Stories in Shadow

How a performance carries culture across generations

6-9.WG.5.2 "Give examples of how language, literature, and the arts shape the development and transmission of culture in regions throughout the world."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline one example each of language, literature, and the arts passing along culture, then circle the words that show what people learn or share.

A Story on a Screen

1 On the Indonesian island of Java, a shadow puppet show called wayang kulit can last for hours. A puppeteer, called a dalang, moves carved leather puppets behind a lit screen. Their shadows act out stories while a gamelan ensemble plays music. Families may watch together, and children can learn a story by seeing characters face hard choices. When people perform and watch these shows again, they pass along ways of telling stories, making music, and gathering as a community.

2 In many traditional performances, the dalang speaks Javanese and gives different voices to the puppets. Javanese has ways of speaking that can show respect and social relationships. A character's choice of words can help listeners understand how that character treats another person. Younger audience members hear these patterns as part of a lively story, not just as a list of rules. The show keeps the language in public use and lets older speakers share familiar expressions with younger listeners.

3 Many wayang kulit stories draw on the Ramayana, an epic from India that reached Java centuries ago. Javanese storytellers reshaped parts of these stories and added local characters, including the wise comic figure Semar, who is not in the Indian epic. Through the dalang's words, the puppets, and the music, audiences meet both an old traveling story and ideas shaped in Java. Each performance can change details, so culture is not simply copied. People carry it forward by retelling it in ways their communities recognize.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How can hearing Javanese during a performance teach younger listeners about social relationships?

2. How did Javanese storytellers make a story from India part of their own culture?

3. How do the puppets and music help pass along culture in Java?

4. How do the dalang's words and the puppets work together to carry a story to a new audience?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a region other than Java and one real example of its language, literature, or art. In four or five sentences, explain how people use it to express a cultural idea and how others learn or carry that idea forward.

ANSWER KEY

Stories in Shadow

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WG.5.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline one example each of language, literature, and the arts passing along culture, then circle the words that show what people learn or share. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How can hearing Javanese during a performance teach younger listeners about social relationships?	**Characters use ways of speaking that show respect and relationships. Younger listeners hear these patterns and familiar expressions in the story.**
2	How did Javanese storytellers make a story from India part of their own culture?	**They reshaped stories from the Ramayana and added local characters, including Semar.**
3	How do the puppets and music help pass along culture in Java?	**Repeated performances let audiences experience ways of making music, telling stories with puppets, and gathering as a community.**
4	How do the dalang's words and the puppets work together to carry a story to a new audience?	**The dalang speaks the story and gives characters voices while moving puppets that act it out. Together, these help audiences hear and see the retold story.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In parts of Mexico, families make paper cutouts called papel picado for Day of the Dead displays. These decorations help express the importance of remembering relatives who have died. Older relatives may show children how to cut the paper and explain why the family makes a display. Families can create new designs that reflect their own memories. By making and displaying the cutouts together, they pass the practice to another generation.

Accept other accurate examples that connect a specific use of language, literature, or art to a cultural idea and explain how people learn or pass it along.