

# Respect

This week we will learn about respect through a cultural lens. The goal is to explore what makes us all unique and yet all part of the same, wonderful melting pot.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

## Main Lesson

**Whole Class Lesson**  
30 minutes



### Respect for Other Cultures

In this lesson, we will explore the characteristics and qualities that make up the unique cultures we are all a part of. Students will brainstorm these cultural elements in groups and create different melting pots that represent these cultures. (See *page 3 for lesson details.*)

## Mini Lessons

**For Small Groups**  
15 minutes



### Signs of Respect

Explore various signs of respect from different cultures. You may consider exploring how people from different cultures greet one another; see [Reuters' Modern Etiquette: Different Cultures have Different Greetings](#) for ideas. Have large group discussion about how knowing some common cultural norms can help us show more respect toward people of different cultural backgrounds.

**For Partners**  
15 minutes



### Culture Card Flip

With a partner, respond to some culturally-specific (but odd to Americans) questions, each written on a flash card; talk about your reactions or answers and then flip the card to learn more about the custom. Talk about how distaste or ignorance for other culture's customs might be disrespectful for someone of that culture. You can also think about some strange American customs we have that might seem strange to someone from a different country. (See Culture Card Flip Cards included with this lesson.)

**For Individuals**  
15 minutes



### American Custom Assessment

What are some family traditions or customs (or typical American customs) that you practice or value. If you were not from America, how might that custom be strange? For example, would a Jewish or Muslim person find it odd that Christians (or those who recognize Christmas as a holiday or tradition) bring an evergreen tree into their home, decorate it, and put presents under it?

**Bonus Extension:** Hand back the active listening inventory from the very first week of the unit (if you had students complete it from the independent mini-lesson) and ask students to self-assess if they have reached their listening goal.

## Technology-Focused

15 minutes



### Discover a New International Day

In America, we have a [“day” to celebrate everything](#): National Donut Day, Groundhog’s Day, and even Clean Your Desk Off Day! But there are a number of really important, meaningful international days of celebration or observance that you probably have never heard of, but should know more about because it will help you understand and respect different cultural celebrations. Take some time to explore the [UN’s International Days](#) webpage. Click on your birthday month, and then click on a day (that is listed in your month) that you think sounds interesting and that you’d like to know more about.

Note: January has just one celebration day, so January birthdays could pick a different month to give them more options.

Each explanation is fairly short. Take time to read it and determine how this day connects to respect for self or for others; then return to the group to share what you learned. Maybe you’ll find another reason to celebrate during your birthday month!

*If going online isn’t possible, print out 4 or 5 days and break students into small groups. They can pick a day, read about it, discuss, and report back to the larger group.*

# Respect for Other Cultures

This week we explore how we can be more respectful of everyone if we understand where we all come from, what we share as a culture, and what makes us unique as individual members of that culture. This lesson invites students to create different melting pots that represent the cultures they are all a part of together.

## Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

## Required Materials

- Large black poster paper to make the melting pots.
- Packs of small sticky notes in any color
- My Family Culture worksheet for a home extension, if applicable

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Identify qualities and characteristics that make up a variety of cultures
- Create “melting pots” that represent the cultures the students are a part of

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Culture is a big reflector of respect. If the people within the culture show respect for themselves and others, the culture is healthy and has the capacity to grow. If the people within the culture do not show respect for themselves and others, the culture is unhealthy and will remain fixed and stagnant, if not regressive. How is your school culture right now? What about your classroom culture? What are some things you can do to improve the culture and improve your capacity for respect? Set one goal this week around improving your classroom culture and work toward meeting it in the next few weeks. Observe how you and your students improve giving and receiving respect after that goal is met.



## Share

5-7 minutes

For the last week of our Respect unit, we are going to look at culture and how understanding culture can help us be more respectful, especially if we are not familiar with a particular culture or tradition.

We are all part of a culture. In fact, we are part of many cultures! We have a school culture. We have a family culture. We have a national culture. We have historical culture through our family’s history and where our ancestors came from. Some of us know these cultures very well and some of us don’t. We may have never thought about the school culture, but we definitely have one. Maybe we have never really thought about American culture if we have never been immersed in a non-American culture. But we definitely have one! Some of you may have strong ties to your historical culture. You may have parents or grandparents or great-grandparents who came to America from another country. Maybe some of you still have relatives living in another country. Maybe your ancestors are Native American and you have always been here. All of these things help shape the cultures we are part of. Understanding and appreciating culture helps us respect both ourselves and others.



