

UNIT 6: Connecting U.S. Students' Lives with Those of Maasai Students

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Introduction: Artifacts tell us interesting things about a culture. Remember the story of the Nacirema, a tribe of people living south of the Canadian Cree people with curious body ritual habits? (The Nacirema story can easily be found on the web and is a must-read for teachers of culture and anthropology! Needless to say, the Nacirema people are Americans.) Every culture everywhere has artifacts that have cultural, religious, social, or medicinal purposes, and students can learn a lot of others cultures and their own culture by becoming cultural anthropologists for a day or week.

This lesson is best done in conjunction with lesson 2B. It is important that students know something about the Maasai before they start reaching conclusions based on pictures of artifacts. The PowerPoint slideshow provided in lesson 2B gives students actual pictures of Maasai people wearing jewelry and using instruments that we might consider artifacts in this discussion here.

Unit Organization: Unit organized into 2 lessons (6A and 6B). Assessment applies to entire unit. Every thing else applies to each individual lesson.

Grade Level and Subject: Middle to High School

Unit Assessment: Use the Rubric (page 6-5) to assess student work.

Lesson 6A: Artifacts: Pieces of a Puzzle that Tell the Story of a Culture

Objectives: Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:

- Write an accurate and informative article or story about the Maasai Culture, after viewing and interpreting pictures of artifacts relating to their lifestyle.

Materials:

Included:

- Slide show of Mkonoo village "Meet the Maasai" (PowerPoint)
This is in PowerPoint format or printed out, depending on what version of the curriculum you have. If you have the PowerPoint version and a projector in class, use that technology to display the slideshow. If you do not have the technology in class or have the print version of the

curriculum, print out the PowerPoint slide show – or use the print out that comes with the hard-copy of the curriculum – and copy it onto overhead transparencies to display in class)

- Maasai Fact Finding Worksheet (page 6-6)
- Maasai Artifact Photographs (pages 6-7,6-8)
- Maasai Artifacts Chart (page 6-9)
- Maasai Artifacts Descriptions (page 6-10)

Not Included:

- Access to computers with Internet for student research

Time Allotment: Two to three 50-minute class periods.

Procedure:

Talk about artifacts and what they tell us about (and don't tell us) about a culture. By way of prompts, ask your students to think about the following scenes that an alien might stumble upon:

- Nacirema bathroom story (available via the web; do a simple Google search for "Nacirema").
- A sporting event (name one likely for your school) with cheerleaders, uniforms, and cheering parents.
- Spirit week with students in theme-oriented costumes.
- Halloween with streets filled with costumes ranging from Little Red Riding Hood to horrifying goblins.
- A prom or dress-up dance with students all dressed up and dancing.

What conclusions might that alien come up with based on seeing these scenes? Would these conclusions be accurate? What information would the alien need in order to have accurate information about the scene?

Review lesson 2B "Meeting the Maasai" to learn more about the Maasai. It is optimal if you actually teach lesson 2B prior to starting this lesson to give your students enough background knowledge about the Maasai to understand the role that artifacts play in their lives. By way of review, hand out the Maasai Fact Finding Worksheet (page 6-6). Have each student (or students in groups if computers are limited) do online research to find five facts about the Maasai. Students come together at the end of the period to discuss their findings.

Discuss the roles of both archaeologists and anthropologists, conveying the importance of artifacts in the study of a group or culture's past. Emphasize that an artifact is like a single piece of a big puzzle. From artifacts, you can deduce things about the larger picture, but you also need other pieces to fill all the information in. Putting the puzzle together can help tell the story behind the lifestyles of a particular group of people.

Set up three tables and put a print out of one Maasai Artifact Photographs (pages 6-7, 6-8) on each table. Assign the class to three groups. Each student will play the role of an anthropologist. The groups are used for rotating students from table to table, observing the photographs as if they are objects.

Pass out the Maasai Artifacts Chart (page 6-9). Instruct the class to observe the artifact pictures on the tables while taking notes and thinking about how the artifact might connect to the Maasai lifestyle. Students will then return to their seats and fill out the chart, writing down detailed information about what they observed. Class discussion will follow to link their observations to the facts they learned about the Maasai earlier in the lesson. Then, read aloud the actual descriptions of the objects (page 6-10).

