Welcome To My World: Letter from Syria

Students learn important lessons about cultural differences by reading a fictitious letter from a Syrian girl then writing about it.

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Grade Level: 6-8
Duration: 2-4 class periods

Ell Adaptation by: Barbara Martin

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| Application | Comprehending Text: The student will analyze text for expression, enjoyment, and response to other related content areas. **Beginning**: The student will respond to stories dramatized or read to him or her, using a variety of physical actions (e.g., matching objects, pointing to an answer), and by drawing pictures. **Intermediate**: The student will respond orally to stories dramatized or read to him or her by answering factual comprehension questions using short patterns of words and phrases. |
| Application | Comprehending Text: The student will analyze text for expression, enjoyment, and response to other related content areas. **Beginning**: The student will identify main ideas and key details of text. **Intermediate**: The student will identify the main ideas, key words, and important details in text that requires some level of inference. |

| Assessment | Individual | Group | Written | Oral |
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| Arizona ELL I Reading Standard | Arizona ELL III Reading Standard |
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### Arizona ELL I Writing Standard

**Writing Applications:** The student will express in writing his or her own thinking and ideas.

**Beginning:** The student will respond with drawings to stories dramatized or contextualized by the teacher.

**Intermediate:** The student will relate messages by drawing, by using imitative writing, by dictating to an adult, or by writing key, self-selected words.

### Arizona ELL III Writing Standard

**Writing Applications:** The student will express in writing his or her own thinking and ideas.

**Beginning:** The student will use the writing process to write short, single paragraph personal narratives or friendly letters distinguished by topics and ideas that are broad and simplistic.

**Intermediate:** The student will use the writing process to create essays and formal communications of up to 2 paragraphs in various genres (expository, narrative, research) distinguished by identifiable main ideas that contains general supporting details.

### Overview

In many countries of the world today, a person’s role and status is determined by culture and gender. Because American students live in an open society that stresses civil rights and equal opportunities for all its citizens, they may not realize that for people in some countries the situation is very different.

### Key Vocabulary

- **Heading:** This contains the writer’s address and date.
- **Greeting:** This is the formal “hello”.
- **Body:** This is the message of the letter.
- **Closing:** This is the formal “goodbye”.
- **Signature:** This is the writer’s name.
- **Culture:** A way of life learned from the people around you.
- **Syria:** A country in the Middle East. Syria is bordered by the countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, and Jordan.
- **Arabic:** The language spoken in Syria.
- **Archaeologist:** A person who studies artifacts from the past.
- **Hijab:** A head covering worn by some girls and women.
- **Islam:** A religion begun in A.C. 610 by a man named Muhammad. He is considered a prophet by the followers of Islam.
- **Koran:** The holy book of Islam.
- **Mosque:** The place of worship for followers of Islam.
- **Mecca:** A city in Saudi Arabia.
- **Family:** People who are related through birth or marriage.
- **Parents:** Father and mother.
- **Aunt:** A sister of a father or mother.
- **Uncle:** A brother of a father or mother.
- **Grandparents:** The parents of a father or mother.
- **Cousins:** The children of an aunt or uncle.
- **Chores:** The jobs some one in a family has in order to help the family. Some examples would be: washing dishes, sweeping the floor, feeding the dog, or taking out the garbage.
- **Religion:** A belief in God and the way people worship God.
- **School subjects:** classes such as reading, mathematics, history, geography and science.
Goals: Things people work towards by accomplishing tasks

Additional Materials Needed for ELL

- Vocabulary cards
- Writing prompt for ELL letter
- ELL Adaptation of Letter from Zayna
- Highlighted Cloze letter form
- Colored pencils.

Procedures

SESSION ONE

1. Have students locate Syria on a world map, in a textbook or in an atlas (Preparation: Strategies Incorporated). Show pictures with captions of Syria (Scaffolding: Comprehensible Input). Discuss some generalities about what life might be like in Syria (Integration: Speaking and Listening; Grouping Options: Whole Class).

2. As a class, students will read the letter from the Syrian girl describing her daily activities and how her culture plays a part in her life (Integration: Reading). The teacher will link relevancy of pictures to text (Application: Linked to Objectives).

3. The teacher will read the letter a second time and direct the students to color code pertinent terms such as family (red), chores (blue), food (green), religion (orange), school subjects (yellow), goals (brown). (Scaffolding: Guided Practice) The teacher will model the highlighting.

4. The teacher will direct the students to color code the pertinent terms on the worksheet titled “Zayna’s Letter Worksheet” from the original lesson (using the same color coding as in the letter.) (Scaffolding: Guided Practice) As they are reading, students should record any similarities or differences between their lives and hers on the worksheet. (Preparation: Links to background) Students could highlight those parts of the letter that describe the girl’s culture that may be different from theirs. (Application: Meaningful) Students will use the color-coded sections to write responses to the Zayna Letter prompt.”

SESSION TWO

1. Students are to write a response to the Syrian girl in the form of a friendly letter. Their responses will describe their lives and the part culture plays in it. For ELL use Cloze Letter Template. (Assessment: Individual). For ELL 2, use Writing prompt. (Integration: Writing; Application: Promotes Engagement). In small groups, have students share their letters aloud. (Integration: Speaking) ELL1 students can draw pictures to accompany their letters. Some students could work in small groups to write letters and then compare responses. (Grouping: Small groups)

Assessment

Mastery: The student will accurately include 4 of the 5 parts of a friendly letter and incorporate appropriate content describing his/her life and culture.