

**Voyage of the Dream Weavers:  
Discovering the American Dream and the Dreams of People of Other Nations-  
A Shared Interdisciplinary Curriculum for the Sixth Grade**

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The sixth social studies curriculum focuses on the basic history of countries in the Eastern Hemisphere. As a language arts teacher, it is my desire to align the content of my courses with that of the social studies courses in order to reduce fragmentation of learning and help students in their development of a more unified view of their education. My original intention was to create a yearlong literature-based curriculum using texts that expand, extend, and enrich what was being learned in history.

A dilemma presented itself in that I also wished to make the content of my classes more relevant to the lives of my students. To focus on the Eastern Hemisphere would be to stray far from my initial aim to explore the cultural histories my students could most identify with, such as the cultures of Latin and North America. However, after much consideration, it became clear that the basic study of Eastern Hemispheric countries lends itself wonderfully to a yearlong comparative view of the U.S. culture(s) and the principles that drive the American Dream.

Under the metaphorical theme of a voyage, students will travel to foreign places and times, and they will read and hear the stories of people their own age from the pages of novels, short stories, biographies, and works of nonfiction.

As a precursor to venturing out and exploring other cultures, students will spend the first few weeks observing their own culture and what it means to be "American". Terms will be established and the context from which they will compare cultures to their own will be introduced. The introduction to the rest of the year's curriculum is comprised of three separate units, each lasting approximately two to three weeks in duration.

In their social studies classes, students will be introduced to a country's political structure, education system, religion(s), and arts. In their literature class, students will be challenged to extract the hopes and dreams of the average citizen of that place and time after having read or listened to accounts of what life was like for the average citizen during that time. The same important questions will arise each time another country is explored:

1. What does the average citizen of that time and place dream for himself or herself?
2. What does the average citizen of that time and place dream for his or her country?
3. What dream do the leaders of the country have for their people?
4. How does education play a part in reaching these dreams?

## 5. What are the other factors that play a part in these dreams?

With these questions in mind, students will remain focused on comparing the American dream to that of the dreams of other nations.

### **The Academic Setting**

#### School Setting

Garfield Middle School is located in a predominantly Hispanic community whose families have been there for generations, when the North Valley was primarily made up of small family-owned farms.

Two-thirds of the student body qualify for free lunch and breakfast programs and two-thirds qualify for the Title I program. Overall, Terra Nova scores are lower than the district average.

#### Class Setting

The class this curriculum is designed for is a sixth grade language arts and literature block consisting of mostly regular education students. At Garfield, that could mean a group of 20 students with reading and writing skill levels ranging from second to seventh grade.

A quarter of the class is usually classified as being limited in English proficiency and about a quarter of those will be taking half the block in their native language, which is Spanish. Title I is being phased out at Garfield, so regular education teachers will have more students in their classes who have lower skills.

The sixth grade curriculum at Garfield Middle School is somewhat unique in that students have two required courses devoted to language arts and literature. This was implemented in 1998 in order to address district-wide literacy aims. As of yet, I've been unable to overlap instruction between the two classes because students who receive ESL services join us in the literature section without having attended the language class. For this reason, students focus primarily on communication and composition skills in one class, and in the other they practice reading strategies and skills. While the composition class will fall under the same theme and will explore identity through writing, it will be the reading class that will be wholly devoted to extending the history content.

#### Objectives

##### *Curriculum Objectives*

Students will:

- be able to identify themselves in connection to two or more cultures.
- acknowledge their dreams and the dreams of their families in relation to that of our nation's dream.
- have a more accurate view of their rights under the Constitution and they

will be

- more likely to appreciate them in comparison to the rights others have or don't have in other countries.
- be exposed to the views of many people of various cultures. This will form a solid base for learning more about these cultures and in forming a world view in the following years.

### *Introductory Unit Objectives*

Students will:

- become familiar with the language needed in order to communicate their dreams and the dreams of their families within the larger context of the world.
- be introduced to the words, thoughts and ideas of American citizens who are bi-cultural and who have diverse ideas of what it means to be American, broadening their view of the American Dream.
- be given a 3-week introduction to civics-based content, in order to provide the context from which the rest of the year's readings will be built upon in literature and in social studies.
  - acquire information from primary and secondary sources.
  - evaluate information for objectivity, accuracy, and point of view.
  - develop critical-thinking skills to make informed and responsible decisions.
  - work cooperatively with others.
  - develop a sense of effectiveness in the role of community advocate.
  - consider the balance between rights and responsibilities.

