

Shorts: Reinventing Roots | Education Screening | Grades 9-12

Dear Educators,

Thank you for engaging your students in Milwaukee Film's Education Screening of Shorts: Reinventing Roots. This selection of short films was largely selected by our Teen Screen Selection Committee—a group of teens from high schools around Milwaukee who collectively watch and choose films for the Teen Screen program of the Milwaukee Film Festival— and will be presented publicly as our Teen Screen Shorts (aside: some of the films they selected were not designed for education purposes; we have made some careful swaps to support your classroom use of the screening!). Our aim is for students to establish connections with the various themes, characters, and plot intricacies, while also exploring the real-life challenges, communal dynamics, and cultural heritages portrayed. Following the screenings, we hope that students will engage in discussions with their peers to share their personal insights, analyze thematic elements, and reflect on the cultural significance of these filmmakers' stories.

Yet, our exploration extends beyond the realm of film. In this curriculum packet, students will be prompted to examine how these narratives relate to other forms of media, considering historical contexts and underlying intentions. Additionally, they'll have the opportunity to conduct interviews with elders in their familial or communal circles, gaining valuable insights into tradition, heritage, and cultural identity. Ultimately, the objective is for students to develop a deeper understanding of their roots and place within their familial and communal frameworks, fostering a stronger sense of identity and belonging.

We hope this collection of short films and curriculum spark creativity and engaging conversation among you and your students!



Education Coordinator

Milwaukee Film





Curriculum At-A-Glance

Short Film Snapshot

Our showcased short films center around the theme "Reinventing Roots" but vary greatly in format, genre, and style. Students are prompted to engage deeply with each film, reflecting on their resonance, the questions they raise, and the emotions they evoke. This exercise encourages discussion about favorite films, allowing students to articulate their reactions.

ELA Wisconsin Standards: SL.9-10.1-3, SL.11-12.1-3, SL.9-10.4, SL.11-12.4, W.9-10.1, W.11-12.1, W.9-10.4, W.11-12.4.

Wisconsin Social & Emotional Learning Standards: ED.9-10.1, ED.11-A.1, ED.9-10.2, ED.11-A.2, ED.9-10.5, ED.11-A.5, ED.9-10.6, ED.11-A.6, SC.9-10.12-18, SC.11-A.12-18.

Film to Form: Mapping Connections Across Media Platforms

In this lesson, students will analyze various artistic mediums, such as poems, stories, visual art, and media, alongside the short films they watched. Their objective is to find connections between these forms of expression and the films, exploring common themes and personal reflections.

ELA Wisconsin Standards: R.9-10.1-3, R.11-12.1-3,R.9-10.4-6, R11-12.4-6, R.9-10.7-9, R.11-12.7-9, W.9-10.3, W.11-12.3, W.9-10.7, W.11-12.7, W.9-10.8, W.11-12.8, W.9-10.9, W.11-12.9, SL.9-10.1-3, SL.11-12.1-3, SL.9-10.4, SL.11-12.4, SL.9-10.5, SL.11-12.5, L.9-10.3, L.11-12.3

Wisconsin Standards for Art and Design:

A.A.R.19.h, A.A.R.18.h, A.A.R.16.h, A.A.Pr.10.h, A.A.Pr.11.h

Wisconsin Social & Emotional Learning Standards: ED.9-10.1, ED.11-A.1, ED.9-10.2, ED.11-A.2, ED.11-12.3, ED.9-10.5, ED.11-A.5, ED.9-10.6, ED.11-A.6, S-C.9-10.9, S-C.11-A.9, S-C.9-10.11, S-C.11-A.11, SC.9-10.12-18, SC.11-A.12-18, SC.9-10.23, SC.11-A.23

Wisconsin Information and Technology Literacy Standards: KC1.a.9-12, KC1.b.9-12, KC2.b.9-12, CC2.a.4.h,

Roots & Revelations: Discovering Wisdom Through Elder Interviews

In "Coming Home," members of the Freedom Dabka Group embrace their cultural roots through dance, engaging with their elders to preserve tradition and foster a sense of belonging. Students will conduct interviews with elders in either their family or community to similarly discover more about their own heritage and traditions.

