

MILWAUKEE'S CULTURAL CONNECT: AFRICAN AMERICANS

Teacher Guide

This program includes (1) your input (which can be modified any way you wish), (2) a video (divided into three parts) that describes the Milwaukee African American experience presented by an African American anthropologist, (3) talking points with images you can print out from this site, (4) a game of jeopardy to help students retain information, and (5) a pre-/post-test survey to evaluate the program.

Small prizes may be offered. Or you might print out the cultural FACEBALL CARDS on this site as prizes.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Explain that students will be learning about the practices and history of African Americans
2. Show students where Africa is on a world map
3. (If you have a Milwaukee Neighborhood map) Show students some of the neighborhoods where most Milwaukee African Americans live today (near north side through much of the northwest side)
4. Explain the concept of "culture" to the students

Culture

Cultural traits are any kinds of behaviors or ideas or beliefs that are SHARED by a group—meaning that a high percentage of the people practice these behaviors or beliefs. The cultural traits develop because people are adapting or adjusting to something in their environment. For example, if the group lives in an area where people are at war all the time, they might become more of a warrior society themselves to protect their group, and they might then believe that the finest people are those who are good fighters. If a group is discriminated against, they might learn that their only way to survive is to really stick together as a group, as they can't rely on help from the outside.

5. Pass out African American timeline (if desired)
6. Conduct the pre-test survey (if desired)
7. Have students count off to divide into four groups (numbered one, two, three, four) and pick group leaders, for later discussions and game

PART TWO: EXPLAIN HOW THE VIDEO WILL WORK

1. Tell students that the cultural anthropologist is a Milwaukee African American
2. Tell them they will also see excerpts from a documentary where black Milwaukeeans discuss their culture in their own words
3. Tell them that parts of the video will be covered later in discussions and a game of Jeopardy—hence they might want to take notes
4. The video will be paused at various times so students can take part in discussions
5. Explain that you will write questions on the board for discussion later when the video is paused

PART THREE: VIDEO (FIRST SECTION)

While the video is on, write these questions (and any others you deem important) on the board:

1. Given what you are learning about African American history, what kinds of cultural traits do you think the African Americans would develop to help them survive and/or do well?
2. What traits does this cultural group have in common with other cultural groups you have learned about?

The video narrator will tell you when to pause the video

PART FOUR: STUDENTS TABULATE CULTURAL TRAITS

1. In their groups, students should tabulate lists of cultural traits African Americans would develop to help them survive and/or do well
2. In their groups, students should tabulate lists of traits African Americans have in common with other cultural groups
3. Group leaders should report out, then hand in the lists with their group numbers on sheets of paper

PART FIVE: VIDEO (SECOND SECTION)

While this section is aired, you can add up the *correct* responses on the lists, for later prizes, if applicable.

PART SIX: TALKING POINTS

Here you might give out Faceball Cards (or some other prizes) to the students and may select some topic in the previous section of the video to discuss. Some might be the following:

1. Do you remember how people in the video mentioned Amos and Andy?

Amos and Andy radio show (later a TV show)

Ask what they know about this. Pass around the images (print out from this site).

Amos 'n' Andy was a comedy radio show popular in the US between the 1920s through the 1950s. The two men who played Amos and Andy, Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, were actually white men. When they appeared in public they had their faces smeared with black like in the old minstrel shows. The actors imitated blacks in a very derogatory and stereotypical way, making them seem either silly or con artists.

The show was later picked up on TV, and the actors were then African Americans. But the derogatory images remained. African Americans and concerned whites were eventually successful in getting the show cancelled.

2. Do you remember the kingdoms of Ashanti and Dahomey mentioned in the video?
- 3.

The female warriors of the kingdoms of Ashante and Dahomey

Ask what they know about this. Pass around the image (print out from this site).

The Dahomey Amazons were an all-female military regiment of the ancient Kingdom of Dahomey (now in the area called Benin) that lasted until the late 1800s. The regiment was founded by the

third king of Dahomey who ruled in the 1600s. They were originally a group of royal bodyguards, but later joined the general militia in wars against neighboring kingdoms. That was in the 1700s. They had strict training and were deprived of nearly all comforts while being trained and had to learn how to endure all kinds of pain and weather conditions.

The western world found out about them from the notes of European traders. These traders recorded a similar female regiment in the kingdom of Ashanti.

Ask if the students thought there were any female warriors in America during those times. (There were not. Even when the WACs and WAVEs began, the women never really were warriors. Now some do serve as front line soldiers.)

4. Do you remember the discussion of rap music in the video?
- 5.

African American musical styles (Jazz, R&B, Rap, Rock 'n Roll, Gospel)

First see what they know about this. Ask if they know other music traditions the African Americans developed. (Pass around all the images from this site, as they apply)

Jazz was actually the folk music of former slaves in the South and their descendants. The music was influenced by West African music and it gradually evolved as black musicians moved into cities. In New Orleans, small bands of self-taught African American musicians who led funeral processions played a key role in the development of early jazz. These marching bands would play songs like, "When the Saints Come Marching Home," and others. These musical traditions moved North with the Great Migration. In Bronzeville, great jazz musicians like Duke Ellington played, but they could never stay at the local hotels. They were put up by homeowners in the neighborhoods.

Jazz developed into Rhythm & Blues, which evolved in part into what would later become Rock 'n Roll in the 1940s. The term Rock 'n Roll wasn't used until the 1950s. Major early rock and roll stars were Roy Brown, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, and Little Richard. Many of the white musicians, such as Elvis Presley, studied the black musicians to learn the new music.

PART SEVEN: VIDEO (LAST SECTION)

PART EIGHT: GAME/EVALUATION

1. Engage the four groups in the game of Jeopardy, which can be accessed on this site.
2. Conduct the post-test survey (if desired), which can be accessed on this site.