### *Goals*

By the end of the school year, students will:

- gain a larger vision of the world
- find commonality among the hopes of many peoples
- find diversity to be interesting and valuable
- discover a new meaning of the word freedom
- gain a greater appreciation for law, government and education
- make connections between individual dreams and the guiding principles of a state
- have a greater awareness of U.S. culture and the effect it has on their own dreams
- gain a more accurate view of their rights under the law
- learn more about citizenship and responsibility

## **A Comparative Look at the Dreams of Nations**

### Curricular Rationale

The metaphorical theme of a voyage will encourage children to investigate the world around them in an interesting and pleasurable way.

To further enhance students' potential for learning, I've decided to create a curriculum that is strongly connected to the instruction they receive in other classes, most notably social studies. Interdisciplinary instruction is widely regarded as effective because it reduces the fragmentation of learning, it facilitates the teaching of thinking and interpersonal skills that are often overlooked in conventional instruction, and it helps students develop a unified view of their education. Personally, I feel empowered as a teacher when I'm able to collaborate with others to ensure our students are getting a fair shot at success.

Interdisciplinary instruction enhances the learning experience of students because it provides a way of teaching that reflects the interconnectedness of the real world.

Sixth grade students need to be familiar with the basic principles upon which their nation was built upon. They need to know their rights as defined by the laws and they need to be introduced to the value of education in a way that is neither condescending, nor paternal.

Garfield Middle School surveyed students for the first time this year, asking questions such as "Why are you in school?" and "Why is education important?"

The response varied with answers such as "I come to school because my parents make me," or "To get a good job when I grow up." Not one student made the connection to citizenship, which is what the original aim of public schooling was.

Civics is usually introduced at the seventh grade level by way of a focus on American history in the social studies curriculum. However, young people must learn how to participate in a democracy at an earlier age. They need a foundation from which they can begin to understand their community and its institutions, develop decision-making and evaluative skills, learn the ins and outs of public policy, and know the value of service. Civic responsibility is not an intuitive process. Students must be taught so that as they mature, they may address social problems in an informed, committed, and positive manner. The attitudes they develop will shape the quality of life for all of us.

Civic responsibility can best be developed when teachers work toward linking civic education, community service, and learning outcomes. This approach is called "service learning" and its aim is to forge strong links between classroom work, community service, and civic education. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) lists certain traits important to democratic life. Those include respect, empathy, tolerance, trust, responsibility for oneself and others, and cooperation. Half of these traits are consistent with the Albuquerque Public School's Character Counts initiative, which is a program designed to encourage educators to incorporate character education into their curriculums. For this reason, service learning will be a major component in the instructional approach of this curriculum.

Citizenship involves the ability to understand and participate within a national culture that is bonded by some sort of common goals, no matter how diverse the

population. In learning about what culture is, what American culture may be, what the American Dream means to different people, and exploring the dreams of other peoples in other nations, students will be engaged in a yearlong discussion of what it means to be a citizen of the United States. Making connections to their own country every time they approach a different region of the Eastern Hemisphere will naturally steer them toward a continuous review of our government, the education system, and the various coexisting subcultures here in America.

Initially, students will become familiar with the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. These will be revisited every quarter as we examine the vital doctrines of other nations and how those principles compare to ours. For this reason, what will most likely be retained from this course are the all-important broader concepts that encompass it. Those concepts are American ideals, rights, duties, and the value of education and diversity.

### Other Equally Important Reasons

Young people need to know the facts when it comes to their rights under the law. Too often, they make sweeping generalizations based on what they perceive to be their rights, stemming, perhaps, from their view of what "freedom" means. For this reason, a very basic introduction to civics is necessary at this grade level.

