfortable sharing ideas and taking risks. It is through open dialogue and thoughtful engagement with peers that students develop a sense of what it means to participate in a democratic society. In this way, the lessons in this unit not only support their development as students of social studies but also support their growth as citizens and community members.

Structure: How to use this curriculum

The 10 lessons in this unit are divided into 2 sections: the Introduction and the Lesson Plan.

The *Introduction* includes the following sections:

- **Overview:** This section provides a rationale and description of the lesson and explains how the lesson content connects to the study of world history.
Learning goals: The activities and suggested assignments have been designed to help students master specific learning goals. The lessons also promote students' learning in other areas such as reading, oral expression, and critical thinking.
- **Materials:** Following each lesson, we have included materials needed to implement the lessons, such as graphic organizers, texts, or images. Other suggested materials, such as Dr. Seuss's story "The Sneetches," can be borrowed from Facing History's library. The short book *The Bear That Wasn't*, by Frank Tashlin, is the central text of Lesson 3. Classroom sets of this book have been distributed to all schools.

The *Lesson Plan* includes five sections:

- **Warm-up:** The warm-up activity prepares students to access the material in the lesson by activating prior knowledge, introducing an important vocabulary word, or providing an opportunity for personal connection to the themes in the lesson.
- **Main activity:** The main activity is typically built around a specific text or hands-on project. It introduces students to new concepts and ideas and provides a structure for students to work with this material so they can make it their own.
- **Follow-through:** To deepen students' understanding and encourage retention of the material, the follow-through activity often requires students to apply the material explored in the main activity to a new situation. Students might be asked to connect the material to their own lives, synthesize concepts from different lessons, or develop their own opinions about the content of the lesson.
- **Homework:** Suggested assignments can be used to evaluate learning goals or prepare students for the next lesson.
- **Curriculum connections:** In the body of each lesson, we have included *curriculum connections*—ideas about how you can use the lesson's content or teaching strategy throughout the school year to help students better understand world history.

These lessons have been designed to be implemented in a 50-minute class period. Depending on your own classroom context (e.g., how many students you have, the skill level of your students, and your students' interests) lessons may take more or less time. If you are concerned about running out of time, you can shorten the warm-up activity or assign the follow-through activity for homework. This unit could easily engage students for several weeks if you implement the optional extension activities included in most lessons.

Journals

We strongly recommend that students keep a journal during this unit. The journal is a place where students can answer questions during class and at home. Students can also keep a list of important terms in their journals. By keeping their ideas in one place, students are better able to make connections between lessons and take stock of how their own understanding has developed.

LESSON 1

Who am I?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

“Who am I?” is a question we all ask at some time in our lives. It is an especially critical question for adolescents. As we search for answers we begin to define ourselves. How is our identity formed? To what extent are we defined by our talents and interests? by our membership in a particular ethnic group? by our social and economic class? by our religion? by the nation in which we live? How do we label ourselves and how are we labeled by others? How are our identities influenced by how we think others see us? How do our identities inform our values, ideas, and actions? In what ways might we assume different identities in different contexts? How do we manage multiple identities? Answers to these questions help us understand history, ourselves, and each other.

As students study world history, they will explore how individuals and groups over time and across continents have answered questions about identity. They will learn that many of the same factors that influence their identities—factors such as religion, gender, and geography—also shaped the identities of the ancient Greeks, the Mayans, and the Chinese. Thus, this lesson establishes an important social studies theme that will resonate throughout the year.

At the same time, beginning the year by having students examine and share their own identities is a way to build relationships in your class. When sixth grade students begin a new school year, often with unfamiliar classmates and teachers, it is particularly important for them to have the opportunity to get to know their new community and to become known by others. The activities suggested in this lesson begin this process of relationship building.

Learning goals

- Students will be able to define the word *identity*.
- Students will be able to identify various factors that shape their identity.

Materials

- Index cards
- “My Name,” by Sandra Cisneros

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

When students begin a new school year they may hold contradictory feelings. On one hand, they may think they know a lot about their classmates just by looking at them. They may have formed judgments about who will (or will not) be their friends based on the clothes people wear or how they speak. On the other hand, students may feel they are in the company of strangers; they may feel that nobody really knows them and that they don't really know their classmates. To help students push beyond judging their peers based on simple stereotypes, you can have them participate in a "How well do we know each other?" activity.

First, distribute an index card to each student. Ask students to write one little-known fact about themselves on this card. It should be something that people could not know just by looking at them. Their names should not appear on the cards. Then collect the cards.

Read a card and ask the class to guess who the fact describes. You might read several cards at the beginning of each class period throughout this unit. Through this activity students often learn that they have something in common with a classmate or they learn something interesting about someone that might otherwise have taken all year to discover.

Main activity

In the next several lessons, students will focus on the concept of identity. Write the word *identity* on the board and ask for volunteers to share their thoughts on what it means. Or you can share this definition with students: *Identity is the answer to the question, "Who am I?"* The fact students wrote on their index cards in the warm-up activity represents one part of students' answer to this question.

Next, distribute copies of "My Name," a chapter from Sandra Cisneros's book *House on Mango Street*. In this excerpt a young girl, Esperanza, reflects on her name. In the process she reveals information about her identity—how she perceives herself, what she values, where her family is from, and so on. Ask student volunteers to read a paragraph of this excerpt to the class. As the text is read aloud, students can underline any words or phrases that give them information about how Esperanza would answer the question, "Who am I?"

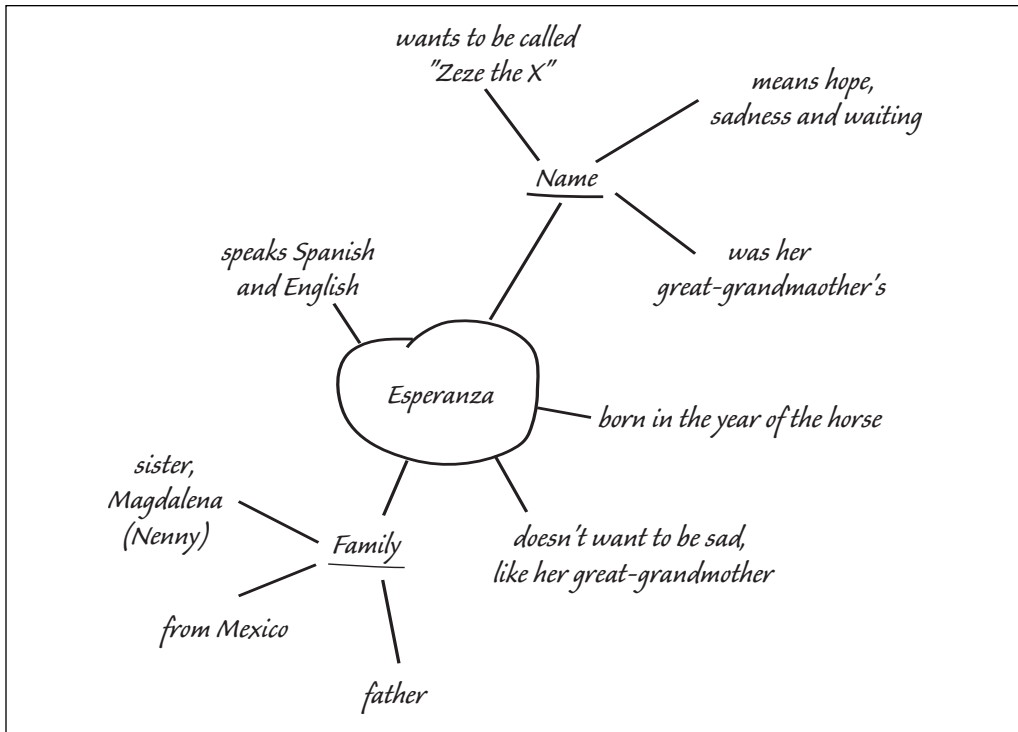
In small groups, have students create an identity chart for Esperanza. The diagram on the next page is an example of an identity chart. Students can begin with the words or phrases they underlined in the passage that represent how Esperanza defines her identity.

You can also provide groups with some questions to guide them:

- Who is in Esperanza's family?
- Where is her family from?
- What languages does she speak?
- What does she hope for her future?
- What does she think about her name? What does this reveal about her personality?

Alternatively, you can create Esperanza's identity chart as a whole class activity.

Curriculum connection: Students can create identity charts for historical figures as well as for civilizations and nation-states. For example, have students create identity charts for Athens and Sparta or for Montezuma or Siddhartha.



The purpose of reading “My Name” is to help students think about the various factors that shape our identities. However, the text also introduces other interesting themes such as the concepts of stereotypes and prejudice. Later in this unit, students will have the opportunity to address questions such as, “How do we perceive and judge others?” and “How does it feel to be labeled?” For now, you can frame questions about the way Esperanza describes Mexicans, Chinese, and women in terms of what this says about her own beliefs and experiences.

Follow-through

Now students can create identity charts for themselves. Before beginning this activity, ask students to brainstorm a list of categories people use to help define themselves such as gender, age, physical characteristics, and hobbies as well as ties to a particular religion, ethnic group, neighborhood, and nation. Explain to students that they will be sharing their identity charts with the class so they should be cautious about including information that they want to remain private. In the next few lessons, students will have the opportunity to think more deeply about their own identities. As they gain a deeper understanding of identity, they will add to their identity charts. Their identity charts will also serve as useful prewriting tools for future assignments such as students’ biopoems.

Teaching note: In preparation for this class, you may want to create your own identity chart. Not only will this model the assignment for students but it also provides a way for students to get to know you. Throughout this unit there are opportunities for you to work alongside the students to reinforce the idea that you are a member of their classroom community too.

Homework

1. Students can complete their identity charts for homework. You could also ask students to write a brief journal entry about their identity charts. Here is a prompt to help structure students' reflections:

Look over your identity chart. What aspects of your identity are most important to you? Select one characteristic from your identity chart and write about why it is an important part of defining who you are.

