

# An Introduction to Cultural Diversity,

## Summary

The provided interactive tool is supposed to motivate students to engage with the topic of cultural diversity. It encourages the students implicitly to reflect on their experiences with cultural diversity and raises awareness for different dimensions of cultural diversity. The tool consists of six different tasks, every one of them deals with a different dimension of cultural diversity: Habits, music, identity, food, equality and discrimination. The tasks are self-explanatory and easy to complete. There is no specific pre-knowledge necessary. The content can easily be adapted and the tasks build up on the students individual experiences.

## Overview

Topic	In which ways does culture differ?
Aims	The students will develop a broad understanding of specific aspects of cultural diversity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are able to express their understanding of culture in their own words.</li><li>• They reflect on different aspects of cultural diversity and their personal experience with it.</li><li>• They can identify and describe dimensions of cultural diversity.</li><li>• They are able to find solutions to problems that occur due to cultural diversity.</li></ul>
Level	Grade 7
Time	1 double lesson
Apps & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Padlet surface/task guideline.</li><li>2. Youtube Video (link on padlet).</li><li>3. Menitmeter Wordcloud.</li><li>4. Mentimeter geographical quiz.</li><li>5. Menitmeter survey.</li><li>6. Spotify songs</li></ol>

## Background information

What is culture? The answer to this seemingly simple question is complex and has been discussed in academical and non-academical contexts ever since. There are traditional notions of culture as Culture with a capital **C** which refers to culture as high culture in contrast to everything else that is not worth to be considered as culture. An Example in the UK would be the texts of Shakespeare, physical relics of the monarchy or the famous habit of drinking tea on every occasion. On the other hand, there are notions of culture with a small **c**. This universal approach criticizes the notion of elite culture. Culture, it claims, can be discovered everywhere and there is no such thing as worthy and unworthy culture. An alternative model of describing culture is the iceberg model by Hall (1976). Due to this model, there are aspects of culture that are more visible, like physical artefacts or attitudes (often exaggerated in clichés), and less visible aspects, like gender roles or implicit believes about friendship.

All models have in common that culture is exercised and shared by a group of people. However, the perception that this group is nation is old fashioned. Culture is not limited to national borders. Additionally, there is not just one culture in each country. Furthermore, people may identify with more than just one culture, a phenomenon which is called transcultural identity.

The discussion illustrates that engaging with the topic of culture is difficult. And the complexity will not stop at the classroom door. It is therefore important and necessary to make students aware of facets culture can have and that there is no right or wrong. Cultural Diversity can be observed in every aspect of our life: In music, food or how we greet each other. In discussing these topics in this interactive activity students learn to identify aspects of culture and start to reflect on their own cultural identity/background. This will help to understand themselves and to raise awareness for other cultures.

Students should be motivated to develop an Intercultural Communicative Competence. A competence which is a fusion of Intercultural Competence and Communicative Competence.

### **Didactic considerations**

The interactive tool can be used for a broad introduction to cultural diversity. It could also be used to improve the communicative skills, the ability to reflect on yourself or to support a joyful process of learning. There is no pre-task necessary since the topic is an introduction itself and it builds on the individual knowledge and experiences of the students.

The activity starts with a short introduction. The students are encouraged to find ways to say hello in different languages. This intends to activate cognition and pre-knowledge. Motivated by a short clip they become active themselves. In small groups they are supposed to find physical and verbal ways to greet someone. Working in groups should create a good atmosphere and finding ideas supports the creativity. Furthermore, this exercise will help to minimize anxiety and motivate to participate in the ongoing lesson.

The students compose their individual definition of culture. When comparing the definitions with the ones of their peers, they will understand that everybody has a different perspective on culture and that it is not easy to say what is right or wrong.

Subsequently, several tasks will deal with different aspects of culture. The topics music and food are intended to illustrate the diversity of culture and help to understand that culture is part of our everyday life. It makes it easy to grasp and relate. The music task is gamified. The students are supposed to match songs to geographical areas. Integrating this task in a game will help to keep focused and motivated.

The final part of the activity deals with cultural discrimination. It reveals the risks of an ideology which claims that there is a superior culture. Negotiating solutions for this problem will support their communicative competence and intercultural competence.

### **Material**

<https://padlet.com/jonathan94hein/cultural-diversity-zrcvmhy93gk1xmbv>

