

Title: TURBANS: TIES TO RELIGION AND CULTURE

Overview:

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage students to examine various aspects of cultural identity. The students will view the film *Turbans*, which focuses on a Sikh family's immigration to Oregon in the early 1900s.

Grade Levels: 4-8

Subject Area: Language Arts

California State Standards <http://www.cde.ca.gov/board/>

Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Grade 4

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment).

2.3 Make and confirm predictions about text by using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, titles, topic sentences, important words, and foreshadowing clues.

2.4 Evaluate new information and hypotheses by testing them against known information and ideas.

2.5 Compare and contrast information on the same topic after reading several passages or articles.

Grade 5

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.3 Discern main ideas and concepts presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas.

2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.

Grade 6

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.

Grade 7

3.3 Analyze characterization as delineated through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.

Language Arts Writing

Grade 4

2.3 Write information reports:

- a. Frame a central question about an issue or situation.
- b. Include facts and details for focus.
- c. Draw from more than one source of information (e.g., speakers, books, newspapers, other media sources).

Grade 5

Organization and Focus

1.1 Create multiple-paragraph narrative compositions:

- a. Establish and develop a situation or plot.

Grade 6

2.1 Write narratives:

- b. Include sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character.

Grade 7

2.2 Write responses to literature:

- b. Organize interpretations around several clear ideas, premises, or images from the literary work.

Grade 8

Research & Technology

- 1.5 Achieve an effective balance between researched information and original ideas.

Language Arts Listening & Speaking

Grade 4

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

- 1.5 Present effective introductions and conclusions that guide and inform the listener's understanding of important ideas and evidence.

Grade 5

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

- 1.4 Select a focus, organizational structure, and point of view for an oral presentation.
- 1.5 Clarify and support spoken ideas with evidence and examples.

Grade 6

2.1 Deliver narrative presentations:

- a. Establish a context, plot, and point of view

Grade 7

- 1.5 Arrange supporting details, reasons, descriptions, and examples effectively and persuasively in relation to the audience.

Grade 8

2.1 Deliver narrative presentations (e.g., biographical, autobiographical):

a. Relate a clear, coherent incident, event, or situation by using well-chosen details.

Learning Objectives:

Students will

- be able to synthesize information from a variety of sources.
- be able to interpret facts and express meaning through writing activities.
- be able to translate knowledge to new contexts.
- be able to predict consequences and draw conclusions.

Assessment:

To assess students' mastery of the learning objectives, you may rate them on the quality of their writing, their presentations and their participation in group discussions.

You may also have students complete the following Student Self- Evaluation:

What did I learn from this lesson?

What do I still want to learn about this topic?

What part of my work on this lesson gives me a sense of achievement?

What would I do differently next time?

In what ways was I able to work effectively with others?

What did I like most about this lesson?

You may wish to conduct individual conferences to discuss the students' self-evaluations and their own observations of student participation in the lesson activities.

Time: Two to three 40- to 50-minute class periods

Materials and Teacher Preparation:

Videotape of **Turbans**, directed by Erika Surat Andersen

Internet access

Drawing and writing (journal) supplies

Bookmark the following Web sites:

<http://www.sikhmuseum.org/bs.htm>.

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/webcrit.html>.

<http://www.sikhnet.com/s/SikhIntro>

<http://www.freep.com/news/religion/nsikh10.htm>

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/news/lifestyles/links/turbans_27.html

<http://www.kamat.com/kalranga/attire/headgear/turbans.htm>

<http://www.sikhlink.net/presentation/sikhpresentation.htm>

<http://photon.bu.edu/~rajwi/sikhism/mansukh1.html>

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Activity One

The purpose of this activity is to prepare students for viewing the film by providing a brief introduction to Sikh culture.

1. For an overview of the Sikh culture, have students, as a class, visit the following Web site:
<http://www.sikhmuseum.org/bs.htm>.

2. Divide the class into groups of three. Provide the students with pieces of construction paper for recording information. Then, send them on an "Internet Scavenger Hunt" to collect facts about Sikh culture and the wearing of turbans. Each group should collect 10 to 15 facts. Remind the students to record the Web site where they found each fact.

(*Teacher Note:* Before you begin, you may wish to view the following Web site, which contains criteria for evaluating Web pages: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/webcrit.html>.)

Some excellent sources students may use to begin their research include the following:

<http://www.sikhnet.com/s/SikhIntro>

<http://www.freep.com/news/religion/nsikh10.htm>

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/news/lifestyles/links/turbans_27.html

<http://www.kamat.com/kalranga/attire/headgear/turbans.htm>

<http://www.sikhlink.net/presentation/sikhpresentation.htm> (Slides 54-58 and 74 contain pictures of turbans.)