Now show the students an example of beadwork worn by real Tanzanians. Show them all or some of the PowerPoint slide series (“Meet the Maasai”). In particular, focus on slides 17 and 18 (bead making) and 21 and 23 (traditional clothing with beads). Compare the artifact photograph of the necklace (page 6-8) with the slides of real women making and wearing these necklaces. Invite them to think about how this new information—putting the necklaces in some context—changes their thinking about this artifact.

Extension (based on significant study of the Maasai):

Instruct students to write an article or story about the lifestyles of the Maasai people including the three artifacts they observed. This will be based on the student’s interpretation of the objects presented at the tables. The information gathered and written in their chart will aid in the completion of this writing assignment. The stories can be fictitious based on information viewed. Depending on time, this can be an in-class assignment or can be assigned as homework.

Lesson 6B: Comparing and Contrasting Life in the U.S. with Life in a Maasai Village

Objectives: Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:

- Draw parallels between their own lifestyle and that of someone living in a Maasai village by examining and interpreting photos of a village in the Arusha area of Tanzania.
- Synthesize the information into an essay based on their interpretation of the various village photos and their own lives.

Materials:

Included:

- Comparing and Contrasting Chart (page 6-11)
- Pictures of Maasai Village (PowerPoint)

This is in PowerPoint format or printed out, depending on what version of the curriculum you have. If you have the PowerPoint version and a

projector in class, use that technology to display the slideshow. If you do not have the technology in class, print out the PowerPoint slide show – or use the print out that comes with the hard-copy of the curriculum – and copy it onto overhead transparencies to display in class

- Reflection Questions (page 6-12)
- Community Aspects Worksheet (page 6-13)
- Venn Diagram (page 6-14)

Note: Some teachers prefer to use “Double Bubble Maps” instead of Venn Diagrams. A “Double Bubble Map” looks like two connected bubble maps, and it is used to organize information about two things in order to compare and contrast them. Due to copyright restrictions, we were unable to provide a “Double Bubble Map” as part of this curriculum, but you can visit

<http://www.mapthemind.com/thinkingmaps/themaps/dbubble/> for on-line examples. You can find other examples of these maps and other similar writing tools by searching *Google* for “Double Bubble Map.”

Time Allotment: Two 50-minute class periods

Procedure:

Hand out the Comparing and Contrasting Chart (page 6-11) and explain that each student will compare his or her life in the US with the life of a student in Tanzania. Instruct students to fill out the “My Life” section of the chart.

Show the PowerPoint Pictures of a Maasai Village. Instruct students to make interpretations of a Maasai Villager’s life based on the photographs. Have students pair up and discuss their interpretations. Hand out the Reflection Questions (page 6-12) and have students complete the worksheet. Again, pair students off to discuss their answers. Next, hand out the Community Aspects Worksheet (page 6-13) and instruct students to fill it out.

Assign students a writing assignment that is a comparative essay taking into account all the information gathered from the Comparing and Contrasting Chart and Cultural Aspects worksheets. Depending on time, this can be an additional in-class assignment or can be assigned for homework. Encourage students to use a Venn Diagram or double bubble chart (explained in lesson 5D) to organize their thoughts for their essays.

Extension ideas:

- Discuss with your students what we learn when we compare and contrast our lives with the lives of others?
- What skills do we need to have to compare and contrast our lives with the lives of others?