2. Following Esperanza's example, students could write a personal essay about their own name. Students could share their essays in class the next day as a way to begin to introduce themselves to each other.

My Name
(from *House on Mango Street*)
Sandra Cisneros

Please visit this page to view Cisneros' reading:
<http://www.filebox.vt.edu/users/sgerro1/main/My%20Name%20Imitation.pdf>

LESSON 2

What shapes your identity?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The previous lesson introduced students to the term *identity* and encouraged them to think about the factors that shape their own identity. This lesson includes activities to deepen and broaden students' ideas about identities. First, students share their identity charts as a way to reflect on their own identities and to get to know their classmates.

Next, students will write biopoems. This poetic format emphasizes how personal experiences shape identities. When students consider how experiences have influenced their own identities, it lays the groundwork for them to connect the customs (e.g., how people ate, dressed, and played) and dramatic events (e.g., war and famine) that occur throughout world history to the individuals who lived through these experiences. This step helps bring distant history down to a human scale.

Learning goals

- Students will review and deepen their understanding of *identity*.
- Students will be able to identify how their experiences have shaped their identities.

Materials

- Tape (for posting identity charts around the room)
- “How to write a biopoem” handout
- “Biopoem examples” handout

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

Begin class by having students share their identity charts from the previous lessons. They can do this in small groups of four to six, with students each taking a minute or two to present their charts to the group. Or you can structure the sharing of identity charts as a “pass around” in which each student gives his or her chart to the student to the right. After about a minute, instruct students to “switch,” and have students pass the charts to their neighbors. Continue this until students receive their own identity charts.

Looking at classmates’ identity charts can help students recognize similarities and differences within the classroom community. Through the sharing process, students often discover factors included in others’ charts that they may not have considered. For example, some students may have included information about their families’ histories that other students have not. Therefore, you may want to give students the opportunity to add to their identity charts after they have viewed the work of their classmates.

Main activity

A biopoem is an 11-line poem that describes a person. In the standard biopoem structure an individual is described largely through his or her experiences, hopes, and accomplishments rather than by basic characteristics such as gender, height, age, and race. In this lesson, students write a biopoem describing themselves.

Curriculum connection: Students can write biopoems for historical figures based on individual research or class material. For example, ask students to write a biopoem for Queen Hatshepsut, Charlemagne, or Marco Polo.

Before introducing the biopoem activity, ask students to write a list of the types of factors or characteristics they used to describe themselves on their identity charts. See if any of them mention hopes, personal experiences, or accomplishments. If not, ask students to identify an example of an experience that shaped how they answer the question, “Who am I?” Or you may want to refer back to the “My Name” reading. In this excerpt, Esperanza describes how her great-grandmother’s identity was shaped when she was “kidnapped” by Esperanza’s great-grandfather. Before this event she was “a wild, horse of a woman.” After she was married off to Esperanza’s great-grandfather, she became a sad woman who sat at a window much of the day.

When students have an initial understanding of the relationship between identity and personal experience, distribute the handout “How to Write a Biopoem.” In preparation for this class, we suggest you write your own biopoem to share with the class as an example.

Another way to structure this activity is to have students complete Step 1 on the “How to Write a Biopoem” worksheet and then hand their work to a partner. Students could use this information to write a biopoem about their partner.

Follow-through

Give students the opportunity to share their biopoems. Depending on how much time you have, small groups of students could read their biopoems aloud to each other. Or you could have students read their poems to the whole class. Some students might be shy

about reading their own poems so you could have students read each other's poems. To ensure that each student gets a response to his or her biopoem, you could assign one student to be the "responder" for each poem. After a biopoem is read aloud, the responder has to comment about something he or she heard that was particularly interesting or surprising.

If you have more time, the following exercise is another way students can read and respond to each other's biopoems:

- Ask students to pass their poems to a neighbor. (Note: This exercise works best if students have written their poems on large sheets of paper with ample room in the margins for comments.)
- Give students several minutes to read their neighbors' poems. After they read them, they should respond to them silently by writing comments or questions in the margins.
- The room should be silent for the entire activity.
- After about three to five minutes, have students pass the poems to their neighbors so that each student gets a new poem.
- Repeat this process for as long as your class period allows. This activity works well when at least three students have read each poem (or other text).
- At the end of class, students get their own poems back and can read the comments of other students.

Teaching note: One step toward establishing a respectful classroom culture is to remind students about the difference between appropriate and inappropriate ways to respond to their classmates' work. Later in this unit, students will have the opportunity to explicitly discuss the norms and rules they think should guide classroom behavior. For now, you may wish to go over a few dos and don'ts, such as "Do write questions you have after reading the biopoem" and "Don't make comments that are not related to the ideas in the biopoem."

Homework

Students can add to their identity charts based on the type of information they included in their biopoems. As a follow-up to this lesson, you might also ask students to write a brief journal entry using the following prompt:

Experiences help us define who we are and who we are not. Identify an experience that shaped your identity. Describe this event or experience and then explain the impact it has had on how you answer the question, "Who am I?"

How to Write a Biopoem

Step 1: Brainstorming ideas

1. List at least seven adjectives that you would use to describe yourself.
2. List three important relationships in your life (e.g., friend, brother, daughter, or nephew).
3. List five things that you love.
4. List five memories you have and describe how you felt at those times.
5. List five of your fears.
6. List three accomplishments.
7. List five wishes or hopes.
8. Where do you live?

Step 2: Use your answers to the above questions to help you write your biopoem.

The Biopoem Structure

(Line 1) First name

(Line 2) Three or four adjectives that describe you

(Line 3) Important relationship (e.g., daughter of . . . , friend of . . .)

(Line 4) Two or three things, people, or ideas that you love

(Line 5) Three feelings you have experienced

(Line 6) Three fears you have experienced

(Line 7) Accomplishments (e.g., who won . . . who performed . . . who learned . . .)

(Line 8) Two or three things you want to see happen or want to experience

(Line 9) Your residence

(Line 10) Last name

Write your biopoem here:

Biopoem Examples

Jackson

Friendly, silly, athletic, tall

Son of John and Brenda

Who loves chocolate chip ice cream, the Grizzlies, and Saturdays

Who feels happy, tired, and lucky

And who is scared of tests, thunderstorms, and failure

Who learned how to shoot a three-point shot and won a basketball trophy

Who hopes to see an NBA game and make his parents proud

Lives in Memphis, Tennessee

Tillman

Emily

Loud, short, gymnast, smiley, responsible

Friend of Lila, Carly, and Grace

Loves to do cartwheels, eat raw cookie dough, and write poetry

Who feels excited on weekends and embarrassed at school

Who learned how to do a handstand when she was three years old

Who hopes that everyone could get along

Resident of Tennessee

Garner

Martin

Proud, courageous, eloquent, wise

Leader to millions

Who loved nonviolence, god, and humanity

Who felt outraged by hate and prejudice

And who was inspired by acts of kindness

Who gained greater dignity for his people

And hoped everyone could leave in peace

He lives in our hearts

Luther King, Jr.

LESSON 3

How do others define your identity?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In the first two lessons, students engaged in activities in which they answered the question, “Who am I?” Yet, even as we struggle to define our unique identity, we are being defined by others. Sometimes groups attach labels to us that differ from those we would choose for ourselves. In the book *The Bear That Wasn't*, Frank Tashlin uses words and pictures to describe that process. Tashlin tells the story of a bear who is told again and again that he is a “silly man who needs a shave and wears a fur coat.” So many people label him this way that eventually he begins to question his own identity as a bear. Ultimately, the bear recognizes that he is not a man but he is not convinced that he is a bear either. Tashlin’s story is a metaphor for how identity is formed not only by our perceptions of ourselves but also by how others define us.

In the following lessons, students will explore the relationship between the individual and society by looking at how their own identities are influenced by others. This is a theme relevant to the study of world history, especially ancient world history. Before the modern era, most cultures placed labels on individuals that were determined at birth—labels such as slave, prince, merchant, or farmer. Reminding students about how, even today, their own identities are shaped by larger society can help students relate to the histories of people whose culture may seem distant and unfamiliar.

Learning goals

- Students will be able to recognize how their own identity has been defined by others.
- Students will begin to recognize the relationship between the individual and society.

Materials

- *The Bear That Wasn't*, by Frank Tashlin (Classroom sets of this book have been distributed to school libraries. An excerpt from this book is included in the *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource book on pages 3–7.)
- Storyboard template
- Bear claw identity chart
- Excerpt from *Farewell to Manzanar*

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

This warm-up exercise prepares students for reading *The Bear That Wasn't* by helping them think about how the labels others use to describe us are sometimes different from the ones we choose for ourselves.

First, show students an image of a famous person—a movie star, an athlete, a historical figure—anyone who will be easily recognizable by all students in the class. Ask students to respond to the prompt, “What words or labels would you use to describe this person?” For example, if you use an image of Martin Luther King, Jr., students might use words like “hero,” “leader,” or “African American” to describe him.

Next, ask students to think about the labels or words that are used to describe themselves. Have them answer the following prompts in writing:

- What words or “labels” would you use to describe yourself?
- What words might others use to describe you?
- What words might others use to describe you that you would not choose for yourself?

You can segue to the main activity by explaining that in today’s lesson the class will be reading a story about what can happen when other people put labels on us.

Main activity

The relationship between individuals and society is complicated. *The Bear That Wasn't* provides an opportunity for students to begin to understand how society shapes our identities as individuals.

If you have access to a classroom set of this book, you can read the book aloud to students as they follow along. Or you can ask student volunteers to read the following parts: Narrator, Bear, Foreman, General Manager, Third Vice President, Second Vice President, First Vice President, President, zoo bears, circus bears.

If you do not have a classroom set of the book, while you read the story aloud, have students illustrate what they hear on a storyboard. A storyboard template has been included with this lesson. Students can draw an image in the large box next to a short caption describing the main idea in that section of the text.

