

## High School Ethnic Studies Lesson Plan: Understanding Cultural Appropriation

**Grade Level:** 10th-12th Grade

**Subject:** Ethnic Studies

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Theme:** Cultural Appropriation and Cultural Appreciation

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### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define cultural appropriation and distinguish it from cultural appreciation.
  2. Analyze examples of cultural appropriation in society and media.
  3. Reflect on the impacts of cultural appropriation on marginalized communities.
  4. Discuss ways to engage with other cultures respectfully.
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### Materials Needed

- Projector or Smartboard
  - Handout: "Cultural Appropriation vs. Cultural Appreciation" (attached below)
  - Chart paper and markers (optional)
  - YouTube video clip on cultural appropriation (pre-approved and age-appropriate)
  - Case studies/examples (prepared by teacher)
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### Lesson Outline

#### 1. Introduction (10 minutes)

1. **Opening Question:** Write on the board: *"What does culture mean to you?"*
  - Have students take 2-3 minutes to write their thoughts.
  - Facilitate a brief discussion to highlight different aspects of culture (e.g., food, clothing, traditions, music, language).
2. **Definition Activity:** Write the terms *"Cultural Appropriation"* and *"Cultural Appreciation"* on the board.
  - Ask students to share any prior knowledge of these terms.
  - Provide the definitions:
    - *Cultural Appropriation:* The adoption of elements of one culture by members of another, often without understanding or respect, typically in a way that reinforces stereotypes or power imbalances.
    - *Cultural Appreciation:* Engaging with and learning about a culture with respect, understanding, and consent.

#### 2. Core Activity: Analyzing Examples (25 minutes)

1. **Video Clip (5 minutes):** Show a short video explaining cultural appropriation, ensuring it includes diverse perspectives and real-life examples.
2. **Group Work (15 minutes):** Divide students into small groups and provide each group with a case study or image (e.g., celebrities wearing traditional garments, use of sacred symbols in fashion, or cultural elements in advertisements).
  - Ask each group to answer the following questions:
    - What cultural element is being used?
    - Is this an example of cultural appropriation or appreciation? Why?

- What impact might this have on the community of origin?

3. **Group Presentations (5 minutes):** Each group shares their analysis with the class.

### 3. Reflection and Discussion (15 minutes)

1. **Class Discussion:** Lead a guided discussion using these prompts:
  - Why do you think cultural appropriation is harmful?
  - How can we differentiate between appreciation and appropriation?
  - What are some steps individuals can take to engage with other cultures respectfully?
2. **Reflection Activity:** Ask students to write a brief journal entry responding to the question: *"How can I ensure my interactions with other cultures are rooted in respect and understanding?"*

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### Assessment

- Participation in group discussions and presentations.
- Reflection journal entries (assessed for thoughtfulness, not correctness).

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### Extension Activity

- Assign students to research an example of cultural appropriation in their favorite media (movies, music, fashion, etc.) and write a one-page analysis about its impact and possible alternatives.

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### Handout: Cultural Appropriation vs. Cultural Appreciation

Cultural Appropriation	Cultural Appreciation
Taking without permission or understanding	Learning and engaging respectfully
Reinforces stereotypes or power imbalances	Acknowledges history and contributions
Focuses on profit or trend	Builds relationships and understanding

### Examples:

- Appropriation: Wearing a Native American headdress as a costume.
- Appreciation: Learning about the history of the headdress and its cultural significance from Indigenous voices.