ELA Wisconsin Standards:





Wisconsin Social & Emotional Learning Standards: ED.9-10.1, ED.11-A.1, ED.9-10.2, ED.11-A.2, ED.11-12.3, ED.9-10.5, ED.11-A.5, ED.9-10.6, ED.11-A.6, S-C.9-10.9, S-C.11-A.9, S-C.9-10.11, S-C.11-A.11, SC.9-10.12-18, SC.11-A.12-18, SC.9-10.23, SC.11-A.23 **Wisconsin Information and Technology Literacy Standards:** GC2.a.4.h, KC1.a.11.h, KC1.a.12.h, KC1.a.4.h

Generational Journeys

Students will create children's stories inspired by "Boat People," using symbols representing their family's journey to narrate their unique heritage, challenges, and triumphs.

ELA Wisconsin Standards: L.9-10.3, L.11-12.3, L.9-10.4, L.11-12.4, W.9-10.1, W.11-12.1, W.9-10.2c, W.11-12.2c, W.9-10.3, W.11-12.3, W.9-104-6, W.11-12.4-6, W.9-10.7-9, W.11-12.7-9

Wisconsin Social & Emotional Learning Standards: ED.9-10.1, ED.11-A.1, ED.9-10.2, ED.11-A.2, ED.11-12.3, ED.9-10.5, ED.11-A.5, ED.9-10.6, ED.11-A.6, S-C.9-10.9, S-C.11-A.9, S-C.9-10.11, S-C.11-A.11, SC.9-10.12-18, SC.11-A.12-18, SC.9-10.23, SC.11-A.23

Family Tapestry

In this activity, students will utilize the previously collected information to craft a visual representation in the form of a collage, illustrating their place within their family or community. Through a selection of images, students will convey the distinctive narrative of their heritage. **Wisconsin Social & Emotional Learning Standards:** ED.9-10.1, ED.11-A.1, ED.9-10.2, ED.11-A.2, ED.11-12.3, ED.9-10.5, ED.11-A.5, ED.9-10.6, ED.11-A.6, S-C.9-10.9, S-C.11-A.9, S-C.9-10.11, S-C.11-A.11, SC.9-10.12-18, SC.11-A.12-18, SC.9-10.23, SC.11-A.23

Wisconsin Standards for Art and Design:

A.A.Cr.12.h, A.A.Cr.11.h, A.A.Pr.11.h, A.A.Pr.12.h





Short Film Snapshot

Teacher resources:

-Activity sheet: **Debrief Notes Page**

-Basic rules for discussions

- How to conduct a fishbowl discussion resource

- Stills for Reference Slides Doc: Linked Here

Teacher Note

Feel free to modify this activity to better suit your current teaching and learning environment. The short films featured in this program share the overarching theme of "Reinventing Roots," yet they showcase remarkable diversity across various dimensions, including format, genre, subject matter, storyline, duration, and tone. We urge students to engage deeply with each film, contemplating their individual responses. Which films resonated with them the most? Which ones prompted intriguing questions? What emotions did they encounter while viewing each film? It's probable that students will eagerly discuss their "favorite" films, and this exercise serves as a platform for articulating their reactions to specific works.

Lesson Overview:

- 1. Using the included Notes page or one of your choosing, give students indepent time to take notes and reflect on the shorts watched.
- 2. Encourage students to select a short film that resonated with them deeply. This choice could stem from it being their personal favorite, evoking a strong emotional reaction, or any other reason that strikes a chord with them. Once they've made their selection, students will form groups based on their chosen film. Within these groups, they will analyze and dissect the film by engaging in discussions and taking notes on various aspects such as characters, setting, plot, animation style, cinematography, tone/ambience, music/score, story structure, theme, personal connections, and more.
- 3. Facilitate a class discussion on group findings:
 - a. Possible discussion questions:
 - i. How do you think the themes explored in these films relate to your own life experiences as a teenager?





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- ii. How were different cultures or communities represented in these short films?
- iii. What messages or lessons do you think the filmmakers were trying to convey about society or human behavior?
- iv. What cinematic techniques were used effectively in these short films (e.g., camera angles, lighting, sound design)?
- v. Did any characters undergo significant changes or growth throughout the films? If so, how did these changes impact the story?
- vi. How do you think the themes portrayed relate to the experiences and challenges faced by teenagers today?