Young people are constantly bombarded by messages through the media from profiteers of the "culture industry." The products they sell hold value to students as a means of raising status within their culture. Advertisers know this. It is my hope that in discussing the American dream, students may become cognizant of what motivates them to want these products.

It would be easy to approach this content with an Anglo-centric perspective; however, students will see each nation or culture through the words and eyes of everyday citizens outside the American culture. They will read or listen to the stories of everyday life and stories that may reveal the hopes and desires of their people. Activities and discussion ensue which will focus on commonalities as well as the richness of differences compared to Americans.

Sixth graders are at a precipice when it comes to understanding abstract concepts. They understand the extremes of good and evil and the hero vs. the villain, but when asked to take sides, they very rarely admit or state that they simply are unsure or they don't know. Everything is either black or white, yes or no. It's important for students, who are ripe for the jumping, to intuitively sense the irony in a given situation.

For instance, students will be exposed to narratives of citizens who hold their nation's hopes and dreams as their own, but they will also read and listen to the stories of those individuals whose dreams were in opposition to that of their leaders'. And when discussing influences on dreams, we may find such things as fear and ignorance (i.e. Hitler's dream for the Aryans). It's important for these

paradoxes to arise for those students who are ready to see the irony.

Another connection which will be revisited every quarter as we compare national cultures is that of ethnic identity within America and on a smaller, more local scale, within the North Valley, which is where Garfield is located. There was a poll taken in preparation for an "International Day" at our school, and the question of ethnicity was raised. Students were asked to check off the ethnic groups they identified with. They were confused because "Hispanic" was listed more than once and each one had a different country attached to it, such as Spain or Mexico. I observed them asking their friends about it and when their friends, who were recent immigrants from Mexico claimed to not understand, they opted for "white/Anglo." Others watched quietly because they, too, were confused. They did the same and marked as the others did. As misguided as the poll was, it did reveal a disturbing fact about the fear, shame, and ignorance surrounding ethnic identity at Garfield. I believe a curriculum that addresses diversity as beneficial to a healthy society would stave off some of the fear and shame. Cultural recognition and validity through exploration would alleviate not only fear, but the ignorance as well. We are inherently scared of what we don't know or understand. In understanding that most humans, regardless of race, religion, gender, age, etc. all have similar hopes and aspirations, a bridge may well be gapped in the minds of students to those who seem different to them in all other regards.

## **Subject Content**

There are two integral components to this proposed curriculum. One is the basic introductory units, which address culture, our system of government, and the American dream. The other equally important component is the student bibliography, which is a list of novels and short stories that can be used throughout the year to introduce students to the lives, dreams, voices, and stories of people their own age from all over the world, and from different eras. These narratives can be used to draw constant connections between the hopes and dreams of people around the globe with these of their fellow Americans.

The Introductory Units- "Discovering the American Dream"

### *Unit Overviews*

The introduction provides the context from which the rest of the year's content will be drawn from.

The Culture Unit (the focus of this proposal)

- Culture — what is it? What makes up a culture? Is there a Garfield culture? A youth culture? A female culture? A New Mexican culture? A gang culture?
- What is your culture? What are the cultures you identify with most?
- American culture — what defines us? What makes Americans as a people different from other nations? American government, education, mannerisms.

## The Civics Unit

- Declaration of Independence — 3 principles, what do they mean? What DID they mean to the writers?
- The U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights — Laws, "rights"
- Citizenship — duties, responsibilities
- System of government
- Education system — history, what were the aims of public education. Why are you here?

## The American Dream Unit

- The American Dream- what is it to you? To a recent immigrant from Mexico? To a business owner? To a just-married couple? To a homeless family?

Is it a myth or is it a reality?

As directed by the sixth grade social studies curriculum for the state of New Mexico, each quarter's focus will be on a different region of the Eastern Hemisphere. Here's the breakdown:

1st quarter- Ancient civilization

*Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China*

2nd quarter- Europe and Russia

3rd quarter- Middle East and Africa

4th quarter- Asia and the Pacific

Each region (or in the first quarter's instance, each civilization) will be considered a "focus area." As a focus area is being addressed in social studies, we'll explore the average citizen's daily life through storytelling, whole-class readings, literature circles, mystery guest readers, book talks, author studies, reader's theaters, class plays, and excerpts for modeling genre, literary devices, and writing styles.

