Many Ways Together

Cultural values and patterns of diversity in a community

S.2.4 "Identify American cultural values; differentiate between a heterogeneous society and homogenous society."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two actions that show American cultural values. Circle details that help you tell which neighborhood is heterogeneous and which is relatively homogeneous.

A Decision at the Library

1 On a Saturday morning, residents gather at a public library to decide how to use a small city grant. One speaker wants more computers for job searches; another asks for books in several languages. Each person gets the same amount of time to speak, and the group votes on a plan. The meeting illustrates a belief in civic participation: ordinary people can help shape public decisions. Equal speaking time also reflects a commitment to political equality. These are often described as American cultural values, though Americans do not always agree about them or live up to them.

2 The library serves a neighborhood where families speak many home languages and observe different holidays. Some arrived recently, while others have lived there for generations. Because its residents bring a range of cultural backgrounds and practices, the neighborhood is heterogeneous. Across town, another neighborhood has a large majority of residents who share one home language and similar family traditions. It is relatively homogeneous in those cultural respects. That does not mean everyone there thinks alike or has the same life story. These words describe patterns in a group, not the worth of its members or a permanent label for every person.

3 After the vote, volunteers from both neighborhoods help set up a public reading room. Some believe the city should fund it; others prefer private donations. Their disagreement shows that a shared goal need not produce identical opinions about how to reach it. A newcomer can argue for city funding, and a longtime resident can oppose it; neither view belongs to one cultural background. Both neighborhoods can support civic participation, even though one is more culturally varied than the other. To describe a society accurately, ask which cultural traits are being compared, rather than assuming diversity prevents shared values.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two American cultural values does the meeting show? Give one action that shows each value.

2. Which neighborhood is heterogeneous? What details support that description?

3. Why is the neighborhood across town called relatively homogeneous rather than identical in every way?

4. Does the disagreement about funding mean the two neighborhoods cannot share an American cultural value? Explain using the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent two groups planning a community festival. In four or five sentences, classify one as heterogeneous and one as relatively homogeneous using cultural details, and show one American cultural value through an action not described in the passage.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two actions that show American cultural values. Circle details that help you tell which neighborhood is heterogeneous and which is relatively homogeneous. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two American cultural values does the meeting show? Give one action that shows each value.	**The vote shows civic participation. Giving each speaker the same amount of time shows political equality.**
2	Which neighborhood is heterogeneous? What details support that description?	**The library's neighborhood is heterogeneous because families speak many home languages and observe different holidays.**
3	Why is the neighborhood across town called relatively homogeneous rather than identical in every way?	**A large majority share one home language and similar family traditions, but residents can still differ in their thoughts and life stories.**
4	Does the disagreement about funding mean the two neighborhoods cannot share an American cultural value? Explain using the passage.	**No. Volunteers from both neighborhoods help set up the reading room, and both neighborhoods can support civic participation despite disagreements about funding.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Riverside festival team includes families with different home languages and holiday traditions, so it is heterogeneous in those respects. The Pine Street team includes mostly families who share one home language and similar festival traditions, so it is relatively homogeneous in those respects. Riverside members practice civic participation by collecting neighbors' ideas on paper slips and presenting them to the organizers. Members of both teams also invite every volunteer to help plan an activity, showing a commitment to equal opportunity.

Accept other passage-supported evidence for the values and classifications. For Part 3, look for cultural details that support both classifications and a new action that clearly illustrates an American cultural value.