Curriculum connection: Drawing is a literacy strategy that helps students comprehend and retain ideas from written text. Use this strategy to help students better understand historical texts, myths, or parables.

Debrief this story by asking students to create identity charts for the bear. You can use the bear paw template included with this lesson plan to highlight the distinction between how the bear describes himself and how others describe him. Ask students to write all of the words the bear uses to describe himself inside the paw and all of the words that others use to describe him outside the paw.

After students make identity charts for the bear, lead a class discussion about the meaning of this story. Here are some prompts to help guide the conversation:

- What words does the bear use to describe himself?
- What words did others use to describe him?
- How does the identity of the bear shift over time?
- What point do you think Frank Tashlin, the author, is trying to make in this story?
- What do you think has more bearing on identity—the labels we give ourselves or the labels others give us?”

Follow-through

To help students apply their understanding of identity, they can read another story about how we are often labeled by others. In her memoir *Farewell to Manzanar*, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston tells the story of what it was like to be a Japanese American in California during the 1940s. In 1945, Jeanne’s family moved to Los Angeles and she started sixth grade in a new school. A short excerpt included with this lesson describes how Jeanne experienced being labeled as a foreigner by her white classmates even though she had lived in the United States her whole life. After reading this excerpt, ask students to compare Jeanne’s experience to that of the bear. What do their experiences have in common? How are they different?

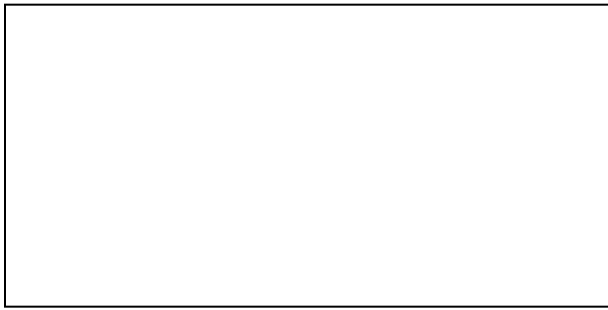
Note: If you are interested in having your students read all of *Farewell to Manzanar*, possibly in collaboration with the literature teachers in your school, you can borrow classroom sets of the book from Facing History’s library. Facing History has also published a study guide to *Farewell to Manzanar*.

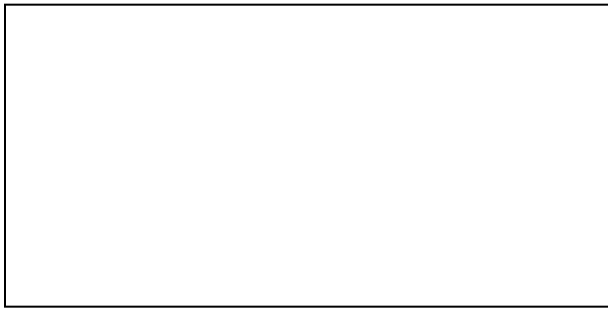
Homework

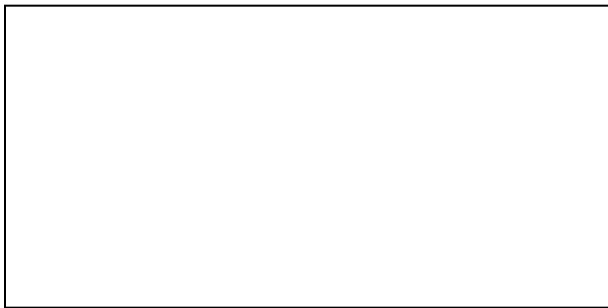
If you do not have time for students to read the excerpt from *Farewell to Manzanar* during class, you may want to have them read it for homework. Students can write a short journal entry comparing Jeanne’s experience to that of the bear. Use the following prompts to guide students’ writing:

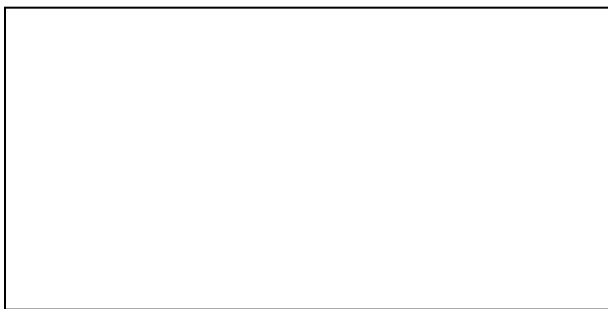
- What do the experiences of Jeanne and the bear have in common? How are they different?
- Identify a time when you have been labeled by others. How did it feel? How did you respond?
- Identify a time when you labeled someone else. Why did you do it?
- Why do you think we are quick to place labels on each other?

Storyboard











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The Bear That Wasn't: Identity Chart



Farewell to Manzanar Excerpt
Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston

In her book *Farewell to Manzanar*, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston tells the story of what it was like to be a Japanese American in California during the 1940s. Jeanne was born in California in 1934, the youngest child of parents who had immigrated to the United States from Japan. In 1945, she started sixth grade in a new school.

That afternoon, during a reading lesson, [the teacher] finally asked me if I'd care to try a page out loud. I had not yet opened my mouth, except to smile. When I stood up, everyone turned to watch. Any kid entering a new class wants, first of all, to be liked. This was uppermost in my mind. I smiled wider, then began to read. I made no mistakes. When I finished, a pretty blond girl in front of me said, quite innocently, "Gee, I didn't know you could speak English." She was genuinely amazed. I was stunned. How could this have even been in doubt?

LESSON 4

What aspects of our identities do we show to others?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In previous lessons, students have focused on various factors that shape our identities. They have learned that our answer to the question “Who am I?” is influenced by biographical characteristics and personal experiences. We define ourselves. At the same time, others choose labels for us. In this lesson, students begin to synthesize their understanding of identity through the creation of a mask.

For centuries, various cultures have used masks as a way to express individual and group identity. In some cultures masks are an important part of spiritual rituals. In other cultures they are part of national traditions such as celebrations of war or independence. Masks play a role in life-cycle events such as weddings and funerals. Throughout their exploration of world history, students can learn a great deal about a culture by analyzing the masks used by its people.

Masks also provide a way to visually represent an answer to the question, “Who am I?” Figuratively speaking, people wear masks all of the time. In his critically acclaimed poem, “We Wear the Mask,” Paul Laurence Dunbar writes, “We wear the mask that grins and lies, / It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes.” Dunbar wrote this poem in 1896. At this time, African Americans were often depicted in literature and the media as happy with their lot in life. Yet Dunbar believed that the smiles worn by African Americans were only a façade used to survive and get ahead, a mask used to hide their pain and resentment at being treated unfairly in the segregated and unequal context of post-Civil War America.

Dunbar refers to the African American experience in his poem but his words capture the universal experience of all people who have used their facial features to hide their true feelings. Through making their own masks, students will have the opportunity to define themselves visually. They can select aspects of their identities to highlight as well as aspects to conceal. Sharing their masks with their classmates (which they will do in the next lesson) provides a way for students to introduce themselves to a new community as well as a way to counter the labels or stereotypes others may have placed on them.

Learning goals

- Students will identify the aspects of their identities that they want to present to others and the aspects they want to conceal.
- Students will be able to represent their identities visually through making a mask.

Materials

- Materials for mask making, including (but not limited to): paper plates, large pieces of paper, glue, scissors, markers, magazines
- “Mask-making preparation worksheet” handout
- “We Wear the Mask,” by Paul Laurence Dunbar (optional)

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

To prepare students for mask making, ask them to respond to the following prompt in writing:

Think about a time when you have pretended to be something that you are not or when you have hidden your true feelings. Why did you choose to hide a part of your identity?

Volunteers can share their responses. Given the personal nature of this prompt, it is best to allow students to keep this reflection private. However, all students can participate in answering general questions such as “Why do people sometimes hide their true selves? What would happen if we never concealed our feelings or parts of our identities?”

Another way to introduce this lesson is to have students read the poem “We Wear the Mask.” This poem has been interpreted in many ways. Dunbar may be referring to the universal human behavior of hiding our feelings or an aspect of our true selves. Many believe that he is referring to the experience of African Americans. For the purposes of this lesson, it is sufficient for students to come away from a reading of the poem with an awareness of the fact that we all wear masks—in different ways and for different reasons. Often in an attempt to come across as “cool” in front of their peers, adolescents will hide their feelings or their interests. They may wear masks to conceal a love of math or disappointment about a bad grade.

If you have more time to discuss the historical context of this poem, you can use the following prompts to structure your conversation:

- Paul Laurence Dunbar was an African American poet who was born in 1872. He was the son of slaves. Whom do you think he might have been writing about in this poem? Why might these people be wearing a mask?
- He writes, “With torn and bleeding hearts we smile.” Why would the hearts of African Americans be torn and bleeding in the years after the Civil War? Why would African Americans still be smiling? Are their smiles happy smiles?
- Why did Dunbar call this poem “We Wear the Mask”?

Main activity

Explain to students that they will be making a mask that will be displayed in the classroom. The purpose of the mask is to answer the question, “Who am I?” Before beginning the mask-making activity, ask students to list the reasons people wear masks. Encourage them to think about masks both literally and figuratively while helping them to consider the multiple purposes of masks. Sometimes people wear masks to hide their feelings or to pretend to be something they are not; at other times people wear masks to emphasize a particular facet of their personalities. For example, a clown mask emphasizes humor and playfulness. Masks can also function as protection (e.g., a doctor’s mask) or as entertainment.

To make their masks, students first have to decide how they want to present themselves to the class. Which aspects of their identities do they want to emphasize? Which aspects of their identities do they wish to conceal? Completing the “Mask-making Preparation Worksheet” can help students answer these questions before they begin crafting their

masks. Students can also refer to their identity charts and biopoems for ideas about what to include on their masks. Before they begin, show students the materials they can use. In addition to markers and paper plates, old magazines are especially useful for this activity because students can cut out words and images. Also, inform students that they can decorate both the outside and the inside of the masks. They can use the outside to represent the aspects of their identities they openly show to the outside world and the inside to represent the more private aspects of their identities.

