DESIGNING FOR DIVERSITY

LESSON PACKAGE FOR GRADES 9 TO 12

THEME: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION | SUBJECT: ENGLISH
THEME: Diversity and Inclusion

SUBJECT: English

GRADE LEVEL: Grades 9 to 12

LESSON PACKAGE OVERVIEW:

Students will consider the definition of cultural diversity and engage with texts that explore the challenges and benefits of working towards increased and authentic diversity. Focusing on inclusivity students will apply knowledge of cultural diversity by writing a formal letter to the appropriate person proposing specific changes to address any diversity and inclusion concerns in the school community. Finally, students will explore the UN Sustainable Development Goals and consider how the concerns for their local community connect to specific goals set by the United Nations.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

► What does cultural diversity mean?
► What challenges does diversity create and what potential comes from diversity?

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:

Students will:

• Gain an understanding of what diversity means as they engage with texts
• Examine challenges and benefits of diversity with an emphasis on the potential that emerges with diverse perspectives
• Discover that inclusivity and accessibility applies to everyone
• Engage with the concept of universal design
• Connect diversity and inclusivity to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
• Analyze texts that relate to societal issues relating to living and working within diverse multicultural societies
• Produce texts that reflect understanding and sensitivity to diversity and inclusion in their school community

Recommended Assessment for Learning:

You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels and knowledge. You are also best positioned to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this lesson package successful.

In this lesson package, teaching strategies include information literacy, collaborative group work and class discussion. Suggestions for demonstration of learning include written and oral reflection, placemat, letter writing and student-generated discussion. Please make any accommodations or modifications that serve your students.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

• Chart paper and markers
• Computers or tablets with access to the Internet

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LESSON 1:
INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

SUGGESTED TIME:
75 minutes

Investigate and Learn

1. Set up the placemat activity. Copy the definition for cultural diversity on a few large pieces of paper with ample margins (at least 20cm), this will allow each student in the group enough space to simultaneously write comments on the paper. Place the papers around the room where groups of students can write on them at the same time.

   Cultural Diversity—Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations. Article 1, UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001. www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/cultural-diversity/.

2. Instruct students to move to the closest piece of chart paper and read, reflect and respond to the definition of cultural diversity.

3. For the first part of the activity, have students work in silence. Ask them to focus on their own thoughts and responses first. Instruct them to record their ideas on the paper surrounding the definition of cultural diversity using the following prompts:
   a. Circle any words that are unfamiliar
   b. Rephrase the main points in your own words
   c. Record any questions that occur to you
   d. Write down any connections you can make to topics studied in this or other classes
   e. Write down any feelings or thoughts in response to the definition
   f. Use the following sentence starters for those who need extra encouragement:
      i. I wonder about...
      ii. This reminds me of...

4. After students complete the silent response, have them review the definition “big paper” and read each other’s comments and questions. Encourage students to discuss the responses, help each other with any vocabulary or content questions. Prompt them to add notes to the page with any additional ideas that come up in their group discussion.

5. If time allows and students are interested, bring two groups together to share and compare responses.

6. Debrief by having each group (or combined groups) share with the class the most significant idea(s) that came about during the activity. Write these ideas on the board or a piece of chart paper.

7. Post student group “big papers” around the room while they complete a written response.

8. ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING: Exit ticket—Ask students to record their understanding of cultural diversity in two to three sentences on an exit card and to think of one question about cultural diversity or inclusion they have.
LESSON 2: CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL OF DIVERSITY

SUGGESTED TIME:
75 minutes

1. Review the writing from last class with a quick gallery walk with the placemats positioned around the room. Clarify understanding of diversity as fundamental to our humanity.

2. **ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING:** Ask students to brainstorm a list of “challenges” and “benefits” of diversity with a partner.

3. Have students read and watch the following:
   c. Watch a clip of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the role of education in promoting diversity from The Canadian Press. www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdUNN5fEKXA.

**Action plan**

4. Using Prime Minister Trudeau’s ideas as a prompt, in small groups create a list of the ways in which the school community encourages cultural diversity and the areas that need to be improved upon.

5. Use this list as a basis for crafting a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau.

6. Provide a model for the proper format for a formal letter. Have students work individually or with a partner to write the letter OR collaborate as a class by using One Drive to express to Prime Minister Trudeau the ways in which the school is developing authentic diversity, the challenges you still face and any support you think the federal government can offer schools in addressing these challenges.

**Take Action**

7. After careful editing and proof-reading, encourage students to send the completed letters to the Prime Minister’s Office.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING: Ask students to brainstorm a list of “challenges” and “benefits” of diversity with a partner.
LESSON 3:
CONNECTIONS TO UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SUGGESTED TIME:
75 minutes

Investigate and Learn


2. Use the first two pages to introduce the resolution.

3. Have students access and browse the list of Sustainable Development Goals and complete the following task: [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300](http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300).

4. Explore at least two specific goals (1-17) that comment on similar issues of diversity and inclusion. Take notes, make specific reference to any relevant targets for the UN SDGs you explore.

Reflection

5. **ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING:** The United Nations states that its primary focus is eradicating poverty and increasing freedom. Write a well-formed paragraph that explains your understanding of the connection between cultural diversity and inclusivity around the world and the UN Sustainable Development Goals—How is the issue of diversity and inclusion connected to the UNSDGs?

Report and Celebrate

6. Ask students if they would like to further commit to the cultural diversity in their community by taking the WE are Canada Pledge. If students are interested, visit [www.WE.ca](http://www.WE.ca) for more information and to take the pledge.

7. Post stories and examples of the diversity and inclusion project online through social media to share the impact students are having with the hashtag #WEAreOne or focus on written stories that may be shared in community newspapers, websites or blogs.

8. Ask students to reflect further and engage in conversations with others to understand the deeper impact of the their diversity and inclusion project and to consider how they can ensure their project has lasting impacts:
   a. How will we ensure that diversity and inclusion are central components of our community?

9. Encourage students to think about how as an individual they are able to create change in their communities by volunteering:
   a. As a young member of society, what other issues are you passionate about and how can you continue to make an impact locally, nationally and globally?
   b. How can you continue to apply what you have learned about accessibility, diversity and inclusion?
   c. As a Canadian and a global citizen, what have you learned about the importance of accessibility, diversity and inclusion in your community?
   d. How can you share the lessons you’ve learned with others now and in the future?