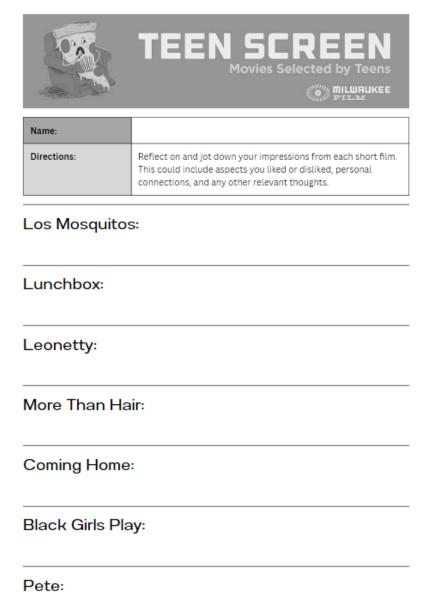




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Boat People:

Education Screenings are presented by Herzfeld Foundation with additional support from Cory & Michelle Nettles, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation Mary L. Nohl Fund, the Gene & Ruth Posner Foundation, and We Energies.



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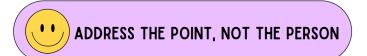
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DISCUSSION BASICS









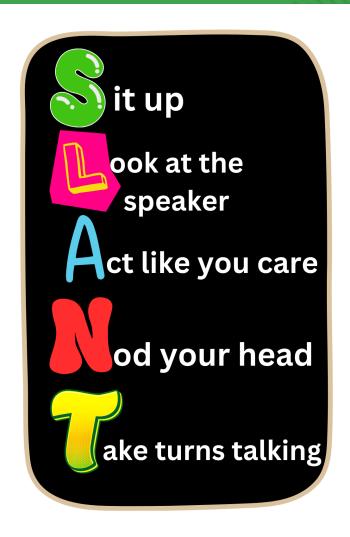




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Film to Form: Mapping Connections Across Media Platforms

Teacher Note:

Feel free to modify this activity to better suit your current teaching and learning environment. Check through all the media attached to ensure it is appropriate for your students/district.

Teacher Resources:

- We encourage you to focus on VTS (visual thinking strategies) when making connections to visual media. The Milwaukee Art Museum offers a nice VTS info sheet on their site: <u>Linked here</u>.
- MEDIA LIST: Feel free to use the media list provided, or make your own!

In this lesson, students will analyze and research various poems, stories, visual art mediums, and media alongside the series of short films they watched. Their objective is to determine connections between these diverse forms of expression and the films. By exploring parallel themes, students will delve into the underlying messages conveyed by both the written works, visual art, and films. Additionally, they are encouraged to make personal connections, reflecting on how these themes resonate with their own experiences and perspectives.

Lesson Overview:

Students will analyze a short of their choosing, focusing on how a character deals with the conflict, trauma or grief within their story.

- 1. Exploration of Artistic Expression: Provide students with a selection of poems, stories, visual art mediums, and media that relate to the themes explored in the short films. In small groups or individually, allow students time to analyze and research the chosen pieces, noting any connections or similarities they observe with the films
 - a. **NOTES PAGE** (and in this packet)
 - b. Check in with students about their comprehension and what their immediate thoughts are.
- 2. Facilitate a whole-class discussion where students share their findings and insights about the connections between the short films and the other forms of artistic expression. Questions to consider:





- 1. Do the short films reflect broader societal issues? How do they compare to similar themes in other art forms?
- 2. What symbols or metaphors do the short films use, and how do they compare to symbols in other art?
- 3. How do the short films make you feel, and how does this compare to the emotions evoked by other art forms like music?
- 4. Do the short films leave room for interpretation? How does this compare to other art forms?
- 5. Consider the overall artistic style of the short films. How does this style contribute to the films' impact, and how does it compare to the styles found in other artistic mediums?
- 3. Students will create a presentation about a short film's themes, story, etc. and their selected media piece which describes possible connections between the two works. They might focus on the works' creators, themes, students' personal connections, mood, history, etc.
- 4. Reflection: Encourage students to reflect on how the themes explored in the films resonate with their own experiences and perspectives. Discuss the significance of exploring diverse artistic mediums in understanding complex themes and messages.





Media List

Connections in Media Teen Screen Activity

Note to Educators:

Teachers have the flexibility to incorporate additional media of your choice or select from the provided list. You are welcome to utilize any or all options available. Similarly, students are encouraged to explore their own sources of media.