Rubric

Topic	4 Exceeds Standard	3 Meets Standard	2 Needs Practice	1 Standard Not Met
Maasai Artifacts Chart (6A-3)	Descriptive, using vivid words and links to Maasai culture.	Words and links to Maasai culture.	Basic simple words not linked to culture. Some ideas are clear, but some are still fuzzy.	No descriptive words at all. Unclear response to task.
Artifacts Article or Story	Creative, vivid images, original use of words. Linked to Maasai culture.	Favorite words used correctly, with attempt to use descriptive words to explain artifacts. Linked to Maasai culture.	Attempts to make point about Maasai culture. Some ideas are clear, but some are still fuzzy.	No link to Maasai culture. Unclear response to task.
Comparing and Contrasting Chart (6B-1); Reflection Questions (6B-3); Community Aspects Worksheet (6B-4)	Charts and reflections are completed in a well thought out manner, using words and experiences that are consistent with both cultures' significant highlights	Charts and reflections are completed, using words and experiences from both cultures'.	Charts and reflections are not fully completed. Some ideas are clear, but some are still fuzzy.	Charts and reflections are not relevant. Unclear response to task
Comparative Essay	Creative, vivid images, original use of words. Linked to Maasai culture & US culture.	Favorite words used correctly, with attempt to use descriptive words to explain images. Linked to Maasai culture & US culture.	Attempts to make points about Maasai culture & US culture. Some ideas are clear, but some are still fuzzy.	No link to Maasai culture & US culture. Unclear response to task.
Overall Conventions & Context	Two or less mistakes of convention & context.	Three to five mistakes of convention & context.	Six to ten mistakes of convention & context.	More than ten mistakes of convention & context.
Overall Neatness	Typed, double spaced, nice use of paragraphs in final products.	Written neatly, in pen, skipping of lines, nice use of paragraphs in final products.	Written neatly, in pencil, skipping of lines, use of paragraphs in final products.	Messy, no paragraphs, no skipping of lines, written in pencil.

Name: _____

Maasai Fact Finding Worksheet

Use the Internet to find four additional facts about the Maasai people (the first one is done for you). Write your facts below and be ready to share your findings with the rest of the class. Some sites to get you started include:

- Maasai Association site at <http://www.maasai-info.org/>
- Art and Life in Africa's Maasai information site at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/people/Maasai.html>

1. The Maasai occupy a total land area of 160,000 square kilometers with a population of approximately one half million people.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Maasai Artifact Photographs

Photographs used with permission from the Jefferson County School District Website at <http://jeffcoweb.jeffco.k12.co.us/isu/art/art.html>, 2004.

Maasai Artifact 1



Maasai Artifact 2



Maasai Artifact 3



Name: _____

Maasai Artifacts Chart

Item	Description	Connection to Lifestyle
Artifact 1		
Artifact 2		
Artifact 3		

Maasai Artifact Descriptions

Artifact 1: CALABASH-Typical of Maasai tribe, Kenya-Tanzania borderland, East Africa-The calabash is used throughout Africa as a container. It is a dried gourd that is the fruit of a tree or vine. The calabash is picked when it is ripe and then left to decay in water. The insides are taken out by cutting a hole in the gourd. The woody rind is kept and it hardens. If the calabash is to be used for storing liquids, the inside is charcoal-burned to waterproof it, which accounts for the smoky smell.

Artifact 2: NECKLACE-Maasai tribe, Kenya-Tanzania borderland-Necklaces and jewelry of all kinds are used for different reasons. Jewelry can be worn to show power and importance. It is sometimes used for magical protection, too. In some tribes jewelry is the accumulation of the family's wealth. Occasionally necklaces are used to mark a newly-won honor such as a wedding, birth, or initiation into manhood or womanhood. Although in many parts of Africa beads are made locally, the Maasai probably traded for these beads. Other types of beads are scorned by the Maasai as having no value.

Artifact 3: SPEAR-Maasai tribe, Kenya-Tanzania borderland-The spear is traditionally carried by the Maasai tribesman as he herds his cattle. It is used in defense of his herd, which grazes in the hunting land of the lion. Before it was against the law to kill a lion, the young Maasai had to prove his manliness by killing a lion single-handed with his spear. The young warriors would provoke a male lion into attacking one warrior who would have to face the lion alone. The attacking lion would, hopefully, impale himself on the spear point while the warrior steadied it by sticking the other pointed end in the ground. If successful, the lion's mane was then worn by the warrior in his initiation celebration to prove he had been brave enough to kill the lion.

Descriptions used with permission from the Jefferson County School District Website at <http://jeffcoweb.jeffco.k12.co.us/isu/art/art.html>, 2004.

Name: _____

Comparing and Contrasting Chart

	My Life	Maasai Villager's Life
Living Space/Home		
Shopping		
Food (buying, preparation, types of food)		
School		
Recreation, Games, & Sports		
Living Space		

Name: _____

Community Aspects Worksheet

Instructions: Many aspects of Maasai village life may appear more difficult than yours. What community activities could be found in a Maasai Village that are not found in your community? List examples and describe how these activities might be implemented in your community.

1.

2.

3.