Curriculum connection: As you study various world cultures, you can introduce students to the masks used in those cultures. Students can discuss the purpose of the masks and what they reveal about a society's beliefs and customs. You could also have students do their own research about the masks used by particular cultures. Students could even recreate the masks and present them to the rest of the class. The Internet provides numerous resources about masks from around the world and throughout history. One place to start is the "Masks of the World" page published by the Museum of Anthropology at the University of Missouri-Columbia (<http://anthromuseum.missouri.edu/minigalleries/worldmasks/intro.shtml>).

Follow-through

Students will likely need the entire class period to finish their masks. You may want to stop class a few minutes early to discuss the idea that identities change over time. The way students design their masks at the beginning of sixth grade is probably different from the way they would have designed them at the beginning of fifth grade. Similarly, the way they answer the question "Who am I?" at the beginning of sixth grade is probably different from the way they would answer it at the end of sixth grade. As you discuss our ability to change our identities, ask students to identify one aspect of themselves that they hope changes during this school year as well as one aspect of themselves that they hope stays the same.

Homework

Students can finish their masks for homework. In addition, ask students to write a letter to themselves that you will return to them at the end of sixth grade. Assure them that you will not read their letters. Suggest that students answer any of the following questions:

- How do you answer the question, "Who am I?"
- When you read this letter at the end of the school year, which aspects of your identity do you hope have stayed the same?
- What is one thing about yourself that you hope has changed by the end of the school year?
- What can you do to help make this change happen?

Mask-making preparation worksheet

1. What aspects of your identity would you like to present to others?

Biographical information:

Experiences and accomplishments:

Hopes and fears:

Likes and dislikes:

2. What labels or adjectives would you like others to use when they think about you?

3. What are some aspects of your identity that you may not present to others but that you still want them to know about? (These are ideas you might want to include on the inside of your mask.)

We Wear the Mask
Paul Laurence Dunbar (1896)

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
 This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
 And mouth with myriad subtleties.
Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
 Nay, let them only see us, while
 We wear the mask.
We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
 To thee from tortured souls arise.
 We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
 But let the world think other-wise,
 We wear the mask!

GLOSSARY

Guile: deceitful, sly

Myriad: many

Subtleties: meanings; can be meanings that are difficult to define

Vile: gross, immoral

LESSON 5

Who are we?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Typically, a study of world history focuses on the identities of groups—cultures, communities, and civilizations—more than on the identities of particular individuals. Yet the same factors that influence the identities of individuals influence the identities of groups. Communities are influenced by physical attributes such as geography just as they are influenced by experiences such as war, plentiful harvests, or natural disasters.

Communities are also shaped by the way they are defined by other groups. Thus the focus on individual identity in the first half of this unit provides a solid foundation for students' exploration of communities in the rest of the unit (as well as throughout a world history course).

In this lesson, students begin to explore the concept of community by describing their class as a collection of people with unique identities. The activities in the lesson help students see the common characteristics that make them a group as well as the distinct qualities they each bring to their classroom community. As students study cultures throughout world history, remind them that although the individuals in these societies share a common identity, they (i.e., all Greeks or all Chinese) were not the same—just as the members of their class maintain distinct characteristics while being part of a class and larger school community. Balancing the desire to organize people into categories with the recognition that we are all unique individuals is an important skill that keeps people from relying on stereotypes.

Learning goals

- Students will learn about the qualities that make their classmates unique as well as the qualities they have in common.
- Students will be able to describe the identity of their world history class.

Materials

- Tape or pushpins
- “Who am I? Who are we?” handout

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

During this lesson, students will tour an “exhibit” about the people in their classroom, called “Who am I? Who are we?” Use the first few minutes of class to have students help mount this exhibit. Ask students to post their biopoems next to their masks in designated areas around the room. You may also want to give students a piece of paper and tape so they can add titles to their portions of the exhibit.

Main activity

Students tour the room in order to view all of the masks and read all of the poems. Facing History teachers often refer to this activity as a *gallery walk*. To guide students as they view their classmates’ work and to hold them accountable for using the gallery walk time productively, we suggest providing students with a note-taking template such as the “Who am I? Who are we?” handout.

Curriculum connection: Gallery walks can be an effective teaching strategy to use throughout your course to help students gather details from a variety of sources. You can create your own exhibit for students to tour in order to learn specific information. Or, as in this lesson, you can have students create pieces that become part of an exhibit about a particular culture or time period.

Follow-through

Now that students have learned about the identities of their classmates, ask them to consider the identity of their class as a group. Have students respond to the prompt, “What words and phrases describe your world history class?” Then, have groups of students work together to create an identity chart for their world history class. Remind students to consider the same factors they used to define their own identities (e.g., physical characteristics, experiences, and interests) when defining the identity of their class.

As the final activity of this lesson, ask students to respond to the following questions in their journals: Do you think this class is a group? Why or why not? Do you think this class is a community? Why or why not? What is the difference between a group and a community? Their answers to these questions will prepare them for Lesson 6.

Homework

Students can finish their journal entries for homework. As an extension of this lesson, you could ask students to begin to make an identity chart of their school. What do they know about it? What don’t they know? To learn more about their school, each student could interview someone for homework. Students could interview other students, teachers, the librarian, school secretaries, custodians, administrators, or other staff. Students might also learn about their school by looking at their school’s website. In the next lesson, students can share the results of their interviews and use all of the information they’ve gathered to create an identity chart for the school.

LESSON 6

What is a community?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

With Lesson 6, students move away from the study of individuals to the study of groups of people. An investigation of world history is ultimately an exploration of how groups of people formed communities, cultures, and civilizations. Communities are distinguished from groups by the fact that they share a common interest, background, or purpose that gives them a sense of cohesion. Although any collection of people can be called a group, not all groups could be called communities.

Throughout history, groups of people have formed communities to increase their chances of survival. They may have shared an interest in providing food for their families so they joined with others to hunt or farm. Or they may have formed a community to protect themselves from other groups that wanted their resources. Often people shared a common interest, such as a religion, which gave them a sense of community. Members of a community typically feel a sense of responsibility to one another.

In this lesson, students will analyze one definition of community in order to construct their own definitions. Students can refer to these definitions throughout the year as they think about how and why people throughout history have formed communities and consider the factors that have caused communities to break down. As students explore the meaning of community, they will reflect on how their class is a community with a shared purpose in promoting the learning and achievement of all its members. The explicit designation of the class as a community can build the sense that students are responsible not only for their own learning but for nurturing the learning of their classmates as well.

Learning goals

- Students will distinguish between a community and a group.
- Students will be able to define the word *community*.
- Students will identify what makes their classroom a community.

Materials

- “Chunking worksheet: What is a community?” handout
- Signs labeled “Strongly agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly disagree”
- Tape

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

Begin class by reviewing the homework from the previous lesson. If you had students interview members of the school community, students can share their interview data. Then the class can create an identity chart for the school. Not only does this activity help students become familiar with a school that is probably new to many of them but it also reinforces the distinction between a group and a community. Because groups of people come together in a school for a specific purpose—to learn—this gives them a sense of community.

You could also begin class by having students share their responses to the following journal prompts: Do you think this class is a group? Why or why not? Do you think this class is a community? Why or why not? What is the difference between a group and a community? If students answered these questions for homework, they could meet with a partner or small group to discuss their answers. If they have not yet responded to these questions, you could have them do so now. They can return to their answers at the end of class after they have thought more deeply about the question, “What makes a group a community?”

Main activity

In her memoir, *A City Year*, Suzanne Goldsmith offers her own definition of the word *community*:

Communities are not built of friends, or of groups with similar styles and tastes, or even of people who like and understand each other. They are built of people who feel they are part of something that is bigger than themselves: a shared goal or enterprise, like righting a wrong, or building a road, or raising children, or living honorably, or worshipping a god. To build community requires only the ability to see value in others, to look at them and see a potential partner in one’s enterprise.

Goldsmith’s definition raises many interesting questions that can help students refine their understanding of the word *community*. To be a community, must members like each other? Do communities always serve a purpose? Are those who do not contribute to this purpose still considered members of the community? Goldsmith’s words introduce the idea that being a member of a community comes with responsibilities—members are “partners” in a common “enterprise.”

Curriculum connection: Students can apply this definition of community to cultures they encounter throughout world history. Ask students to identify the shared qualities that give the peoples living along the Euphrates River a sense of community.

Because this quotation contains language and ideas that may challenge students, you may want to use a chunking strategy to help them decode the text. *Chunking* is a literacy strategy in which students break complicated text into smaller, more manageable sections. After reading the quotation one time through, anticipate the lack of confidence some students may feel that they could ever understand such complex, “grown-up”-sounding text. Reassure students that once they break the quotation down into smaller sections, they can master the language. If this is the first time students have used this strategy, we suggest doing the worksheet together as a class so you can guide students through paraphrasing key ideas.

Teaching note: Chunking is a particularly useful strategy to help students understand excerpts of primary documents. Initially you can chunk the text into smaller sections for students. After students have used this technique a few times, they can chunk the text on their own.

Follow-through

When students understand Goldsmith's definition of community, they are ready to evaluate it. A *four corners* discussion is one strategy that helps students express their opinions. Here's how it works:

1. Label the four corners of the room with signs reading "Strongly agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly disagree."
2. Give students a specific statement to which they respond by standing in the corner that best represents their opinions. Providing some quiet time for students to respond in writing before they have to move reduces the likelihood that they will simply follow a classmate to a particular corner.
3. When all students have moved to a corner, ask a representative from each corner to explain his or her opinion.
4. After someone from each corner has explained his or her opinion, facilitate a discussion among students from all corners, encouraging them to ask each other questions and to challenge each other's ideas. Inform students that it is perfectly acceptable for their opinions to change as they listen to the arguments presented by their classmates. Tell them that they can switch corners at any time to reflect their revised opinions.