3. Make a large cutout of a turban (to estimate size, see number 4, below). Refer to the **Seattle Times** Web site "Understanding Turbans" for examples of turban styles:

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/news/lifestyles/links/turbans_27.html. Post the cutout where it will be visible to the class.

4. After the students have finished collecting information pertaining to Sikh culture, ask each group to print out its facts so that the paper can be cut into strips, with one fact on each strip. Have the students compare and discuss their facts and generate categories for different types of information.

5. Post the students' fact-strips under the appropriate category headings on the cutout of the turban. Students can use this as a shared resource throughout the remainder of the lesson.

Activity Two

The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to reflect on times in their own lives when people were judged by outside attributes rather than their personality, character or other inner qualities.

1. Do a "Think-Pair-Share" activity, in which students pair up, discuss questions and then participate in a large-group discussion. Pairs begin by discussing the following questions:

- How do your clothes reflect who you are?
- Can you think of times when you have judged people by how they looked?
- Can you think of times when people have judged you or your family members based on looks?
- Can you think of examples in your own school of people being judged mistakenly because of the way they look?

2. Share insights from the pairs discussions with the entire class.
3. Have the students work in pairs to create a brief storybook or poem about someone whose looks are very different from who that person really is.
4. Encourage students to edit, illustrate and publish their writing. Hold an author session, in which individual students share their writing with the class.

FOCUS FOR VIEWING

Tell the students to think about how the different people in the film feel about their experiences as immigrants.

Some key terms to define and discuss include the following:

- Immigration
- Assimilation
- Tolerance
- Cultural Identity
- Accommodation

Tell the students to think about the following overarching question as they watch the production:

- How do people retain their cultural identity when they move to a new country?

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

In the post-viewing activities, students are challenged to explore the different experiences of the key characters in the film.

Activity One

In this activity, students are encouraged to reflect in writing on how the incidents in the film affected the different characters.

1. Read the following scenario to the students:

Imagine that another Sikh family has just moved to Astoria, Oregon, and the Singh family has invited them for dinner. The guests are very concerned about how they and their children will adapt to this new environment.

Tell the students that they are going to write a brief skit in which various members of the Singh family share their own experiences with the new family.

Divide the students into small working groups and assign each group a different role from the film. Each group should take on the persona of a member of the Singh family and write dialogue expressing that character's reactions to the removing of the turbans and the cutting of the boys' hair. The students should write in the first person.

Group One: The sister

Group Two: The younger brother

Group Three: The older brother

Group Four: The mother

Group Five: The father

The students should include the following elements in their dialogue:

- How did you feel about what happened?
- In what ways do you think your life will change because of this?
- How do you think other members of your family felt?

If you are writing from a child's perspective, include the following:

- How do you feel about your parents' decision?

If you are writing from a parent's perspective, include the following:

- How do you think this will impact the lives of your children and their children?

2. After each group has finished, stage a presentation. If possible, invite students, staff, parents, teachers and community members to view the performance.

Activity Two

The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to think about the long-term impact of intolerance.

1. Share the following scenario with the class:

You have been asked to create a sequel to the film **Turbans**, chronicling the experience of the Singh family after the boys removed their turbans.

Divide the class into small groups. Students in each group will discuss and write a synopsis of what they imagine would happen in the sequel.

2. Have the students designate one person in the class to play the role of a producer, who will judge the ideas for a sequel. The other students will portray filmmakers presenting their ideas.

3. Lead a class discussion based on the issues raised in the presentations.

4. Ask the whole class to collaborate on writing a script for the sequel.

Activity Three

1. Ask the students to respond in a writing journal to the following questions:

- If you were writing the script for **Turbans**, would you change the end? (You may wish to remind the students that this film is a dramatic interpretation of events that actually occurred.)
- What pressures do you think the family felt? Have you had similar experiences?
- How would you respond to being attacked? Would you change the thing that identified you or meant something significant to you?
- What part of your own identity would be the most difficult to change?
- Did the Singh family gain something by coming to live in America?
- What does American society gain as people from varied cultures come to live here?
- Can a person still believe in something (or identify with it in a certain way) without looking the part? Can you think of examples?

Activity Four

1. Create a list of things people can do to welcome newcomers, respect cultural identities and find a place for individual expression in society. Post the list on your classroom door and invite members of your school community to add their own ideas to the list.

Related Resources

Cha, Dia. **Dia's Story Cloth**. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1996.

Hesse, Karen. **Letters from Rifka**. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1992.

Say, Allen. **Tea with Milk**. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.