<u>"Still I Rise"</u> by Maya Angelou: This empowering poem celebrates resilience and inner strength in the face of adversity. Through its rhythmic cadence and uplifting message, Angelou's poem resonates with themes of overcoming obstacles, confronting oppression, and finding the courage to rise above challenges.

"American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin" by Terrance Hayes: In this contemporary poem, the speaker grapples with questions of race, identity, and belonging in America. Through a series of sonnets, the speaker reflects on the complexities of being a Black person in America, exploring themes of history, memory, and cultural inheritance.

"Migration Series" by Jacob Lawrence: This series of paintings depicts the mass migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North during the early 20th century. Through bold colors and dynamic compositions, Lawrence's artwork captures the struggles, aspirations, and collective resilience of African American families seeking a better life.

<u>"Guernica" by Pablo Picasso</u>: This iconic painting depicts the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. Through its chaotic composition and powerful imagery, Picasso's artwork captures the horrors of war, the suffering of civilians, and the devastation of communities.

<u>"Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair" by Frida Kahlo</u>: This self-portrait by the iconic Mexican artist depicts Kahlo wearing a man's suit and cropped hair, holding a pair of scissors. Through her defiant expression and gender-bending portrayal, Kahlo's artwork challenges traditional gender norms and explores themes of identity, self-expression, and empowerment.





<u>The House of Atreus:</u> The House of Atreus is a tragic story within Greek mythology that depicts a cycle of familial conflict, betrayal, and revenge. It includes tales such as the story of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and their children, particularly the tragedies of Agamemnon's murder and the subsequent vengeance of his son, Orestes. (Long series of myths, might take a while for students to read through)

"Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon: This poem invites young people to explore their personal histories and cultural backgrounds. Through detailed descriptions of family, community, and personal experiences, the speaker in the poem undergoes a journey of self-discovery, embracing their roots and identity.

<u>"The Invitation" by Oriah Mountain Dreamer</u>: This poem invites young readers to embrace authenticity and vulnerability in their relationships and personal journeys. Through reflections on courage, passion, and self-expression, the speaker in the poem encourages young people to embrace their true selves and pursue their dreams with confidence and authenticity.

"Hope is the Thing with Feathers" by Emily Dickinson: This timeless poem explores the theme of hope as a source of resilience and strength in times of adversity. Through imagery of a bird's song, the speaker reflects on the enduring power of hope to sustain and uplift the human spirit, embodying a sense of personal growth and transformation.

"Immigrant Picnic" by Gregory Djanikian: In this poem, the speaker reflects on the experience of immigrating to a new country and the challenges of assimilation. Through imagery of food, language, and memory, the speaker grapples with questions of identity, belonging, and cultural heritage, offering insights into the complexities of the immigrant experience.

"Bilingual/Bilingüe" by Rhina P. Espaillat: This poem explores the experience of growing up in a bilingual or multicultural household. Through reflections on language, communication, and cultural identity, the speaker navigates the complexities of straddling two worlds and embracing the richness of their heritage.

<u>"For My People" by Margaret Walker:</u> While not exclusively focused on cultural identity, this poem celebrates the resilience, strength, and collective identity of African American people. Through powerful imagery and language, the speaker affirms the importance of cultural heritage and solidarity in the face of oppression and adversity.





<u>"Where Is My Mind" by Pixies</u> - This song is often interpreted as exploring feelings of disconnection and searching for identity, which can include cultural identity.

<u>"Landslide"</u> by Fleetwood Mac - While not directly about culture, the song reflects on personal growth and change, which can include discovering and embracing one's cultural roots.

<u>"Homecoming"</u> by Kanye West ft. Chris Martin - This song reflects on Kanye West's return to his hometown of Chicago and explores themes of nostalgia and cultural identity

<u>"Bidi Bidi Bom Bom" by Selena</u> - This iconic song by Selena celebrates her Mexican-American heritage and the fusion of cultural influences in her music.

"Alright" by Kendrick Lamar - This anthem from Kendrick Lamar's album "To Pimp a Butterfly" became a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement, encouraging listeners to stay hopeful and resilient in the face of adversity.

"Blessings" by Chance the Rapper ft. Ty Dolla \$ign, Anderson .Paak, BJ the Chicago Kid, and Raury - Chance the Rapper expresses gratitude for his blessings and the support of his community in this soulful track, emphasizing the importance of staying grounded and giving back.

<u>"Happier" by Marshmello ft. Bastille</u> - This emotional pop song explores themes of moving on and finding happiness after a breakup, highlighting the support and comfort found in community and friendships.