Activities and discussion ensue which will take us further into an understanding of that country's diverse population.

Throughout, we revisit these questions, all the time, trying to fill in the pieces of the puzzle just as an archaeologist would:

1. What does the average citizen of that time and place dream for himself of herself?

What does the average citizen of that time and place dream for his or her country?

2. What dream do the leaders of the country have for its people?

3. How does education play a part in reaching these dreams?

4. What are the other factors that play a part in these dreams?

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## *Unit Breakdown*

## The Culture Unit

## Terms

culture- A set of unique ideas, customs, values and skills shared among a group of people.

values- principles, goals, standards most desirable. (liberty, freedom, democracy, an educated public)

ideas- beliefs, opinions, or plans. (God, education, system of government)

customs- habits or traditions (holidays, food, shopping, music, art, celebrations)

skills- abilities (to think, organize, communicate, learn, and create)

## Implementation

First, we'll look around at our own classroom and try to find examples for each term.

Our reason for being in the class is that we're all needing to practice how to communicate through reading and writing. We'll call it the "Room 17 Culture" and we'll first decide what it is we desire the most from this class — these are our values. Possible answers would be good grades, better reading and writing skills, and preparedness for the seventh grade. These are goals.

Then, we'll ask what are some beliefs or opinions we all share about our goals/values. Possible answers would be that learning how to read or write more effectively will help us communicate, that learning is something we need to do, that if we're not prepared for the next grade, our grades will be affected and that to meet our goals, we have to work hard.

The traditions we share are habits such as being seated before the bell rings, listening to the teacher, raising hands to speak, following instructions, and respecting others.

Skills that are most valued in our culture are listening, following directions, paying attention, note-taking, reading, and writing.

After using the classroom as an example of a culture, we can discuss whether or not these things would be true of other classes. First, we'll discuss things that make a culture different from other cultures, for instance; foods, diet, religions, ways of thinking (group vs. individual), ways of communicating, celebrations, and language. If certain aspects are true of other classrooms, then we may want to cross them off our list because they do not distinguish us as being unique. For instance, valued skills in "Room 17 Culture" are skills that are valued in all other classrooms. We may decide to think further on what skills make us more unique as a classroom culture. It may be that we decide our focus on literature and writing makes us unique from the other classes. And we may change answers completely once the "what-makes-us-unique" question arises. For traditions, we may want to omit everything and list that we write in our journals for the first ten minutes of class, unlike the other classes.

In groups, we will then make the same lists for youth culture and New Mexican

culture. We'll come together as a class and list answers on the board. This will open up discussion about the various cultures that coexist within New Mexico and at Garfield Middle School. What about the indigenous cultures and other minorities here in our community. Why is it important for us to consider and include other cultures besides the dominant culture?

The next part of this unit will introduce ethnicity and the various ethnic cultures here in New Mexico. We'll focus on the five main groups and brainstorm about our perceptions of these ethnic cultures. The five groups will be "Anglos", "Latinos", "Indians", "Blacks" and "Asians." These labels are highly disputed by many groups and we will discuss this after we do a bit of research. First, however, we will list our impressions of these ethnic groups using our "culture" charts (see handout #1). Students will be instructed to steer away from any negative stereotypes and to fill in the chart according to what they perceive is the answer for each group. The students will then turn in their sheets. Each group of students (there should be five groups) will get a box of books to look through. Each box will hold five or six heavily illustrated non-fiction books about an individual ethnic group. For instance, the first group will have a box of books on Latino cultures. The groups will have thirty minutes to gather as much data as possible on their assigned ethnic groups and fill in their answer sheets as they go along (see handout #2). Students will be given roles within their groups to assist in their discoveries and a rubric will be handed out so that students know what is expected of them.

After the fact-finding mission, each group will report their findings as the teacher writes their answers down for all to see on an overhead projector. The entire class may add on to the lists after each group has presented their findings. Groups must add on to their lists the items that were suggested by their classmates.

