

## Traditions

### Overview

Students will hear a read aloud of *Deep in the Sahara* by Kelly Cunnane & Hoda Hadadi and take part in a discussion about traditions. They will then learn about the use of henna in Islamic faith, and have an opportunity to create their own henna designs on traced outlines of their hands.

### Grade

1

### Subject

Social Studies

### Essential Standards

- Social Studies 1.C.1.1 - Compare languages, traditions, and holidays of various cultures.
- Social Studies 1.C.1.2 - Use literature to help people understand diverse cultures.
- Literacy 1.RI.1.7 - Use illustrations and details in a text to describe the key ideas.

### Essential Questions

- What is a tradition?
- Why do people have traditions?
- In what ways are traditions expressed?

### Materials

- Book: *Deep in the Sahara* by Kelly Cunnane & Hoda Hadadi
- Images of henna during the Islamic celebration of Eid: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/09/world/the-simple-pleasures-of-eid/index.html>
- Descriptions and images of commonly used henna patterns: <http://www.hennapage.com/henna/what/lineart/index.html>
- <https://www.art-is-fun.com/henna-hand-designs/>
- Paper and pencil to trace hands
- Thin markers or colored pencils for creating their henna designs
- Copies of some of the henna designs students can have at their tables to refer to when creating their own designs found here: <https://www.art-is-fun.com/henna-hand-designs/>

### Duration

Lesson can take place during one 90 minute session, or be spread out into two 45 minute sessions, with the possibility of extensions.

### Procedure

#### ***Deep in the Sahara* Read Aloud**

1. Begin by activating prior knowledge with students. Ask if anyone knows what a tradition is. Out loud, have students brainstorm examples of some of the traditions their families may have, and why they are

important to them. Make a list of their examples on a board or on chart paper. Examples could include celebrating certain holidays, eating something special for certain occasions, etc. Ask students:

- Why do families have traditions?
  - In your family, is there any type of clothing that is special to wear, or that is only worn for special occasions?
2. Brainstorm ways students could find out more information about traditions in other cultures. Examples include: BrainPop, PebbleGo, books, etc.
  3. Introduce *Deep in the Sahara* by Kelly Cunnane & Hoda Hadadi. Tell students that they are going to read about a little girl who wants to take part in the tradition all the women in her family participate in, but she doesn't fully understand the tradition. With students seated in a circle so that they can all see the pictures, read the story aloud to them. Ask students to see if they can figure out why the tradition (wearing the malafa) is important to the women.
  4. While reading the book aloud, ask students what Lalla thinks it means to wear a malafa (answers may include: beauty, mystery, belonging).
  5. As students an Inference Question: Why won't Lalla's family tell her the reason they wear the malafa (answers may include: they want her to discover it for herself, when she's ready to take part).
  6. After finishing the story, discuss what Lalla, the main character, learned about wearing a malafa. Tell students that she is from Mauritania, in Western Africa. Project a world map and show students where Mauritania is. If possible, use information from a database such as CultureGrams to show students photos of people in Mauritania, and to investigate the holidays celebrated there, such as Eid al-Fitr and Tabaski. If you do not have access to CultureGrams, you might show students these images of Mauritania: <https://goo.gl/c1sXyf>. Show images of mosques to give students a frame of reference for Lalla's religious experiences in the story: <https://goo.gl/Q3QWf6>.

#### **Extension Activity – The Art of Henna**

7. Let students know that they are going to learn about a traditional art form used in countries like the one where Lalla is from.
8. Using information from a website such as Art is Fun (<https://www.art-is-fun.com/henna-hand-designs/>) investigate with students the history and tradition of henna. Explore some of the common designs used in henna, and then let students know they are going to try it out. Pass out copies of some of the henna designs students can have at their tables to refer to when creating their own designs.
9. Provide paper and pencils for students to trace their hands. Model for students how you can use some of the example designs to create your own original henna design on their hand tracing. Let students trace their hands, and begin filling in the fingers and palm with various designs.
10. After students have finished drawing, come together as a class and synthesize information learned during the lessons. Probe for new wonderings with questions such as:
  - What did you learn about culture in Mauritania?
  - What is a malafa?
  - Where do Muslims go to pray?
  - Why do people decorate their skin with henna?

### **Additional materials/extensions:**

- Another possible extension activity could include students illustrating a tradition that they have in their families.
- You may also read together one of the following books with similar themes:
  - *Mirror* by Jeannie Baker compares the lives of two boys: one in Australia, and one in Morocco. The wordless book is split in two, allowing the reader to compare and contrast illustrated experiences such as waking up, or going to school, with both boys at the same time by turning right to left on one side of the book, while turning left to right on the other side.
  - *Nadia's Hands* by Karen English. Nadia has been chosen to be a flower girl in her aunt's wedding. To prepare for the big day her aunt decorates her hands in henna, the traditional mehndi. Nadia worries that when she goes to school on Monday the mehndi will still be there, and she'll look different from her friends. Once the wedding is over however, Nadia can't wait to share her Pakistani heritage with her friends.
  - *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World*. You may be surprised at how children celebrate the milestone of losing their teeth in countries all around the world. From placing it under your pillow for the tooth fairy to flinging it at the sun, children will love hearing the many ways we celebrate teeth!