Culture in the Courtyard

Read a neighborhood scene through the details of cultural life.

SS24.HG.4a "Identify and describe essential aspects of culture, including architecture, art, belief systems, customs, food, languages, religion, technology, and traditions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one example of each of four different aspects of culture in the passage. Write the name of each aspect in the margin to show what the example reveals.

Remembering in Mexico City

1 In late October, a neighborhood in Mexico City prepares for Día de Muertos, a time when many families remember people who have died. In an apartment building's shared courtyard, residents arrange an ofrenda, or remembrance display. Its location matters: the courtyard gives neighbors room to gather and shows how a building's design can shape social life. Some families place photographs beside marigolds and candles. Others make displays at home or visit graves. These choices are not rules that every Mexican family follows. They show how one tradition can take different forms within the same city.

2 At a nearby market, a baker sells pan de muerto, a sweet bread often shared during the season. A shopper asks for cempasúchil, a name for marigolds that comes from Nahuatl, an Indigenous language of Mexico. Spanish is spoken at the market, and some city residents also speak Nahuatl. Colorful cut-paper banners, called papel picado, hang above the stalls. Cutting designs into tissue paper takes skill; today, some makers use machines to cut repeated patterns. The bread, languages, and banners each reveal a different part of cultural life, from food and communication to art and technology.

3 At the courtyard gathering, one neighbor says she believes the spirits of loved ones can visit during these days. Another neighbor does not share that belief but brings bread to honor his grandfather's memory. Some families connect the occasion to Catholic observances of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, while others take part without a religious purpose. A student takes a phone photo of the display and sends it to relatives who live far away. The phone does not create the tradition, but it changes how the family shares it. Beliefs, religion, customs, and technology can overlap without meaning the same thing.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the apartment building's design affect a cultural custom in the passage?

2. Identify one example of language and one example of art at the market. Describe what each adds to the scene.

3. How do the two neighbors' views show that a shared tradition does not require a shared belief?

4. Identify a food and a technology in the passage. Describe a different role each plays during the occasion.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a community event not described in the passage. In four or five sentences, identify three different aspects of its culture and describe what each shows about the people taking part. Use a real event you know or invent a plausible one.

ANSWER KEY

Culture in the Courtyard

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HG.4a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one example of each of four different aspects of culture in the passage. Write the name of each aspect in the margin to show what the example reveals. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the apartment building's design affect a cultural custom in the passage?	**The shared courtyard provides space for neighbors to gather around an ofrenda.**
2	Identify one example of language and one example of art at the market. Describe what each adds to the scene.	**Spanish is spoken at the market, helping shoppers communicate. Papel picado adds cut-paper designs above the stalls.**
3	How do the two neighbors' views show that a shared tradition does not require a shared belief?	**One neighbor believes spirits can visit, while the other does not. Both take part in remembering loved ones.**
4	Identify a food and a technology in the passage. Describe a different role each plays during the occasion.	**Pan de muerto is a sweet bread shared during the season. A phone lets a student share a photo of the display with distant relatives.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At an invented riverside harvest fair, neighbors serve pumpkin soup made from crops grown nearby. Handmade painted signs show which families brought each dish, linking art to shared work. Some neighbors speak Arabic and English as they trade recipes, showing how more than one language helps people connect. A yearly seed swap lets growers pass on planting knowledge, making a custom part of the community's tradition.

Accept other accurate examples from the passage when students identify the aspect and describe its role. For the open task, look for three distinct aspects connected to specific details, without treating one group's practice as universal.