Customs in Motion

How groups differ, adapt, and challenge familiar practices

SS24.S.4a "Describe ways in which cultures differ, change, and resist change, including countercultures, subcultures, and ethnocentric beliefs."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline one cultural difference, circle a change and a reason people resist it, and number two groups that relate differently to common habits. Use your marks to explain how cultures can differ, change, and resist change.

A Festival with Different Traditions

1 At Harbor City's yearly block festival, families bring foods, music, and games shaped by different traditions. One booth serves rice from a shared pot, while another hands out individual portions of noodles. Neither way of serving food is universal. This year, organizers added digital tickets because many visitors pay by phone. They also kept paper tickets after residents pointed out that some people do not have smartphones. A festival can change without abandoning every familiar practice. Keeping both ticket options shows how people negotiate change instead of treating every new idea as an automatic improvement.

2 Groups at the festival also differ in how they relate to the city's usual habits. A subculture develops shared practices within a larger culture without necessarily rejecting it. A counterculture goes further by challenging a dominant belief or practice. Near the stage, local skateboarders trade tricks and use slang that newcomers may not know. They still join the festival and follow its rules. Across the street, the 'Fix, Don't Buy' group teaches visitors to mend torn clothes. Its members oppose the common message that buying a new item is the best answer to wear. Both groups have distinctive habits, but their goals differ.

3 Ethnocentrism means treating one's own cultural practices as the best standard for judging others. At the shared-pot booth, a visitor says, 'Individual servings are the proper way to eat. Their way is backward.' A volunteer explains that families at the booth use serving spoons and that sharing food is part of their tradition of hospitality. Later, another visitor asks how the dish is served before forming an opinion. The two reactions show that encountering a difference does not require ranking cultures. Asking questions can help people understand a practice without assuming that their own way is better.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the two food booths show a cultural difference without showing that one practice is better?

2. How did the ticket system change, and why did organizers keep part of the older system?

3. Which group is a subculture and which is a counterculture? Explain the difference using their actions.

4. What makes the first visitor's comment about the shared-pot booth ethnocentric?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a school or neighborhood gathering unlike the festival. In 4 to 5 sentences, describe a cultural difference, a proposed change and why some people resist it, a subculture or counterculture, and an ethnocentric judgment that someone challenges.

ANSWER KEY

Customs in Motion

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.S.4a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline one cultural difference, circle a change and a reason people resist it, and number two groups that relate differently to common habits. Use your marks to explain how cultures can differ, change, and resist change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the two food booths show a cultural difference without showing that one practice is better?	**One serves rice from a shared pot, while the other serves individual portions of noodles. Both are ways of serving food, and neither is presented as superior.**
2	How did the ticket system change, and why did organizers keep part of the older system?	**Organizers added digital tickets but kept paper tickets because some people do not have smartphones.**
3	Which group is a subculture and which is a counterculture? Explain the difference using their actions.	**The skateboarders are a subculture because they share tricks and slang without opposing the festival's wider practices. The 'Fix, Don't Buy' group is a counterculture because it challenges the common practice of replacing worn items.**
4	What makes the first visitor's comment about the shared-pot booth ethnocentric?	**The visitor calls individual servings the proper way to eat and judges the other tradition as backward.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a neighborhood game night, some families teach dominoes while others teach chess, passing down different play traditions. Organizers propose replacing printed sign-up sheets with an app, but some guests resist because they share phones. A puzzle club uses its own terms and meets weekly without opposing anyone else's games, so it is a subculture. One guest calls chess the only smart game and dismisses dominoes as inferior. Another guest challenges that ethnocentric judgment by pointing out that different games reward different skills.

Accept classifications supported by the groups' actions, not just the terms alone. For Your Turn, look for all four requested elements and a clear challenge to the ethnocentric judgment.