<u>"Good as Hell" by Lizzo</u> - This empowering anthem encourages listeners to embrace self-confidence and self-love, celebrating the strength found in community support.





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MEDIA CONNECTIONS

SHORT Title:	MEDIA Title:
Maker History	Maker History
Themes	Themes
Symbolism & Imagery	Symbolism & Imagery





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MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Mood/Atmosphere	Mood/Atmosphere
Character Portrayal	Character Portrayal
Creator Intentions	Creator Intentions
Personal Con	nections





Roots & Revelations: Discovering Wisdom Through Elder Interviews

Teacher Resources:

- Sample Questions: <u>Smithsonian Oral History & Folklife Guide</u>
 - Possible Topics Sheet
- Vimeo Link to Rewatch *Coming Home* if needed: https://vimeo.com/604489899/cb22f8b3ee

Teacher Note:

Feel free to modify this activity to better suit your current teaching and learning environment.

Lesson Overview:

The major theme for these shorts is "Reinventing Roots." Throughout the program there are several instances where characters are faced with finding their roots and what their space looks like within their community. In the short, *Coming Home* the members of the Freedom Dabka Group embrace an aspect of their roots through dance. The members spend time speaking with their elders about the importance of continuing this tradition in the U.S. so that they may feel closer to home. This activity engages students to think about their own roots and the history of their traditions.

Activity:

Students will interview elders within their family or community to discover the history of their traditions as well as the state of their roots today and how those traditions have changed over time. Students will focus on the collection of oral history and their place within their family or community structures.

Possible end products: podcast, documentary short film, creative nonfiction, etc

Preparation:

- Provide guidelines for conducting respectful and meaningful interviews.
- Discuss the importance of active listening and sensitivity when discussing personal or historical topics.
- Rewatch *Coming Home* to ground students in the film and its tactics.
- Review sample interview questions and encourage students to develop their own based on their interests and family background.
 - o Sample Questions: Smithsonian Oral History & Folklife Guide





- This is a great resource where students can explore this program the Smithsonian folklorists have developed.
- Sample questions are located under the possible questions tab.
- Use <u>the possible topics sheet</u> to hold a class discussion on what possible questions students could ask under the topics listed.

Interview Assignment:

- Assign students to conduct interviews with elders in their family or community.
- Encourage students to schedule interviews in advance and prepare any necessary materials.
- Remind students to be respectful of their interviewees' time and to express gratitude for their participation.

Interview Process (Varies):

- Students conduct their interviews either in person, over the phone, or via video call, depending on the preferences and accessibility of their interviewees.
- Encourage students to record the interviews (with permission) or take detailed notes to capture important information.

Reflection and Analysis:

- After completing their interviews, students reflect on the experience.
- Ask students to share their thoughts on what they learned about their family history and traditions.
- Facilitate a discussion on common themes, differences, or surprising discoveries among the interviews.

Final Product:

Here are a few options for a final product: a podcast, short film, presentation, essay and anything else you can think of that would bring this activity to a close.





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TEEN SCREEN

Movies Selected by Teens



Roots & Revelations Interview

Possible Topics

Folklore

Education

Local History

Career

Community Life

Family History

Identity

Childhood

Interests

Adulthood

Achievements

Life Lessons

Special Memories

Religion

Legacy

Historical Perspectives





Generational Journeys

Teacher Resources:

Storyboard Worksheet

Teacher Note: Feel free to modify this activity to better suit your current teaching and learning environment.

Lesson Overview:

Students will create a children's story based on their family history, inspired by the style of the short film *Boat People*. They'll choose something—like an object, animal, or plant—that represents their family, then use it to tell their story. By following this format, they'll craft engaging tales that highlight their family's journey, challenges, and triumphs, all while celebrating their unique heritage.

Part 1. Exploration of Elements Within a Children's Book:

- a. Break down the key elements of children's books: characters, setting, plot, theme, and illustrations. Engage students in a brainstorming session to generate ideas for their own children's book based on the short film *Boat People*. Encourage them to consider age-appropriate themes, relatable characters, and imaginative settings. Discuss the importance of storytelling techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and narrative structure in capturing young readers' attention.
- b. Guide students through a brainstorming session where they create a mind map of the various characteristics of their family or community. Help them narrow in on a simile that best fits with their ideas. This could be an animal (like in *Boat People*), an object, a plant, etc.