## Inspire

15 minutes

America is often called a “melting pot” when it comes to our culture. Who knows what this term means? (Invite student responses.)

Good. America is a melting pot because it is a place where everything comes together to form something new and whole. People from all walks of life, all religious traditions, all educational backgrounds, all income levels, all abilities, all skin colors, and all languages get to be together and form something new and wonderful.

Did you know:

- The Census Bureau estimates that 300 different languages are spoken in the United States (and English is not an official national language, though 90% of the population speaks or can speak some English).
- Because the U.S. protects religious freedom, nearly every religion in the world is practiced in America.
- America is a leader in global fashion and trends often change across America depending on the region of the country you live. What is fashionable on the West Coast may not fly in the Midwest or Deep South.
- American food traditions are heavily influenced by Native American traditions as well as European traditions. Still, there are some uniquely “American” dishes that have emerged and each region of the country often is known for some type of cuisine (an example might be things like deep fried chicken, collard greens, and black-eyed peas the South is famous for).
- The U.S. leads the way in the television, film, and theater industries. There is no place quite like Hollywood anywhere in the world.
- America also leads the way in professional sports, though it lags in full adoption of the “world’s sport,” football, or what America calls soccer.

Source: [Live Science, American Culture: Traditions and Customs in the United States, 2017](#)



## Empower

15 minutes

Today we are going to look at the different cultures we are part of and identify the wonderful parts that melt together in that particular pot. We are going to divide into groups and look at our School Culture, Community Culture, State Culture, and American Culture. Together, you are going to think of all the things that make up the culture: the ideas, the food, the traditions, the people, the music, the activities, the beliefs, the entertainment, the work, the values, etc. Whatever makes the culture distinct and special, that is what you put in the pot.

Each group will have a large black pot (that you can pre-cut for them or that they can cut out before getting started). Their job is to fill their pot with different things that they feel characterizes their assigned culture. To do this, they should brainstorm these characterizations, and when they have their list, write each one on a sticky note and stick it to their pot. The goal is to think of as many cultural characterizations in the time provided.



