

LESSON 3

Biased Attitudes Part 2: Culture

Summary

60 minutes

This lesson explores the concept of culture using the Cultural Iceberg Model, examining both visible elements and hidden patterns that shape behavior. Through personal reflection, video analysis, and interactive activities, students learn to distinguish between surface-level cultural elements (like food and festivals) and deeper cultural patterns (like values and beliefs). Students create their own cultural icebergs to examine their cultural influences, then critically analyze how certain deep cultural norms might contribute to harm or bias in their communities.

Learning Objectives

1. Define culture and understand its visible and invisible components using the Cultural Iceberg Model
2. Create a personal cultural iceberg showing their own cultural influences
3. Assess which deep cultural patterns might contribute to harmful behaviors
4. Generate ideas for positive cultural change in their community

How this lesson prevents violence

- Develops Critical Thinking: Students analyze deep cultural patterns that normalize harm, learning to question social norms rather than accepting them automatically.
- Builds Self-Awareness: Students examine their cultural influences through the iceberg model, recognizing how inherited beliefs shape their reactions to differences.
- Challenges Cultural Norms Supporting Aggression: Students identify cultural patterns that might contribute to violence, empowering them to envision positive cultural changes.
- Promotes Social Responsibility: Students learn how cultural norms affect community wellbeing, developing their capacity to create shifts that reduce harm.

Lesson Sequence

| Time | Procedure | Materials Needed |
|--------|---|---|
| 2 min | Review Community Agreements: | Community Agreements on display |
| 8 min | Journal Students reflect on a time they experienced a cultural difference. | Student Journals |
| 20 min | Direct instruction Students learn about the Culture Iceberg and analyze #cultureshock videos | Lesson Slide Deck H2.3-1 Cultural Iceberg Model Handout (if needed) |
| 20 min | Activity Students reflect on their own cultures and create their own Cultural Iceberg. | Lesson Slide Deck H2.3-2 My Cultural Iceberg Handout |
| 10 min | Pyramid Reflection and Closing Students contribute opportunities for change and potential challenges to the violence pyramid. | Student Journals Violence Pyramid chart paper Multi-colored Post-its |

At the start of class:

1. Students should have journals out
2. Students should have **H2.1-2 Violence Pyramid Handout** from lesson 1 for reference throughout the lesson and/or the classroom Violence Pyramid chart paper should be on display.
3. Copies of **H2.3-1 Cultural Iceberg Model Handout** (if needed) and **H2.3-2 My Cultural Iceberg Handout** for every student.

Implementation

| 2 min | Review Community Agreements | No Slide |
|--------|--|-----------|
| | <p>Review: Teacher will direct students to their Classroom Community Agreements from Lesson 1. Teacher will review the agreements that students created and ask for a thumbs up from everyone to show their continued commitment to upholding these agreements during today's lesson.</p> <p>Teacher Script:</p> <p>Before we begin today's lesson on culture, let's quickly review our classroom agreements. These are especially important as we'll be discussing cultural differences and potentially challenging aspects of our own cultures.</p> | |
| 8 min | Journal | Slide 2 |
| | <p>Direction: Display the journal prompt on the board. Give students 4 minutes for independent writing in their journals. Encourage depth of reflection rather than just surface-level responses.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think about a time when you experienced or witnessed a cultural difference that surprised you. What was it? How did you feel? What did you think about it? <p>Teacher Script:</p> <p>Let's begin by reflecting on our experiences with cultural differences. In your journals, write about a time when you encountered traditions, beliefs, or ways of life different from your own. It might have been during travel, meeting someone new, or through media. What caught your attention, and what feelings came up for you in that moment?</p> <p>Take a few minutes to explore this memory in your writing.</p> | |
| 20 min | Direct Instruction | Slide 3-7 |
| | <p>Direction: Begin with the definition of culture, then reveal the Cultural Iceberg Model in stages. Use the slide deck and distribute</p> | |



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Biased Attitudes Part 2:
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Culture

Health II - Lesson 3

NOTES SECTION GUIDE:

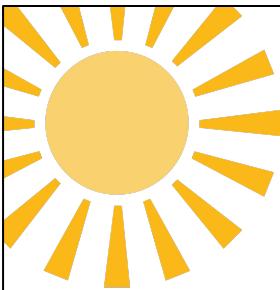
- *Italic Text – Notes for instructors*
- Normal Text – Verbal Instruction (as you get familiar with the content, you are welcome to use your own voice, but feel free to use the verbal instruction notes we have included here as a guide)
- Yellow highlight - instructional considerations

Review Community Agreements

Review: Teacher will direct students to their Classroom Community Agreements from Lesson 1. Teacher will review the agreements that students created and ask for a thumbs up from everyone to show their continued commitment to upholding these agreements during today's lesson.