For the next two weeks, groups engage in literature circles, where they read four short stories and discuss them in their groups and complete activities that draw connections among main characters. The activities and projects focus on the hopes and dreams of their characters and how culture plays out in their lives. For instance, the first group, who were originally assigned to search for information regarding Latino cultures in America, will read memoirs by Latino authors and they will be expected to revise their original handout as they partake in discussions regarding the lives of the authors. One example of a final project would be to have students choose selections from the readings that support their findings about Latino cultures in America and present them in a short series of monologues.

The next part of the "culture" unit will ask students to identify two cultures that they identify with most. First, after having identified micro-culture (classroom), school culture, state culture as well as ethnic cultures, we will list on the board the many other cultures we know about (i.e. youth culture, male or female culture, hip-hop culture, etc.). A weekend homework project will require students to create a collage that will visually represent the two chosen cultures. They will choose images that portray values, ideas, customs, and skills their self-identified cultures

practice. A variety of models will be presented to offer ideas and a rubric will be handed out so that students know what elements are required for their project. The purpose of this assignment will be for students to reflect on themselves and their cultural backgrounds. Also, they will have an opportunity to introduce themselves to their classmates using a creative medium. These projects will not be judged on artistic ability, but rather on their having included everything on the rubric (see the "Assessment" part of this proposal for a sample rubric).

The final part of the first unit will focus on American culture. What does it mean to be American? What makes Americans different from the people of other nations. The class will list on the board the four terms we've used thus far: values, ideas, customs, and skills. It would be likely that at this stage, students will not have enough prior knowledge to draw from in order to create a bountiful list. Therefore, this information may be presented by introducing members of the community who have traveled to other countries. They could present slide shows of their trips (carefully selected to show opposing values, ideas, customs, or valued skills). These volunteers could be members of the students' families, or they could be school staff members. After the guest speakers and a question and answer period, we would brainstorm answers for our list on the overhead. What follows is a list of possible answers when brainstorming for what it is that makes us different:

*Values:* democracy, education, family, healthy environment

*Ideas:* equality, freedom/liberty, religious freedom, free education

*Customs:* shopping, entertainment, vacations, Sundays off, fashion/dress, dating, diet/nutrition, waste disposal, holidays and celebrations

*Skills:* spoken languages (English, Spanish), reading and writing, computer knowledge, the arts (theater, music, visual art)

The Civics Unit (in brief)

The culture unit serves as segue to the next unit, which is a very basic introduction to civics. The most unique aspect of American culture, it should be pointed out, is the system of government that is in place. The founding principles of the Constitution — liberty, self-government and equality — form the base of many Americans' hopes and dreams. In this unit, students will be introduced to a very basic history of the conditions that led to the creation of documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. The three founding principles of American sovereignty are introduced: liberty, self-government, and equality. Also, duties and responsibilities of the nation's citizens will be approached. Students will discuss the issue of rights and what they perceive their rights to be in terms of the law.

In this unit, a project will arise where students will need to demonstrate comprehension of the unit content by synthesizing much of what was discussed and learned by interviewing various people. They will be asked to answer the questions that will be posed throughout the year, after learning about other cultures and nations:

1. What does the average citizen of that time and place dream for himself or herself?
2. What does the average citizen of that time and place dream for his or her country?
3. What dream do the leaders of the country have for its people?
4. How does education play a part in reaching these dreams?
5. What are the other factors that play a part in these dreams?

For the first time, students will answer these questions as they apply to Americans. On a continuous basis, they will revisit these answers and compare them to the answers they come up with after learning about other countries or cultures.

### The American Dream Unit

The civics unit leads to a focus on the American dream. What is it? What are the dreams and hopes of students and how does the American ideal play a part in it? Do all Americans have the same dream? What is the dream for a recent Mexican immigrant? For a new business owner? For a retired man who goes back to school to get his GED? We'll read stories to expose the students to different points of view and to generate discussion. Students will be asked to interview the adults in their lives to find out what their hopes and dreams are, and they will be asked to present their findings in creative ways.

