

CELEBRATING BENGALI CULTURE

Learning objectives:

- To raise students' awareness of aspects of Bengali/Bangladeshi culture.
- To enable students to understand that culture is a broad concept that can mean different things to different people.
- To reflect about what culture may mean to students.

English learning objectives

- 5.1 Developing and adapting active reading skills and strategies.
- 5.2 Understanding and responding to ideas, viewpoints, themes and purposes in texts.
- 6.1 Relating texts to the social, historical and cultural contexts in which they were written.
- 6.2 Analysing how writers' use of linguistic and literary features shapes and influences meaning.
- 6.3 Analysing writers' use of organisation, structure, layout and presentation.
- 7.1 Generating ideas, planning and drafting.
- 7.2 Using and adapting the conventions and forms of texts on paper and on screen.
- 8.2 Varying sentences and punctuation for clarity and effect.
- 8.3 Improving vocabulary for precision and impact.
- 8.4 Developing varied linguistic and literary techniques.
- 8.5 Structuring, organising and presenting texts in a variety of forms on paper and on screen.
- 8.6 Developing and using editing and proofreading skills on paper and on screen.
- 10.2 Commenting on language use.
- Also, locating and extracting information.

Preparation/resources:

Either ask students to go online to read OR give them printed sheets of the pages under: www.banglastories.org/the-bengal-diaspora/culture.html

A selection of posters and leaflets for students to view and compare.

Scrap paper for students to draft ideas and A3 paper for posters.

Scrap paper for students to draft leaflet and A4 paper for final draft of leaflets.

Exercise 1*In pairs*

Students should read the 'Culture' section on the website (www.banglastories.org/the-bengal-diaspora/culture.html), and make notes summarising key aspects of 'Bengali culture'. Explain that they will be designing a poster for a fictitious 'Festival of Bangladesh' in their locality.

As a whole class

Ask students to reflect on what culture means by asking them:

- What do you understand by the word culture?
- Thinking about the previous exercise of reading about culture, what aspects of Bengali culture do you think are not included in the descriptions given?
- Can Bangladeshi/Bengali culture be enjoyed by anyone? Can you think of some examples?
- Do you stop being Bengali/Bangladeshi if you don't know, understand or are uninterested in aspects of Bengali/Bangladeshi culture?

Can students think/find more information on Bangladeshi culture?

Teacher's notes

Culture can be as broad as students wish it to be, but common themes may include:

Music; dance; literature; art; drama; films; religious beliefs; lifestyle; gender; sexual orientation; nationality; pop culture; ethnicity; history and heritage; festivals; celebrations; sport; cooking and clothes, etc.

For religious connections students can go to the following pages on the website:

www.banglastories.org/the-bengal-diaspora/religion.html

and

www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/migration-themes/religion-2.html



Exercise 2

In small groups

Ask students to look at various posters and examine the design and whether they are effective in getting the point across. If there are a limited number of posters, they can be rotated around the class. Ask students to think about the following:

- Who are these posters aimed at?
- What messages are the posters trying to convey?
- What kind of style and language are used on the poster?
- What kinds of words and images did they use?
- What use do the posters make of different font sizes?

Exercise 3

In pairs or in small groups

Ask students to think about the key aspects of Bengali/Bangladeshi culture that they found on the website, as well as their own ideas, to design a poster to promote the festival. Thinking about the previous exercise and what makes an effective poster, get them to apply this to their own design.

- When they have finished ask them to re-read their texts and make appropriate amendments.
- How will their poster persuade people to come to the event?

Work may need to continue over another session. When posters are complete ask volunteers to show their work and evaluate for content, design and appropriateness for the target group.

- Which do you think is the most persuasive poster? Why?
- Are the posters aimed at different types of audience (men, women, young people, children or all groups)?



Reflection (10 minutes)

As a whole group

Re-visit the key aspects of Bengali culture asking students about other aspects of Bengali culture that were of interest to them.

Extended work/homework

Individually or in pairs

Explain that a leaflet is a different way to impart information. Although leaflets have less space to make a strong visual impression, they contain more text and description.

Ask students to individually create a leaflet that expands on their poster. It would be a good idea for students to collect a few leaflets to look at layouts. Which leaflets have good layouts? How do they use fonts and font sizes? What makes a good leaflet?

Explain that a leaflet should not try to explain too much about the fictitious 'Festival of Bangladesh', perhaps pick two or three of the most exciting events or attractions. Summarise that good leaflets:

- grab the attention of the reader;
- give a clear idea of what is happening on the day;
- stand out;
- keep the attention of the reader; and
- persuade the reader to come to the event.

Remind students also that they should think about using:

- bullet points;
- headings;
- paragraphs;
- various font styles and sizes;
- images.

More extended work/homework

Individuals or small groups

Students can be encouraged to make a PowerPoint presentation of research found on the website and beyond. Students can research one of the migration themes mentioned on the website, one of the topic areas within the teaching resource or another area connected to work on Bangla Stories.