Teacher Script:

Before we begin today's lesson on culture, let's quickly review our classroom agreements. These are especially important as we'll be discussing cultural differences and potentially challenging aspects of our own cultures.



In your journals :

1. Think about a time when you experienced or witnessed a cultural difference that surprised you.
2. What was it? How did you feel? What did you think about it?



Journal

Direction: Display the journal prompt on the board. Give students 4 minutes for independent writing in their journals. Encourage depth of reflection rather than just surface-level responses.

1. Think about a time when you experienced or witnessed a cultural difference that surprised you.
2. What was it? How did you feel? What did you think about it?

Teacher Script:

Let's begin by reflecting on our experiences with cultural differences. In your journals, write about a time when you encountered traditions, beliefs, or ways of life different from your own. It might have been during travel, meeting someone new, or through media. What caught your attention, and what feelings came up for you in that moment?

Take a few minutes to explore this memory in your writing.



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What is Culture? Copyright Nest 2026 ©



Direct Instruction

Direction: Begin with the definition of culture, then reveal the Cultural Iceberg Model in stages. Use the slide deck and distribute the **H2.3-1 Cultural Iceberg Model Handout** if needed for better visibility.

- Facilitate class discussion about culture; surface level and deep level.
- Show #cultureshock videos and have students identify levels of culture shown.

Teacher Script:

Let's explore what we mean by culture. From your experiences, what makes up a culture?

(Gather student responses)

Culture

The shared beliefs, values, and ways of living that shape how a group of people understand their world

Teacher Script:

Culture runs deeper than we might think. It's the shared beliefs, values, and ways of living that shape how a group of people understand their world. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. While we often notice obvious things like food, music, and clothing, culture actually works a bit like an iceberg.



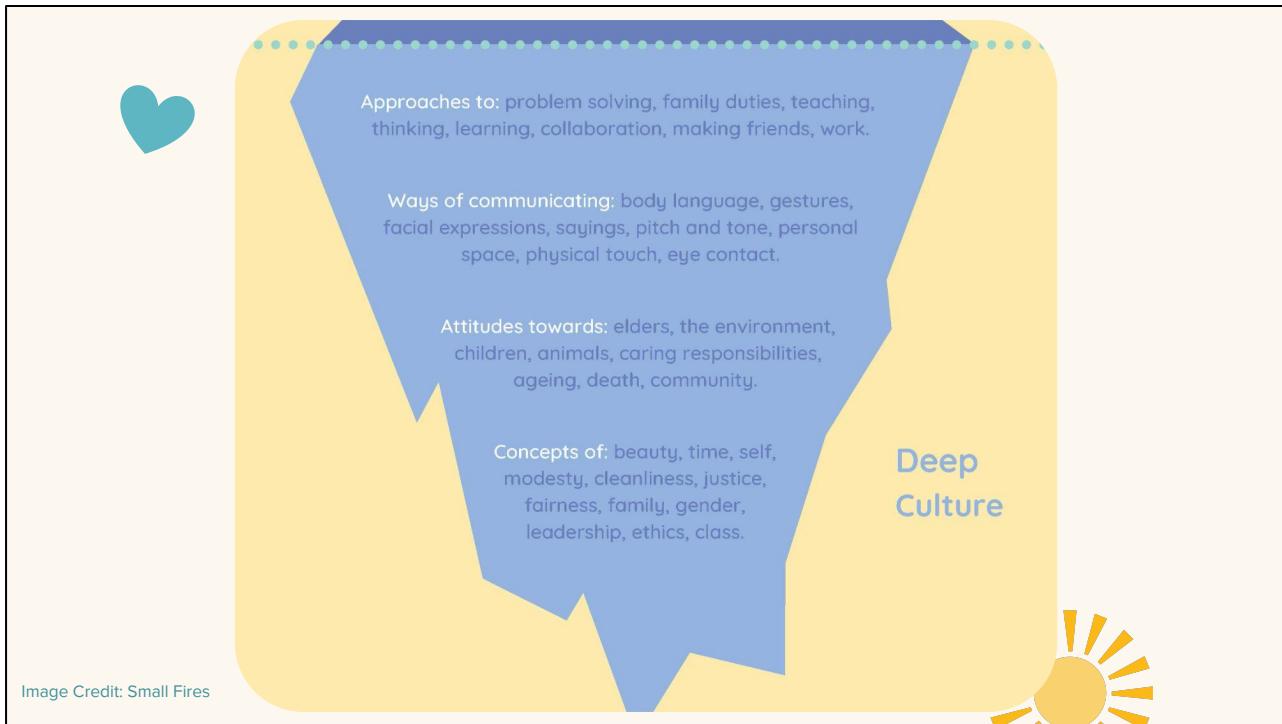
Teacher Script:

(Reveal top of iceberg)

At the surface, we see these visible elements - like festivals, language, food, clothes, and traditions. Has anyone experienced differences in these surface-level cultural elements?