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

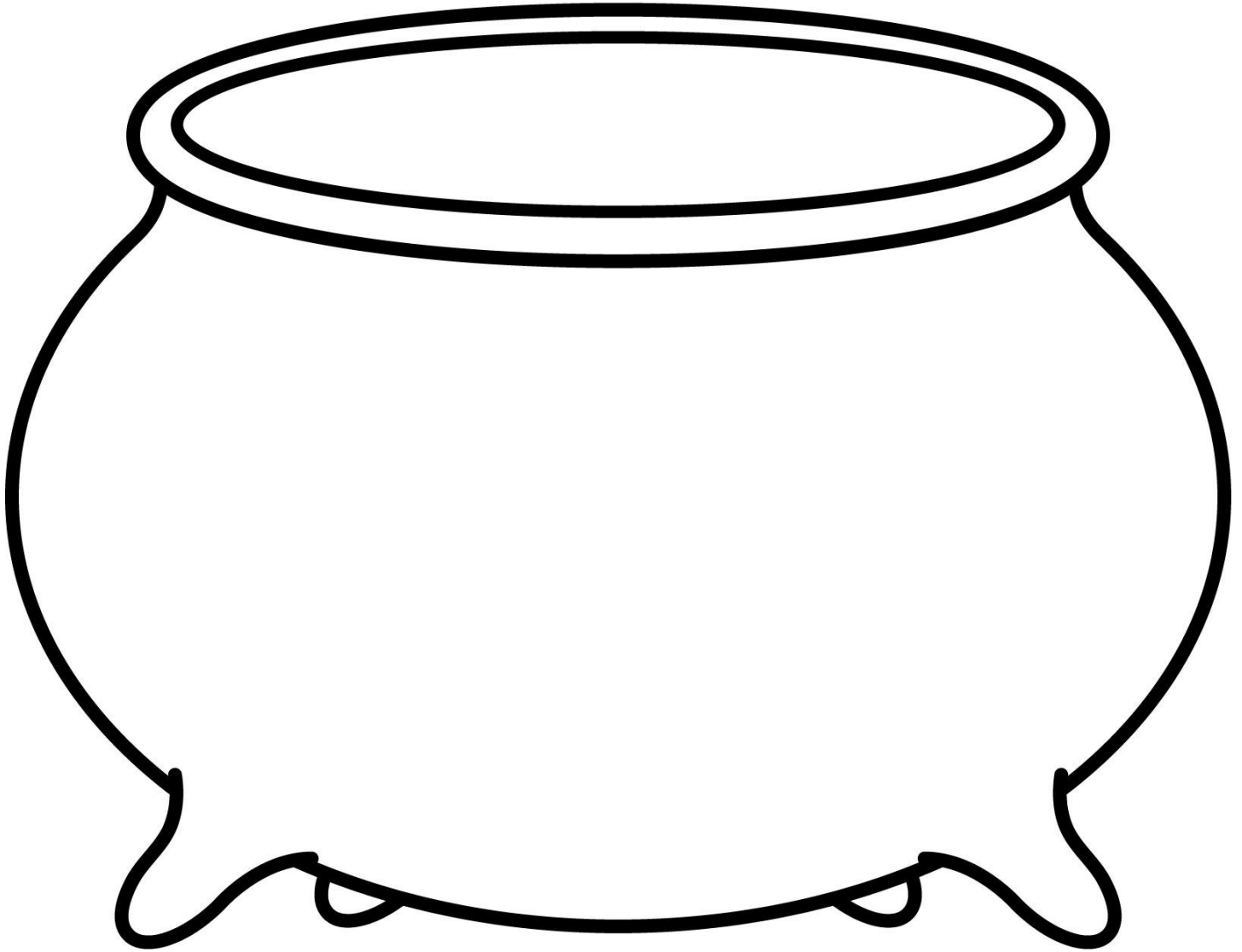
At the end, students share their pots and all of the things they put into it. There will likely be some overlap which provides an opportunity to explain how these sub- or mini-cultures (like a school culture) feeds into or is influenced by larger cultures like community, state, or the national culture.

Finish by asking how knowing all of these parts of our culture and about other people's cultures can help us have better respect for ourselves and others.

As an extension, students can take home My Family Culture worksheet and think about what makes up their family culture. Ideally they can do this with their family members and then discuss all of the things that make their family unique and its own little melting pot, as no two members will be exactly the same.

# My Family Culture

With your family, think of all the things that make up your family's culture. What makes you unique, different, the same, and special? Then, in the pot, write those things down. When you are finished, look at what you wrote and talk about what it says about your family. How do you all melt together into one family unit?



What is our Family's Culture?

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# Culture Card Flip

Print out this sheet and cut around each card. Then fold it in half to create a front and back.

When you order a hamburger at a restaurant, how do you usually eat it?

In Norway, people eat everything with a knife and fork, including their sandwiches! It would be considered rude to simply pick up your burger and eat it.

When you go out to eat in a restaurant, do you tip the server at your table?

In America (and other countries), this is customary. But in South Korea and other countries, to leave a tip insults the wait staff. Food service industry workers typically make a very good living, so they are not looking for their customers to give them more. By contrast, U.S. food service workers largely depend on tips to help ensure they are making enough money.

If you ordered spaghetti in a restaurant or ate it at home, would your parents or guardians let you slurp up the noodles one at a time?

Probably not! But, in China, slurping is a sign of good cheer and enjoyment, which is a compliment to the chef. Plus, it makes your food a lot more fun to eat! If you don't slurp, you might actually insult the cook.

When someone gives you a gift, would you open it right away in front of the gift giver?

In America, we usually open our gifts as soon as we get them. We want the giver to see that we like what they gave us. In Asia, though, it is customary to wait and open a gift later and not in front of the giver. To open it right away might make you look greedy to the gift giver.

If you were to hail a cab, would you get in the front seat or the back seat?

In America, you would probably get in the back seat. This is customary. In other countries like Australia and New Zealand, though, they expect you to get in next to the driver. To get in the back gives the driver the impression that you think they are better than they are.