### Planned Assessment Strategies

Grades will be based on a point system. Each unit will consist of 500 points broken down as follows:

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>
Participation	100
Individual Final Unit Projects	100
Reading Homework	100
Reflective Learning Log Entries	100
Group Project	85
<u>Peer Evaluation from Group Project</u>	<u>15</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>

Grades are based on the following scale:

- 450-500= A
- 400-449= B
- 350-399= C
- 300-349= D

### Participation

This is an interactive, experiential class. Students are expected to engage actively

in class discussion, learning exercises, and group activities. There are many ways to participate including active listening, thoughtful inquiry, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication. Lecture and class discussion will cover material not included in the readings. Attendance is absolutely critical to meeting the overall course objectives.

### Reading Homework

The purpose of the reading homework is to supplement and augment material covered in class. Class discussion and activities will build from the homework readings so it is assumed that the homework has been completed before the assigned date.

### Individual Projects

These are projects designed to have the student demonstrate mastery of content based on the principles of Bloom's taxonomy. The culture unit will require all students to choose at least two cultures they identify strongly with and present a collage that represents those cultures in a personal way.

### Group Projects

Group projects involve a team approach to investigating and presenting a topic or issue which is of concern and importance to the class. The purpose of the group project is to practice working collaboratively, to actively engage in inquiry and to creatively present the finding. Students randomly choose cards for group role assignments. Peer evaluations are based on a set of criteria given to students before the group begins work.

### Learning Log Reflections

Every few days, students will be given a choice of prompts to respond to that have to do with what was discussed and presented in preceding days. This is meant to be mostly a review as shared responses present summaries of what has been learned or remembered by fellow students.

### Rubrics

Rubrics are a set of criteria and standards that accompany a few models that demonstrate the desired standard (see Handout #3 for a sample rubric).

### Holistic Assessment

Each unit is allotted 500 points for a "unit" grade; however, other points are added using holistic scoring methods, based on activities and strategy practice sessions for reading comprehension skills, genre studies, literature circles, and other activities that are literacy related, but may not have anything to do with the comparative theme for the year.

### *Year-end Objectives*

Students will reflect on what they discovered throughout the year in their language arts, literature, and social studies classes using learning logs, notes, and materials created throughout the year. A class-generated rubric will set the criteria for a personal essay.

### *Quarterly Objectives*

Students will demonstrate what was learned during the quarter in the form of a quarterly project. A list of high-interest projects is provided at the start of the quarter. Projects have a range with regard to modalities and talents with special consideration given to synthesis and evaluation of content.

### *Weekly Objectives*

Students will reflect in their Learning Logs at the end of each week adding questions, comments, suggestions, concerns, etc. They will be required to summarize the week's lessons and respond with their own thoughts.

Weekend homework will consist of students using their Learning Logs, which include class notes, to teach someone at home what was learned during the week. "Student teachers" must have their student summarize what was learned.

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Handout #1

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<b>Culture</b>	<b>Anglo</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>
<b>Indian</b>	<b>Latino</b>		

Values-  
goals,  
principles,  
standards

-

-

Ideas-  
beliefs, opinions,

plans

-

-

Customs-  
traditions, habits,  
behaviors

-

-

Skills-  
most valued  
abilities

-

-

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Handout #2

Directions: Your group has 30 minutes to find as much information as you can about your assigned ethnic group using the books in this box. Choose your group roles and record them here.

Recorder (writes the information down on the handout) \_\_\_\_\_

Task Leader (keeps everyone focused and on track) \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter (reports the information to the rest of the class) \_\_\_\_\_

Representative (asks the teacher questions, if needed) \_\_\_\_\_

Communicator (makes sure no one interrupts others) \_\_\_\_\_

Your group has been assigned to research facts about the cultures within America. Fill in the chart with as much information as you can.