Below are several prompts you can use for this activity: (Note: Before students respond to these prompts, remind them that there are no right or wrong answers. They should respond based on their own opinions, not based on what Goldsmith believes about the definition of a community.)

- Communities should only include people who are friends and who like each other.
- Unlike Goldsmith, I believe that communities are sometimes made up of people who are not working toward a common goal.
- Members of a community feel responsible to one another.
- Communities are a kind of group. But not all groups are communities.
- Our classroom is a community.
- A community has certain rules about membership. Not everyone can belong; some people must be excluded in order for a community to exist.

Homework

Have students respond to the following prompt in their journals:

Write your own definition of community. Based on your definition, write a list of the communities to which you belong. Pick two of these communities and answer the following questions for each: What do you have in common with other members of the community? What responsibilities or obligations does membership involve? Who is not part of the community? Why?

In preparation for Lesson 7, ask students to bring in an artifact (e.g., a newspaper article, postcard, photograph, or souvenir) that represents the community to which they all belong: the city of Memphis.

Chunking Worksheet: What is a community?

Communities are not built of friends, or of groups with similar styles and tastes, or even of people who like and understand each other. They are built of people who feel they are part of something that is bigger than themselves: a shared goal or enterprise, like righting a wrong, or building a road, or raising children, or living honorably, or worshipping a god. To build community requires only the ability to see value in others, to look at them and see a potential partner in one's enterprise.

—*Suzanne Goldsmith*, author

What does this sentence or phrase mean?

Rewrite the main ideas in your own words.

<p>Communities are not built of friends, or of groups with similar styles and tastes, or even of people who like and understand each other.</p>	
<p>They are built of people who feel they are part of something that is bigger than themselves . . .</p>	
<p>. . . a shared goal or enterprise, like righting a wrong, or building a road, or raising children, or living honorably, or worshipping a god.</p>	
<p>To build community requires only the ability to see value in others . . .</p>	
<p>. . . to look at them and see a potential partner in one's enterprise.</p>	

LESSON 7

What makes Memphis a community?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Following Lesson 6, students should have a conceptual understanding of the term *community*. In Lesson 7, students explore the meaning of community in a more concrete way. Through describing Memphis, Tennessee, a community with which they are all familiar, students will begin to identify important factors that have shaped the identities of communities throughout history. Students have already learned that certain factors such as biology, personal experiences, and group affiliations influence individual identity. Now they will see how factors such as geography, politics, economics, and culture/entertainment influence the identities of communities. And just as students have thought about how their own identities have changed over time, they can see how the identity of Memphis has changed as a result of new technology, shifting values, social movements, and migration.

Learning goals

- Students will be able to describe Memphis, Tennessee.
- Students will identify factors that shape the identity of a community/society.
- Students will begin to understand the concept of society.

Materials

- Images of Memphis
- Post-it notes, index cards, or small pieces of paper
- Large poster paper (optional)

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

For homework, students may have written about the communities to which they belong. As a follow-up, ask students to raise their hands if they identified Memphis as a community to which they belong. Then ask them, individually or in small groups, to brainstorm a list of words and phrases that complete the sentence “Memphis is. . .” Students should record these words or phrases on Post-it notes, index cards, or small pieces of paper. They can also use these lists to make an identity chart for the city of Memphis. If you had students bring in artifacts that represent Memphis, they can use these objects to spark responses to the “Memphis is. . .” prompt.

Main activity

The purpose of the main activity is to help students connect what they know about Memphis to the concept of community. First, divide the class into small groups. Then distribute copies of the images of Memphis included in this lesson plan. Inform students that the images are meant to stimulate their thinking but that they can record ideas unrelated to the images based on their own experiences of living in Memphis. Ask students to add to their lists of words and phrases that complete the sentence “Memphis is. . .” As in the warm-up exercise, students can record these words or phrases on Post-it notes, index cards, or small pieces of paper.

When groups have at least 25 descriptions of Memphis recorded on separate cards or pieces of paper, ask them to organize these words/phrases into broad categories. For example, they might create one pile of words that describe what Memphis looks like, another pile that describes what people do for fun in Memphis, and another pile representing the history of Memphis. When students have finished placing all of their cards into piles, ask them to give each pile a name. If time permits, groups can draw identity charts for Memphis.

Curriculum connections: An essential critical thinking skill for social studies students is the ability to organize information into categories. The exercise of physically placing items, images, or words in piles is one way to help students develop this skill.

This is an appropriate time to ask students to connect their conceptual understanding of community, developed in the previous lesson, to their concrete description of an actual community—the city of Memphis. First, ask students to review the definitions of community they generated in Lesson 6. Then give them a few minutes to respond in their journals to the following prompt: What does it mean to belong to the community of Memphis? What common goals might people who live in and near Memphis share? If time permits, you can facilitate a discussion about the factors that contribute to making Memphis a community. Ask students to clarify the distinction between Memphis as a city and Memphis as a community.

Follow-through

Thus far in this unit students have focused on local communities such as the class and the city of Memphis. During the rest of the year students will explore the histories of distant societies. This final activity can help students connect what they have learned about local communities to what they will be studying about larger societies.

First, write the word *society* on the board. Ask students if they have any ideas about how a society is the same as a community and how it is different. Both communities and societies include groups of people. Indeed, sometimes people use these terms as synonyms. However, typically communities represent smaller groups of people. You would not usually refer to a class or a school or even Memphis as a society but you would call all of these groups communities. On the other hand, the United States or the Mayan Empire is more often identified as a society rather than as a community. Because societies are just large communities, everything that students have learned about communities applies to the societies they will be studying in world history. You could also take a few moments to brainstorm other words people use to describe the large communities you will be studying. Terms like *civilization* and *culture* may come to mind.

In the main activity, students used their description of Memphis to generate broad categories representing some of the key factors that shape communities. Have students share the main categories they created. As they name a category, write it on the board or on a large piece of paper, grouping related categories such as geography and physical characteristics. Inform students that when they look at societies from around the world they will be studying the same factors.

Curriculum connections: Elements that make up societies include the following: geography, government, religion/values, economics/trade, arts/entertainment, education, science/technology, and social structure. The images selected of Memphis allude to these factors that shape a community. You can keep a list of these categories on the wall as a tool for students to use when describing and analyzing the societies they will study throughout the school year.

Communities and societies change over time. Indeed, exploring how societies develop and why they decline is often a central theme of a world history course. To introduce students to the idea that societies change, ask them to create a list of the ways Memphis has changed over time. Challenge groups to come up with one change for each of the categories listed on the board. As an extension question, ask students to guess why or how these changes took place. Students can add their ideas about how Memphis has changed to their identity charts of the city.

Homework

Students can add to their identity charts of Memphis. They can gather new information about their community by talking to their parents, neighbors, or other community members, or by doing research on the Internet. Students can more easily compare data if they use the same interview questions. Here are some interview questions related to the concepts of membership, community, and belonging that students will be exploring in the next lesson:

- What are important or defining moments in the history of Memphis?
- What is an example of a moment when you feel that the residents of Memphis came together as a community around shared goals?
- What is an example of a time when you feel that the Memphis community was divided?
- How would you describe Memphis to others?

In addition to these questions, students can contribute their own interview questions.

Images of Memphis

Use these photographs to help you complete the statement “Memphis is . . .”











LESSON 8

How do communities define *we* and *they*?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Communities, like Memphis, are made up of distinct groups of people such as students, business people, musicians, and city employees. At the same time, the community of Memphis is situated within a larger network of places such as other cities in Tennessee or the United States. This lesson focuses on how we categorize people within our communities as well as how we place labels on members of other communities. In both of these situations, individuals are making choices about who belongs and who does not belong. Psychologist Deborah Tannen writes that categorizing people is a basic part of human behavior:

We all know that we are unique individuals but we tend to see ourselves as representatives of groups. It's a natural tendency; since we must see the world in patterns in order to make sense of it; we wouldn't be able to deal with the daily onslaught of people and objects if we couldn't predict a lot about them and feel that we know who or what they are.

Throughout history, communities have classified people into groups in order to establish boundaries on membership. Understanding these communities (or societies) demands an awareness of who is included and who is excluded, as well as what factors are used to make the decisions about who belongs. Membership has been based on family, tribe, nationality, race, class, religion, gender, and even skills; and organizing people into categories has served many functions (e.g., political, economic, and social). For example, in India, the caste system created strict rules about membership based on family. It was once impossible for someone to become a member of a different caste. In the Middle Ages, groups of people with similar trades formed guilds. Membership often required serving an apprenticeship and proving one's skill. In the history of the United States, race has been used to classify people into groups with different rights and privileges.

In this lesson, students will read the classic Dr. Seuss story "The Sneetches." In this tale, Sneetches with stars on their bellies have more status than those without stars. Yet even when the plain-bellied Sneetches get stars on their bellies, they are still denied entrance to the elite community of star-bellied Sneetches. Ultimately the Sneetches learn that, stars or no stars, they are all members of the same community. This poem has been used for decades as a warning against discrimination and prejudice. Dr. Seuss wrote a shorter version of "The Sneetches" in 1953, when the Supreme Court was hearing testimony in *Brown v. Board of Education*. He completed the longer version of the poem, with illustrations, in 1961. Many scholars believe Dr. Seuss wrote this poem to express his opposition to discrimination against Jewish people in Europe.*

Throughout history, cultures have resolved tensions between communities in the same way as the Sneetches, by extending membership to a wider range of people. For example, the Romans tried to assimilate many of the people they conquered into their society.

* Thomas Fensch, *Of Sneetches and Whos and The Good Dr. Seuss* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1997), 118.

