

Homescapes

Overview

A “homescape” is a meaningful place that is familiar and comfortable enough to call home but it also exists within a living, breathing, changing environment and cultural landscape. Therefore, a homescape is a resting place in-between movement and settlement. For example, when people move to an unfamiliar place whether it is across oceans and national borders or a new apartment down the street, they take things with them to help them recreate a sense of home in a different place. Often these things are tangible objects such as food, furniture, pictures, clothing, pets and equipment, but they can also be symbolic aspects of culture such as language, traditions, ideas and even memories. In this lesson plan students will discuss what it means to call a place a home and create a homescape as a collaborative class project.

Objectives

This lesson introduces students to cultural adaptation in relation to the movement and settlement of people.

1. To understand immigration as a shared experience of recreating home in unfamiliar places.
2. To learn about the concept of culture as a fluid and changing process of adaptation and human diversity.

Activities

1. In small groups of three or four have students consider the following scenario: Your family has to move to a new country where you do not speak the language well and have never visited before. You have to travel light and only bring the essentials.
2. Have students make a list of the things they would take with them in order to recreate a sense of home in a new and unfamiliar land. They must narrow their list to ten material things and at least five symbolic things (specific traditions, ideas, music, values, memories etc.) Have them discuss why they made those particular choices.
3. Bring the class together to create your homescape. Make a map representing all of the objects and ideas that make up the homescape or have students create their own individual maps or collages of their own homescapes. Be creative!

Materials

This lesson will take two 45-minute class sessions, but can be adapted for one 45-minute class period.

1. Construction paper, markers, scissors, crayons, writing materials, paints, decorations, tracing paper, pictures, collage material...be creative!
2. Notebook paper or computer for recording group discussions and for listing the objects and ideas that students will use to recreate home in a new land.

Adaptations

1. Have students write a personal essay about the concept of home.
2. Have students create a collage of all the objects and ideas that they collected to create a homescape.
3. Students can interview family members or friends about their immigration experience and write a short essay or make a presentation to the class about what they learned.

Evaluation

At the end of this lesson students will have a material representation of their homescape in the form of a map, collage or other project that the class invented together. These items can be used to evaluate student participation in the lesson. Students should also be able to answer or at least discuss the following questions after completion of the lesson:

1. Why do people move to new lands?
2. How do people adapt to new and unfamiliar places?
3. What examples of homescapes can you identify in your city?

Educational Standards Referenced

Grades 6-8 Language Arts/Literacy In History/Social Studies

CCSS ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1, RH.6-8.2, RH.6-8.9

Grades 9-10 Language Arts/Literacy in History/Social Studies

CCSS ELA-Literacy.RH9-10.1, RH9-10.2, RH9-10.9

Grades 11-12 Language Arts/Literacy in History/Social Studies

CCSS ELA-Literacy.RH11-12.1, RH11-12.2, RH11-12.7, RH11-12.9

Created by Amy Garza, Education Consultant

Edited by René Harris, Collections and Education Programs Manager