**Values-**

**Ideas-**

**Customs-**

**Skills-**

goals, principles, most desirable <u>standards</u>	beliefs, opinions, plans	traditions, habits behaviors	most valued abilities
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Handout #3

*Sample Rubrics*

<b>Cultural Collage Rubric</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
Name on collage.....	10 pts.	_____
Chose 2 or more cultures.....	10 pts.	_____
Chose pictures that represent the values of each culture.....	15 pts.	_____
Chose pictures that represent the ideas of each culture.....	15 pts.	_____
Chose pictures that represent the customs of each culture.....	15 pts.	_____
Chose pictures that represent the valued skills of each culture.....	15 pts.	_____
Personalized your collage to show your own interests, hopes and dreams.....	10 pts.	_____
Presented your collage to the Class.....	10 pts.	_____
Project in on time.....	10 pts.	_____
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 pts.</b>	_____

*Student Bibliography*

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New Mexico Language Arts Standards for grades 5-8

**Content Standard 1:** Students will understand and use Language Arts for communication.

Students will:

- use a variety of language resources in a variety of contexts; and
- use and expand vocabulary and linguistic skills to communicate effectively.

**Content Standard 2:** Students will understand and use Language Arts as a learning tool.

Students will:

- apply Language Arts knowledge and skills to solve problems that arise in other curriculum areas;
- use language to understand various sources of information, local traditions, and culture as resources for learning;
- explore and expand connections among areas of Language Arts study; and
- apply critical thinking skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

**Content Standard 3:** Students will listen and read for a variety of purposes.

Students will:

- listen, react to, and interpret conversations, drama, music, poems, and stories delivered live and through technology;
- read and study a wide range of materials;
- increase and use vocabulary through listening, reading, observing, and interacting with others;
- select and use appropriate reading materials and other information sources for a variety of purposes; and
- use print and non-print sources to generate and apply options to solve problems in the classroom and daily life.

**Content Standard 4:** Students will use a variety of listening and reading strategies appropriately.

Students will:

- use active listening skills to acquire information;
- acquire and use knowledge of structural elements including rhetorical devices, figurative, descriptive, and visual language;
- apply knowledge of culture and context to aid comprehension;
- demonstrate comprehension of written and spoken language; use study skills independently;
- use technological resources to assist comprehension; and
- use the social skills of audience behavior in a variety of settings.

**Content Standard 5:** Students will speak clearly and write effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Students will:

- use appropriate strategies to organize and to deliver oral communication;
- expand writing skills and explore a variety of writing forms by writing on a regular basis;
- express facts, ideas, and opinions in a variety of settings in oral and written forms;
- adjust language and vocabulary appropriate to various audiences and for a variety of purposes;

- develop, write, and participate in drama, music, poems, and stories; and
- draw on prior experiences, knowledge, culture, and home language to speak and write proficiently across the curriculum.

**Content Standard 6:** Students will speak and write clearly, effectively, and correctly.

Students will:

- use correct voice and body language when speaking, with an awareness of cultural conventions which influence language;
- refine handwriting skills and acquire basic technology skills appropriate for writing;
- construct clear, concise, complete, and mechanically and grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs;

**Content Standard 7:** Students will respond personally, analytically, and critically to written and spoken language, and other media.

Students will:

- analyze and critically respond to a variety of print and non-print materials in order to build understanding of content, self, and the cultures of the United States and the world;
- explore how language is used to present differing perspectives;
- apply media literacy knowledge and skills to classroom and daily life; and
- identify and analyze propaganda, marketing campaigns, and other persuasive messages.

**Content Standard 8:** Students will appreciate and respect their own language, culture, and literature, and will learn about the languages, cultures, and literature of others.

Students will:

- explain and appreciate elements of literature from diverse cultures;
- explain differences between the forms and content of oral traditions and literature from a variety of cultures;
- compare and contrast the use of language, voice,

conventions, and format from a variety of cultures;

- identify the origin and evolution of language, vocabulary, and communication for diverse cultures; and
- develop an understanding of diverse literature, language, and cultural experiences; and
- develop, analyze, and use social and interpersonal skills to understand and communicate effectively within their own cultures and with the cultures of others.

**Content Standard 9:** Students will use language and literature to gain insight into their own and others' lives, and to build understanding of the moral and aesthetic dimensions of human experience.

Students will:

- use language and literature to build understanding of self and others.

**Content Standard 10:** Students will use state-of-the-art computer and other technology to gather, use and synthesize information, and to create and communicate knowledge.

Students will:

- find and apply information from a variety of sources;
- acquire and use a common language for technology, technical writing, and research skills;
- use available technology to locate, organize, and present information; and
- produce a variety of forms of writing using technology.