Students will also learn about communities that maintained strict boundaries on membership. Thus, the story of the Sneetches can serve as a touchstone throughout your course: It can be a way to begin a conversation about how a specific culture makes decisions about who belongs and who doesn't. This story also provides a window into students' relationships with others in the class and in the school. Adolescents are known for forming cliques. This story may help students think more deeply about the purpose and fairness of "in" groups and "out" groups.

As communities set boundaries on membership, they create distinctions of *we* and *they*. In the poem "We and They," Rudyard Kipling writes about how people judge those outside their community as "other." His experience as a British boy growing up in Bombay, India, inspires the ideas in this poem. He writes about how the British label the eating habits of Indians as "scandalous," whereas the Indians find it disgusting that the British eat the meat of a cow, an animal considered sacred by Hindus. Thus this poem provides an effective way to introduce students to the idea of perspective, an important concept for any student of history. Especially in world history, where the content focuses on cultures so distant from students' lives, both geographically and temporally, students should be aware of how their perspective influences their ideas about the cultures they are studying. Similarly, as students encounter classmates from other schools, backgrounds, and neighborhoods, they should be aware that labels of "normal," "strange," and "different" are matters of perspective rather than fact.

Learning goals

- Students will understand the relationship between membership and community and will be able to identify ways in which communities define membership.
- Students will be able to define the word *perspective*.
- Students will consider how membership in a particular group can influence how people view those outside of that group.
- Students will be able to identify examples of *we* and *they* distinctions in their own lives.

Materials

- *The Sneetches*, by Dr. Seuss (Facing History's Memphis office has a limited number of books that can be checked out. Most school and public libraries have copies of *The Sneetches* as well.)
- Optional: *The Sneetches* video (This can also be borrowed from Facing History. It is only available in VHS format and is approximately 12 minutes long.)
- "We and They" by Rudyard Kipling
- "We and They" worksheet

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

Begin class by having students share what they learned about the history of Memphis from interviewing someone in their community. You can structure this as a timeline exercise. As students share information about the history of Memphis, record the events they describe at the appropriate place on the timeline, noting whether an event represents a moment of unity or division in Memphis. The concept that communities change over time—with moments of cohesion and separateness—is a theme students will explore in the main activity.

Main activity

The story of the star-bellied Sneetches provides an opportunity for students to talk about how communities can break down when members are told they do not belong or they are inferior. You can read students the book or show them the video, pausing at two key moments to check for comprehension and to allow students a few minutes to discuss the issues of membership and belonging.

Pause #1: Before Sylvester McMonkey McBean enters the scene (page 8)

Questions:

- What communities are represented in this story?
- How is membership defined? Who is included in these communities? Who is excluded?
- Why did the Sneetches make these distinctions?
- Do you think all Sneetches agreed with these rules of membership?
- This is a children's story. Do you think it represents anything that exists in the real world? Does this story remind you of anything you have experienced or heard about?

Pause #2: When the star-bellied Sneetches remove their stars (page 18)

Questions:

- Why do you think the star-bellied Sneetches decide to remove their stars?
- How have the rules of membership changed? Why have they changed?
- What do you think will happen next?

After you finish the story, ask students to meet in small groups to discuss what the story tells them about membership and belonging. Each group can be responsible for responding to particular questions:

- What are three ideas this story reveals about communities, membership, and belonging?
- The media always depicts teenagers as forming cliques. Compare the way the Sneetches treat each other to the way teenagers treat each other. What is the same? What is different?
- Whom do you respect more, the Sneetches at the beginning of the story or the Sneetches at the end? Explain why.
- Often stories are written to express a moral or teach a lesson. What is the moral of this story?

Curriculum connections: Many of the questions above can be used to help students better understand societies they will study in world history. You can use these questions while also making reference to the Sneetches. For example, as students study a particular society, ask them to compare that society to the Sneetches. Students can identify the communities that act like the star-bellied Sneetches and those that are like the plain-bellied Sneetches.

Follow-through

When students understand how communities make choices regarding membership, they are ready to think about how belonging to a community shapes the way people view the world, especially how they view people who live outside of their community. Rudyard Kipling's poem "We and They" reinforces the idea of in-groups and out-groups that is a central theme in *The Sneetches*, while also introducing the concept of perspective.

Distribute the poem to students. Read it aloud or ask students to volunteer to read a stanza. After you read the poem, have students create a list of the words Kipling uses to describe *we* as well as the words he uses to describe *they*. Encourage students to notice verbs as well as nouns and adjectives. Students can use their lists to help answer the question, "What is the difference between *we* and *they*, according to the poet?" The "We and They" worksheet included with this lesson is designed to guide students' analysis of the poem.

Next, write the word *perspective* on the board. See if any students can define this term. Or you can give them the following definition: *Perspective is your point of view. Perspective is how you see and understand the world and the people around you.* Explain that we each have a perspective that is influenced by our unique identity as well as the communities to which we belong.

Before students think about how their identities and communal affiliations influence their own perspective, ask them to apply the concept of perspective to Kipling's poem. Tell half of the class to imagine that they are members of the *we* community described in the poem and the other half to imagine that they are members of the *they* community. Then have all students answer the following questions: Whose practices are proper? Whose practices are disgusting? After students representing the *we* group and the *they* group share their responses, as a class you can discuss the meaning of the final stanza of the poem:

But if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by (think of it!) looking on We
As only a sort of They!

Homework

Perspective assignment: Have students identify a group or a community. It could be a sports team, a school, a family, a neighborhood, a religion, or a nation. Next, ask students to select an object or event that represents this group's experience. The students' assignment is to write a paragraph describing this object or event from the perspective of a member of that group (the *we* perspective). Then, have students write another paragraph in which they describe the same object or event from the perspective of someone who is not a member of that group (the *they* perspective).

Journal assignment: Identify a community to which you belong. How might your ideas be different from those of people who are not part of this community? How does being a member of this community shape the way you view those outside of your community? How do you think people from other communities view the ideas or practices of your community?

We and They
Rudyard Kipling

Father and Mother, and Me,
Sister and Auntie say
All the people like us are We,
And every one else is They.
And They live over the sea,
While We live over the way,
But — would you believe it? — They look upon We
As only a sort of They!

We eat pork and beef
With cow-horn-handled knives.
They who gobble Their rice off a leaf,
Are horrified out of Their lives;
While they who live up a tree,
And feast on grubs and clay,
(Isn't it scandalous?) look upon We
As a simply disgusting They!

We shoot birds with a gun.
They stick lions with spears.
Their full-dress is un-
We dress up to Our ears.
They like Their friends for tea.
We like Our friends to stay;
And, after all that, They look upon We
As an utterly ignorant They!

We eat kitcheny food.
We have doors that latch.
They drink milk or blood,
Under an open thatch.
We have Doctors to fee.
They have Wizards to pay.
And (impudent heathen!) They look upon We
As a quite impossible They!

All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people, like Us, are We
And every one else is They:
But if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by (think of it!) looking on We
As only a sort of They!

“We and They” Worksheet

Record the words Kipling uses to describe *We* and *They* in the poem. Try to list at least three nouns, adjectives, and verbs for each community.

	We	They
Nouns	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Verbs	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Adjectives	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

What is the difference between *We* and *They*, according to the poet?

LESSON 9

What does it mean to belong?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In Lesson 8, students explored issues of membership and belonging through a fictional and historical example. “The ‘In’ Group,” a short reading included in this lesson, brings ideas about inclusion and exclusion to a more familiar context—a middle school playground. The narrator of the story, Eve Shalen, recounts her experience as an outcast among her peers. She highlights a moment in eighth grade when she was invited to join the “in” group. At times a victim of ostracism, Eve is confronted with a difficult choice about how to behave. Should she join the “in” group in taunting another classmate? Should she stand by as they read a classmate’s diary? Should she try to stop them from violating her classmate’s privacy? As students predict what they think Eve will do, they can identify the different roles people play in a community. Words such as *victim*, *perpetrator*, *bystander*, and *upstander* help students describe the behavior of individuals and groups they will study in world history. This vocabulary also helps students think about their roles and relationships within their own communities.

Eve’s story also highlights the universal desire to belong to a community—a desire that can be seen in the behavior of ancient Egyptians as well as Mayans. In those societies, like many others, ostracism and exile were considered to be the harshest penalties. To achieve a sense of belonging, individuals often choose to conform to the norms and behaviors of the group. Indeed, Eve Shalen joins the “in” group in mocking a fellow student even though she knows that this behavior is wrong and hurtful. Throughout their study of world history, students will recognize examples of conformity to established customs, religious beliefs, and patterns of behavior. At times, conformity may serve a civilization well by maintaining stability and a sense of cohesion, whereas at other times conformity may lead to a society’s decline, especially in times of environmental, economic, or political change.

Learning goals

- Students will identify a range of responses individuals have at their disposal when reacting to exclusion, discrimination, and injustice. Students will be able to define the words *bystander*, *perpetrator*, *victim*, and *upstander*.
- Students will understand the terms *belonging* and *conformity*.

Materials

- “The ‘In’ Group” reading
- Signs for barometer activity (optional)
- Lesson 9: Warm-up questions (optional)

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

Before students read Eve Shalen’s story, have them spend a few minutes writing about times when they have felt included and excluded. To guide students’ reflections, a set of warm-up questions have been included in this lesson plan.

Main activity

We have divided the reading “The ‘In’ Group” into two parts. This way, students can predict what Eve Shalen *will* do and discuss what they think she *should* do before they actually read about her decision.

Begin the activity by distributing a copy of Part 1 so students can read along while you or a student volunteer reads aloud. This story can also be read as a *round robin read aloud*. This strategy keeps students accountable for following along with the text because all students participate in reading. Typically, one student volunteers to read the first sentence, then his or her neighbor reads the next sentence, and so on.