Part 2. Storyboarding:

Introduce the concept of storyboarding as a tool for planning the layout and sequence of a children's book. Provide students with blank storyboard templates or have them create their own. Instruct them to sketch out the main scenes and key illustrations for their book, focusing on visual storytelling and flow. Encourage students to experiment with different compositions, perspectives, and visual styles to bring their story to life.





Part 3. Writing:

Have students begin writing the text for their children's book based on their storyboard outlines. Remind them to use simple language and age-appropriate vocabulary. Encourage students to incorporate descriptive language and engaging dialogue to enhance the storytelling experience for young readers. Provide guidance and feedback as students work on developing their narratives, helping them refine their ideas and clarify their storytelling objectives.

Part 4. Illustrations:

Introduce various illustration techniques, including drawing, painting, collage, and digital art. Allow students to choose their preferred medium and begin creating illustrations for their children's book. Remind them to focus on vibrant colors, expressive characters, and detailed backgrounds to captivate young readers. Offer guidance and support as students work on their illustrations, providing tips on composition, perspective, and visual storytelling techniques.

Part 5. Final Product:

Decide what would be best for your classroom. Students could read their books to a younger audience, they could present them during a family heritage event, they could record themselves reading their picture book so that they may share with younger students digitally. There are a variety of different meaningful ways to share their stories. Pick one that would work best.

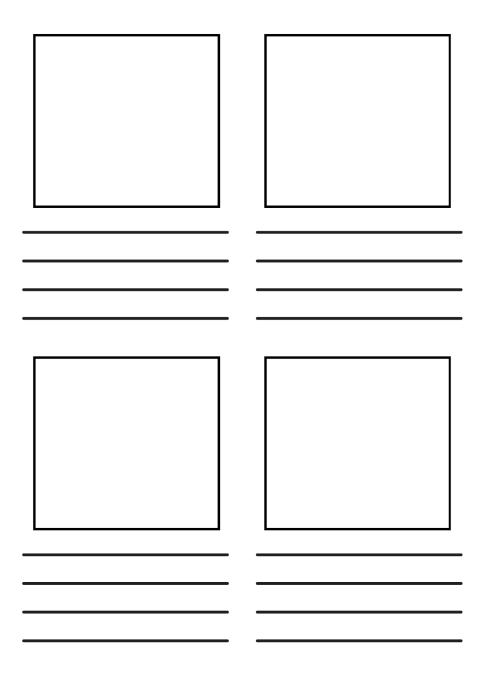




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Storyboard Worksheet







Family Tapestry

Teacher Note:

Feel free to modify this activity to better suit your current teaching and learning environment

Materials Needed:

- Art supplies such as poster boards, glue, scissors, markers, magazines, photographs, and other collage materials.
- Notebooks or journals for students to record interview notes and observations.
- Access to research materials, including books, articles, and online resources about family structures and dynamics.

Lesson Overview:

If already completed, consider using previous assignments (Roots & Revelations) to supplement information gathered.

1. Interview and Observation:

- Instruct students to conduct interviews with family members to gather information about their family dynamics, roles, traditions, and personal stories.
- Encourage students to observe their family interactions, routines, and traditions to gain insights into their family dynamics.
- Remind students to take notes and record their observations in their notebooks or journals.

2. Research:

- Provide students with resources to conduct additional research on family structures, roles, and dynamics i.e. internet access.
- Guide students to explore various perspectives on family life, including cultural influences, generational differences, and societal norms.

3. Collage Creation:

- Distribute art supplies and instruct students to create a collage that represents their understanding of their family structure and their place within it.
- Encourage students to use photographs, magazine clippings, drawings, and other materials to illustrate their family connections, roles, and experiences.
- Remind students to consider the themes they have previously explored throughout this curriculum.





4. Reflection and Sharing:

- Once the collages are completed, facilitate a reflection session where students can share their creations with the class.
- Encourage students to explain the elements of their collages and how they represent their family dynamics and personal identities.
- Lead a discussion on the commonalities and differences among the collages, highlighting the diversity of family experiences and perspectives.

Optional Extension Activity:

- Invite students to write reflective essays or poems inspired by their collages, exploring themes of family, ownership, and identity in greater depth.
- Organize a family heritage day where students can present their collages to their families and engage in discussions about their family histories and traditions.