(Allow time for students to share. Reveal bottom of iceberg)

Image Credit: Small Fires

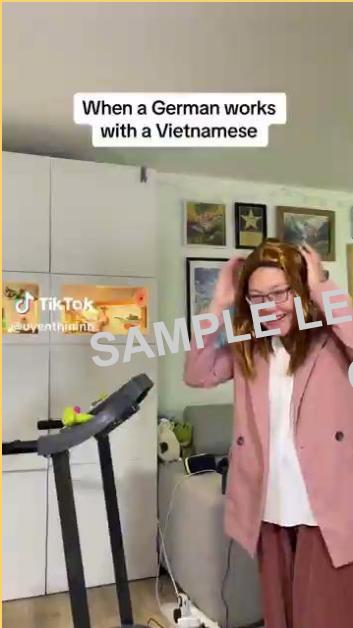


Teacher Script:

But look what lies beneath. Deep culture includes things we can't easily see - how people solve problems, view family responsibilities, make friends, work or think about time. It shapes how close we stand to others, how we show respect, our attitudes towards aging, modesty or gender, and what we consider beautiful or proper.

Deep culture can sometimes be harder to put our finger on.

Image Credit: Small Fires



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As we watch these Culture Shock videos, try and see if you can identify which are examples of visible cultural elements and which are deeper patterns.

(Show videos from the slide deck or choose other ones from the video folder (linked in the slide deck) and facilitate discussion after each asking students to identify and sort the examples of culture onto the Cultural Iceberg).

[Additional Videos](#)

ACTIVITY

My Cultural Iceberg

Create your own cultural iceberg.
What culture has shaped you?

Include 2-3 examples for each level of the iceberg:

1. **At the surface:** visible things like celebrations or clothes
2. **Just below:** less obvious patterns like how we connect with others
3. **Deep down:** core beliefs and values that guide behavior

Activity

Direction: Distribute **H2.3-2 My Culture Iceberg Handout**. Guide students through creating their own cultural icebergs, providing examples as needed.

Teacher Script:

Now it's your turn to create your own cultural iceberg. Think about the culture or cultures that have shaped you - this might be American culture, your family's culture, both or something else.

For each level of your iceberg, list two or three examples:

- At the surface: visible things like celebrations or clothes
- Just below: less obvious patterns like how we connect with others
- Deep down: core beliefs and values that guide behavior

For instance, in general American culture, we might see burgers and fireworks at the surface, sports bringing people together in the middle, and beliefs about individual freedom in the depths.

You can choose to write or draw in your examples.

(Allow independent work time and the opportunity for willing volunteers to share their icebergs with the class).

Surface

Burgers
Fireworks on the Fourth of July



Just Below

Emphasis on Military Service
Correction through Sports

Deep

Beliefs on individual freedom



Teacher Script:

For instance, in general American culture, we might see burgers and fireworks at the surface, sports bringing people together in the middle, and beliefs about individual freedom in the depths.

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Deep Cultural Norms

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Teacher Script:

Now, let's think critically about these deep cultural patterns. Sometimes, beliefs that feel normal to us might actually cause harm without us realizing it. Think about deep cultural norms. Could any of these widely-accepted beliefs have negative effects on our community? Can you think of deep cultural norms that may contribute to biased attitudes towards others?

(Give students time to revisit their icebergs and add any deep cultural beliefs that might affect the violence pyramid. Facilitate sharing of thoughts.)

Pyramid Reflection and Closing

Direction: Either individually in their journals or collectively using the violence pyramid chart paper, encourage students to pick a deep cultural norm that they think needs to be examined or changed. What would be the first step toward that change? What might be a barrier to changing that norm? Document ideas and challenges for change using different colored post-it notes on the chart paper.

Teacher Script:

Let's take a moment to reflect about what we've discovered today about culture's hidden influences. Choose one deep cultural pattern you identified that you think needs attention. What small step could help shift this pattern toward positive change? What might be a challenge to shifting this pattern?

MY CULTURAL ICEBERG

Name: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Create your own cultural iceberg by listing two or three examples for each level: **Surface**: Visible aspects like celebrations or clothing, **Below the surface**: Less obvious patterns like how people connect, **Deep level**: Core beliefs and values that guide behavior. You can write or draw your examples. Reflect on how deep cultural norms might influence biased attitudes or behaviors in your community.

Surface**Below the Surface****Deep**