After the class finishes reading Part 1, ask students to consider the question, “What are Eve’s options?” As students list various choices Eve could make in this situation, record their responses on the board. Students may mention that she could participate in reading the diary, she could walk away, she could ask the “in” group for the diary so she can give it back to its owner, or she could tell the teacher. When you have a range of responses listed on the board, students can answer the following questions:

- What do you think Eve will do?
- What do you think Eve should do?
- What do you think you would have done in this situation?

Next, have students share their answers to the first two questions. One way to structure this sharing is by using the *barometer* strategy. This teaching method asks students to respond to a question by standing on a specific point along a continuum. For this lesson, create an imaginary line in your classroom. The line should be long enough to allow all students in the class to stand on it. Tell the students that one end of the line represents, “Eve takes a stand against the ‘in’ group” and the other end represents, “Eve makes fun of the girl whose diary was taken.” You can post signs in the room labeling the two ends of the continuum. Then ask students to stand at the point on the line that best represents what they think Eve *will* do. If students think that Eve will join the “in” group but not make fun of the girl, they can stand near the middle.

Facilitate a discussion in which students at various points along the line explain what they think Eve will do and what leads them to this conclusion. As they listen to their peers’ comments, students can change their position on the line. If you have time, repeat this activity, but change the prompt so that students stand on the point along the continuum that represents what they think Eve *should* do. Again, ask students to explain their position on the line. After the barometer activity, students can return to their seats and read Part 2 of “The ‘In’ Group.” Then have them respond to the following questions in writing and in a class discussion:

- What did Eve do?
- Why do you think Eve made this decision?

- What does Eve mean when she writes, “Often being accepted by others is more satisfying than being accepted by oneself”?
- Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Why or why not?

Follow-through

“The ‘In’ Group” provides an opportunity to discuss themes such as conformity, peer pressure, and belonging—themes that resonate with students’ own experiences and that have shaped the behavior of individuals throughout history.

The following activity helps students develop a vocabulary they can use to analyze their own actions, the behavior of those around them, and the actions of individuals and groups in the past. Often when students think about acts of injustice, they divide those involved into two groups: the victims and the perpetrators. Yet others contribute to the prevention or the perpetuation of injustice. For example, a *bystander* is someone who witnesses or knows about an act of injustice but chooses not to do anything about it. On the other hand, when confronted with information about an unjust act, an *upstander* takes steps to prevent or stop this act from continuing. Introducing students to the terms *bystander* and *upstander* can help them recognize the consequences of their own actions (and inaction) and the choices of individuals and groups throughout history.

As a final activity, review the terms *victim*, *perpetrator*, *bystander*, and *upstander* with students, and ask them to apply these terms to “The ‘In’ Group.” Following are some prompts to help guide this discussion:

- In this story, who was the victim?
- Who are the perpetrators?
- Who are the bystanders?
- Who are the upstanders?

In this story, Eve Shalen might represent a bystander. She did not steal the diary herself or do anything excessive to torment its owner. Yet, although she knew that reading the diary was wrong, she watched while the “in” group read it without doing anything to stop them. An interesting question to ask students is, “What would an upstander have done in this situation?”

To end this lesson, have students discuss the question, “Why do you think people do nothing even when they know something happening around them is wrong?” This is an ideal time to introduce students to the terms *belonging* and *conformity*. Often, because people want to belong to a community, they will adopt the values and behavior they think are most likely to be accepted by this group. Indeed, Eve Shalen wanted to belong to the “in” group so badly that she participated in reading the diary even though she knew it was wrong.

Curriculum connections: You can use the terms introduced here (victim, perpetrators, bystanders, and upstanders) to help students understand and interpret events in world history such as the trial of Socrates or the Spanish invasion of the Mayan Empire.

Homework

Several important issues and new terms are introduced in this lesson. Allow students to choose from one of the following questions to respond to in their journals:

1. Pick a moment of injustice from your own life, from history, or from current events. Briefly describe this event. Then identify the victim, the perpetrators, the bystanders, and the upstanders. Finally, answer the question, "Why do you think people do nothing even when they know something happening around them is wrong?"
2. Identify a moment when you did something to fit in with a group. What did you do? Would you do the same thing again? Why or why not? When can it be useful to conform in order to belong to a group? When can conformity be harmful?
3. Write a short story in which the main character(s) deal with issues of conformity and belonging.

Lesson 9: Warm-up questions

Briefly describe a time when you . . .

1. Were included in a community or group:

How did this make you feel?

2. Were excluded from a community or group:

How did this make you feel?

3. Excluded someone else from a community or group:

How did this make you feel?

4. Did something that you thought might be wrong or stupid only because everyone else was doing it:

How did this make you feel?

The “In” Group: Part 1

My eighth grade consisted of 28 students, most of whom knew each other from the age of 5 or 6. The class was close-knit and we knew each other so well that most of us could distinguish each other’s handwriting at a glance. Although we grew up together, we still had class outcasts. From second grade on, a small elite group spent a large portion of their time harassing two or three of the others. I was one of those two or three, though I don’t know why. In most cases when children get picked on, they aren’t good at sports or they read too much or they wear the wrong clothes or they are of a different race. But in my class, we all read too much and didn’t know how to play sports. We had also been brought up to carefully respect each other’s races. This is what was so strange about my situation. Usually, people are made outcasts because they are in some way different from the larger group. But in my class, large differences did not exist. It was as if the outcasts were invented by the group out of a need for them. Differences between us did not cause hatred; hatred caused differences between us.

The harassment was subtle. It came in the form of muffled giggles when I talked, and rolled eyes when I turned around. If I was out in the playground and approached a group of people, they often fell silent. Sometimes someone would not see me coming and I would catch the tail end of a joke at my expense.

I also have a memory of a different kind. There was another girl in our class who was perhaps even more rejected than I. She also tried harder than I did for acceptance, providing the group with ample material for jokes. One day during lunch I was sitting outside watching a basketball game. One of the popular girls in the class came up to me to show me something she said I wouldn’t want to miss. We walked to a corner of the playground where a group of three or four sat. One of them read aloud from a small book, which I was told was the girl’s diary.

What do you think Eve will do?

What do you think Eve should do?

What do you think you would have done in this situation?

The “In” Group: Part 2

I sat down and, laughing till my sides hurt, heard my voice finally blend with the others. Looking back, I wonder how I could have participated in mocking this girl when I knew perfectly well what it felt like to be mocked myself. I would like to say that if I were in that situation today I would react differently, but I can't honestly be sure. Often being accepted by others is more satisfying than being accepted by oneself, even though the satisfaction does not last. Too often our actions are determined by the moment.

What did Eve do?

Why do you think Eve made this decision?

What does Eve mean when she writes, “Often being accepted by others is more satisfying than being accepted by oneself. . . .”?

Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Explain your answer.

LESSON 10

How do rules and traditions shape communities?

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In Lesson 6, students analyzed Suzanne Goldsmith’s definition of community. Goldsmith explains that a group of people become a community when they have a shared goal. A class is a community of learners: The shared goal, or “common enterprise,” is the intellectual, moral, and social development of students. In Lesson 7 students looked specifically at Memphis in order to identify some of the components of a geographic community. In Lessons 8 and 9, students read texts that explored how individuals within communities and between communities relate to one another, often by forming distinctions between *we* and *they*. Categorizing people is a universal aspect of human behavior. The important question is not how to avoid these categorizations but how to recognize when they are detrimental to the health of a community and its members. Eve Shalen recounts how divisions between the “in” group and the “out” group at her middle school resulted in the ostracism of particular members. Historically, we know that such distinctions have resulted in discrimination, and, in the most extreme cases, the labeling of some groups as subhuman has resulted in genocide.

What leads some societies to deal with membership in ways that may result in ostracism, prejudice, and violence whereas other communities strive to prevent discrimination? To answer this question, we begin by looking at the customs nurtured by a community and how these customs are formalized into law. In this lesson, students will think about the relationship between customs and laws (or rules) as it relates to a safe, productive learning environment. They will consider the difference between laws and customs and begin to think about the rules they want to adopt in their classroom. By the end of this lesson, the class should have a contract that they can all sign as a symbol of their commitment to upholding the norms of the community.

As students create their classroom contracts, the lesson introduces them to some of the key building blocks of civilizations: customs, laws, rules, and contracts. Throughout their study of world history, students can reflect on how the rules and customs of other societies nurtured particular relationships among their members. Just as students attempt to establish rules to help the classroom community achieve the best environment for learning, they can investigate how societies throughout history developed customs and rules to achieve their own particular goals.

Learning goals

- Students will develop an understanding of the relationship among laws, customs, and community cohesion.
- Students will be able to define the terms *rule*, *law*, *contract*, and *custom*.

Materials

- Large paper
- “What is a law? What is a custom?” handout (optional)
- “Writing a class contract” handout (optional)

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

To prepare students to think about the rules they want in their own classroom, begin by asking them to think about what qualities a classroom community should have to provide a safe learning environment for all of its members. Students can meet in groups of three or four to discuss the following prompt:

The goal of a classroom community is to provide a space where all students can do their best learning. Do you think Eve Shalen’s classroom community was a good learning environment for all of the students? Why or why not? What qualities does a class have when all students are able to do their best learning?

Give students three to five minutes to discuss this prompt. Then ask each group to share its list of qualities and record their responses on the board.

Main activity

Before students create rules to nurture the qualities of a good learning community, help them think about the relationship among rules, customs, and culture. Begin by asking students the questions, “What could we do if we want to have a classroom with the qualities of a good learning environment? How do other communities, even countries, try to get their members to behave in certain ways?” Students will likely bring up the idea that countries have laws that everyone must follow or communities have traditions and customs that members adhere to. When students mention laws or customs, ask them to identify specific examples.

At this point in the lesson, students can define the following words: *rule*, *law*, *custom*, and *contract*. Although laws and customs are both types of rules, customs tend to be more informal whereas laws are established by governments or institutions. If you have time, you may want to create a Venn diagram in which students fill in examples of laws, examples of customs, and examples of laws that are also customs. For instance, holidays often start out as customs but then become part of the laws, such as the national holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas. In some communities, throwing garbage away in trash cans is a custom but not a law. In these communities, if you litter people may give you a funny look but you won’t be fined or put in jail. Other communities have antilittering laws. In those communities, if you litter a police officer could give you a fine and if you refuse to pay the fine you might even end up in jail.

