

MILWAUKEE'S CULTURAL CONNECT: POLISH 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 Polish experience presented by a Polish-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 Polish Americans
2. Show students where Poland is located on a worldwide map—also show Austria, Germany, and Russia and point out that at one time, Poland did not exist.
3. 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.

4. Pass out Polish-American timeline (if desired)
5. Conduct the pre-test survey (if desired)
6. 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 Polish American
2. Tell them they will also see excerpts from a documentary where local Polish Americans 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 once 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. What were some of the terrible things that happened in Poland?
2. The video talked about how many Poles ended up in the United States and Milwaukee. How did this change the Poles?

The video narrator will tell you when to pause the video

PART FOUR: STUDENTS RESPOND TO QUESTIONS

1. In their groups, students should come up with lists of the terrible things that happened in Poland.
2. In their groups, students should come up with lists of ways the Poles changed when they came to the United States and Milwaukee.
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 tabulate the best responses on the lists, for later prizes, if applicable.

Here you might give out Facebook Cards (or some other prizes) to the students and select some talking points to address.

PART SIX: TALKING POINTS—LAST SECTION

1. Do you remember the anthropologist mentioning that Martha Stewart was Polish?

You might first ask what the students already know about her.

Martha Stewart (see image on this site)

Martha Helen Stewart was born Martha Helen Kostyra in 1941. She became famous as a businesswoman and TV celebrity with shows on cooking and homemaking. Her mother had taught her to cook, sew, and can at an early age. Living in Jersey City, New Jersey at age 10, Martha was a babysitter for three New York Yankee players, including Mickey Mantle. Later she began organizing birthday parties for the children of the baseball stars. As her skills in gracious living grew, she made several TV and magazine commercials and eventually settled on a business career in homemaking.

Martha founded *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, had numerous TV shows, wrote best-selling books, and gained success with several merchandise lines.

1. Do you remember the anthropologist mentioning Liberace?

You might first ask what the students already know about him.

Liberace (see images on this site)

Władziu Valentino Liberace was born in West Allis, Wisconsin in 1919 (he died in 1987). He was a pianist and entertainer, and became a celebrity in the class of the Kardashians during the early years of television. His father was Italian and his mother was Polish.

At the height of his career he was the highest-paid entertainer in the world, with television shows and established appearances in Las Vegas. Because of his extravagant clothing and his flamboyant presence, he was known as “Mr. Showmanship.” During his lifetime he earned two Emmy Awards, six gold albums, and two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

GAME/EVALUATION

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