



*Cultural Competency

Materials:

- none

Brainstorm

Ask students if they have ever been unable to eat at a restaurant, a party, school or other location because of their cultural background. An example might be there are no vegetarian options, they may have to wait until a certain time of day to eat, or they can't participate in celebrations. .

Discuss

Do you feel that your school cafeteria serves food that fits with your culture? Discuss some of the menu offerings of your cafeteria. Could they add food options that would make you feel more comfortable eating there?

Dive in!

Explain to students that some of the things they identified that make them unique are related to culture. Detail: **Culture** is the beliefs, values, and customs shared by a group of people. Some of these elements include the language you speak, holidays or celebrations you observe, clothes you wear, foods you eat, religion you practice, even some of your common behaviors are likely rooted in your culture. Your behavior, beliefs, and values are largely shaped by the culture to which you belong. A cultural group is a collection of people who have common patterns of behavior and beliefs - in other words, people who share the same culture. Cultural groups could be made up of people within the same neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, age groups, and more. You each have your own unique set of cultural groups to which you belong. Regardless of what cultural groups you identify with, it's important to understand that everyone is unique and to find value in those differences. This is called **cultural competence**. Cultural competence means being aware of your own cultural beliefs, valuing the cultural beliefs and practices of others, and being aware of how cultures interact with and impact one another. Cultural competence helps us to communicate and interact with people successfully in our daily lives.



High School

Activity

We have learned that while every culture is unique, there are commonalities between cultures as well. Cultural competence requires that we think about how our culture relates to other cultures, how they are connected. We need to understand how our culture relates to other cultures in order to have a more complete understanding. Our cultures are all connected. We need to look at the impact cultures have on one another. Sometimes cultures are connected through painful historical events. We can't hide from those events or deny their existence. We must use them to help us understand how those events connect us and the impact those events have on the way different cultures relate in the present.

As a way of showing how our cultures have common qualities, each student will pick their favorite superhero. We are going to redesign our superheroes using aspects of our own cultures. For example, Vishavjit Singh designed his own take on Captain America with a Turban and Beard who fights hate and intolerance:



We are going to do something similar. Think about an element of your culture that you admire. You will adapt your favorite superhero to resemble your culture in some way. Then you have to explain your superhero's primary strength and how it can be used to help the world. Students can use graphic design software on a computer or can draw their own superhero by hand. When students are finished with their superheroes, they can share their creations with the class.

Reflect

How were our superheroes similar? What made them different? What did you learn about your own culture, or a different one?



High School

Extend and Enrich

How can students be involved in creating a school that is more culturally relevant?

For Further Study

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/learning-plan/cultural-relevancy-in-the-cafeteria>

<https://www.sikhtoons.com/>

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/professional-development>

Professional Development

Many teachers teach vocabulary in their subject area. However, are you aware of the derivation of the vocabulary words that you use? Next time you assign vocabulary as part of your curriculum, ask students about the origins of those words. Or you can research them yourself and share them with your students.