A contract is a document that turns customs into laws by making them enforceable by a government or other institution such as a religious organization. Explain to students that in this lesson they will create a class contract. A contract is made up of rules as well as consequences, which articulate what will happen if the rules are not followed. Contracts often begin with mission statements or preambles which state the purpose or goals of the contract. You may want to lead the class through the process of writing a class mission statement. You could do this by incorporating the qualities recorded on the board into a sentence or two. The mission statement might begin with the phrase, “To support the best learning environment for all students, we believe our class must. . . .”

When you have a class mission statement, ask students to meet in small groups to generate a list of rules to support the mission or purpose of the class. With each rule, students should also consider consequences—what should happen if students don’t follow the rules. The handout “Writing a class contract” included with this lesson has been designed

to help structure students' discussion in small groups. Students can record the rules and consequences on a large sheet of paper so that the rest of the class can read along as groups present their ideas.

Determining how to synthesize the ideas from all groups into one class contract can serve as a lesson in governance and democracy. Do you insist that the class reach consensus? Do you use majority rule? Or do you, as the teacher and authority figure, make the final decision? If time permits, you can use this portion of the lesson to teach students about terms such as *democracy* and *dictatorship*. Most likely, you will not have the time to go into these concepts now, but you can refer to this exercise later when you discuss the various government systems of other civilizations. For the purpose of this lesson, a majority-rule decision-making process is both efficient and effective. You can have students vote on rules relatively quickly, which will be more likely to encourage buy-in than if you were to make the decision. You might decide that for any rule to “pass,” at least 60 percent of the students must agree to it.

Curriculum connections: Students can compare their class contract to the legal codes of other societies. For example, they could compare their class contract to Hammurabi's Code. Just as students created their class contract by thinking about the purpose of their community, the rules that support this purpose, and the consequences for breaking the rules, they can also analyze the norms of other societies by using the same three factors: purpose, rules, and consequences.

Follow-through

As a final activity (or homework assignment), provide students the opportunity to reflect on the process of making a class contract. You could structure this reflection as a think-pair-share. First, students respond to a prompt in writing. Then they discuss their responses with a partner, and finally they share an idea from their conversation with the class. Here are some prompts to guide students' reflections:

- Does having a contract that is unique to this class contribute to a feeling of community? Why or why not? Do you feel any differently about this class now than you did yesterday?
- What is the difference between writing the rules yourself and being told what the rules are? What role should community members have in creating the rules?
- What is the difference between how laws are made and how customs are established? What would it take to establish class customs? Give an example of a custom you would like to have in this class.

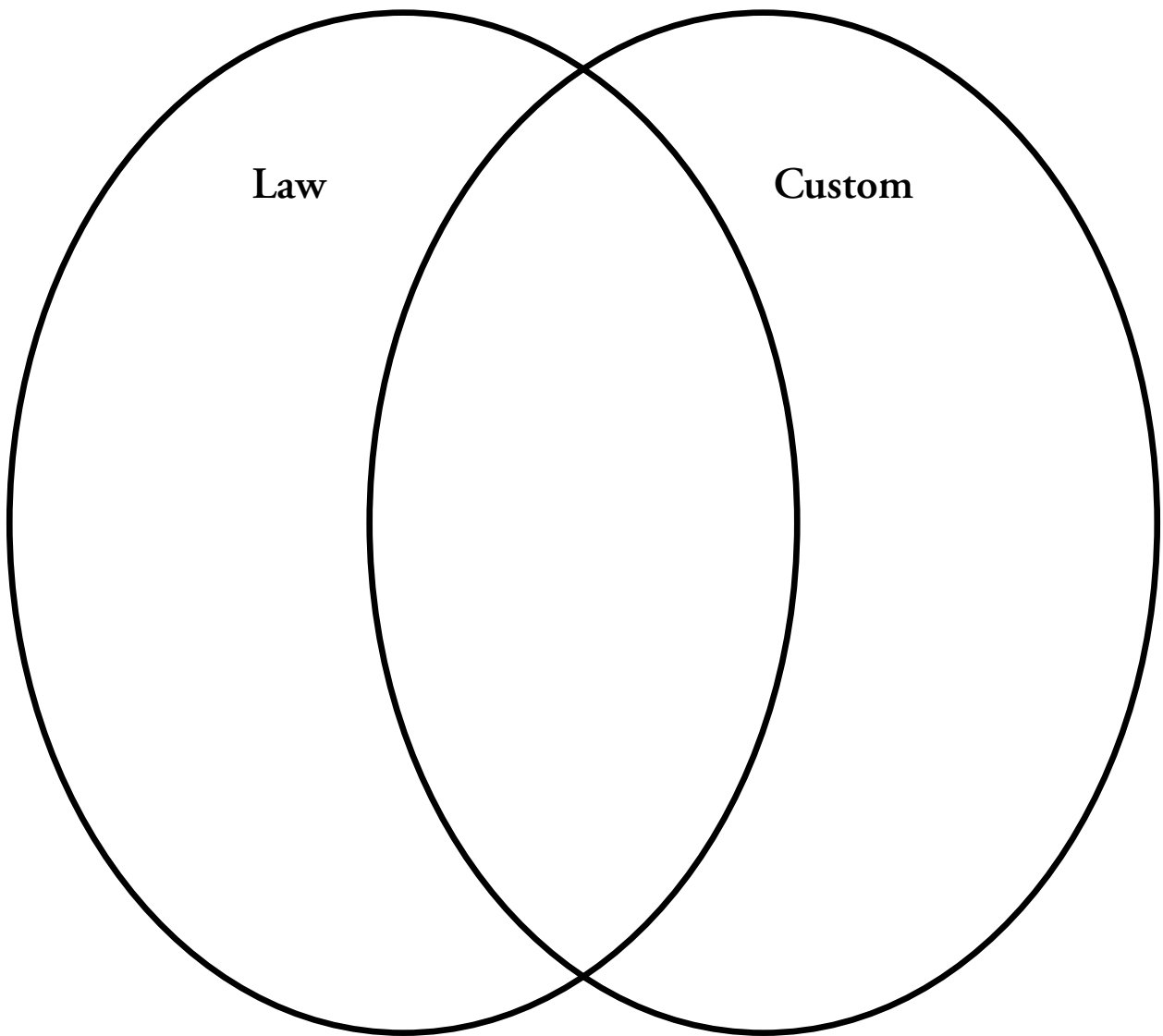
Homework

Students can respond to one of the prompts listed in the follow-through section in their journals.

Since this is the last lesson in the unit, now is an appropriate time to have students synthesize what they have learned about identity and community. One way to do this is to have students look through their journal entries and the other work they have produced over the course of these 10 lessons. Then, ask them to make a list titled, “The Top Ten Things I Have Learned about Identity and Community.”

Another summative assignment might ask students to construct their own glossaries of key terms used throughout these lessons, words such as *identity*, *community*, *membership*, *conformity*, *bystander*, *upstander*, *laws*, *customs*, *contract*, and *society*. In addition to defining these terms, ask students to illustrate their glossaries and/or use these terms in a sentence.

What is a law? What is a custom?



Writing a class contract

Record the class mission statement here:

What rules might help your class achieve its goals as a community?

What should happen if a member of the community does not follow the rules?

Facing History and Ourselves is a nonprofit educational organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-semitism in order to promote a more humane and informed citizenry. As the name Facing History and Ourselves implies, the organization helps teachers and their students make the essential connections between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives by examining the development and lessons of the Holocaust and other examples of genocide. Studying these events helps young people think critically about their own behavior and the effect their actions have on their community, nation, and the world. Our work is based on the belief that no classroom should exist in isolation. Facing History programs and materials involve the entire community: students, parents, teachers, civic leaders, and other citizens.

Facing History and Ourselves provides educators with tools for teaching history and ethics, and for helping their students learn to combat prejudice with compassion, indifference with participation, myth and misinformation with knowledge. Through significant higher education partnerships, Facing History also reaches and impacts teachers before they enter their classrooms.

By studying the choices that led to a historical event, students learn how issues of identity and membership play out on the world stage. Facing History resource books provide a meticulously researched yet flexible structure for examining complex events and ideas. Educators can select appropriate readings and draw on additional resources available online or from our comprehensive lending library.

Our foundational resource text, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*, embodies a sequence of study that begins with identity—first individual identity and then group identities with their definitions of membership. From there the program examines the failure of democracy in Germany and the steps leading to the Holocaust—the most documented case of 20th century indifference, de-humanization, hatred, racism, antisemitism, and mass murder. It goes on to explore difficult questions of judgment, memory and legacy, and the need for responsible participation to prevent injustice, ending with a section called “Choosing to Participate” that provides examples of individuals who have taken small steps to build just and inclusive communities and whose stories illuminate the courage, initiative, and compassion that are needed to protect democracy today and in generations to come. Other examples of collective violence such as the Armenian genocide and the U.S civil rights movement expand and deepen the connection between history and the choices we face today and will face in the future.

Facing History’s outreach is global, with a website accessed worldwide, online content delivery, a program for international fellows, and a set of NGO partnerships that allow for delivery of our resources in 80 countries. By convening conferences of scholars, theologians, educators, and journalists, Facing History keeps its materials timely, relevant, and responsive to salient issues of global citizenship in the 21st century.

For more than thirty years, Facing History has challenged students to connect the complexities of the past to the moral and ethical issues of today. Students explore democratic values and consider what it means to exercise one’s rights and responsibilities in the service of a more humane and compassionate world. They become aware that “little things are big”—seemingly minor decisions can have major impact and change the course of history.

For more about Facing History, visit our website at <http://www.facinghistory.org>.