



An Illuminating Evening

In Columbus, outside the Ohio Expo Center, Natalia and Claire stare up in wonder. The two friends are at Dragon Lights, the annual event showcasing Chinese lanterns. Bright, colorful lanterns light their way. A mighty dragon extends past them on the path. Natalia and Claire look the luminous dragon up and down, their faces are bathed in the blue glow emitting from the lanterns.

“Wow — just, wow! I have no other words to describe how incredible this all looks right now,” Claire says.

“Do you know that artists from China make all of these lanterns?” Claire asks, nudging Natalia.

“No way! That’s pretty incredible.” Natalia turns to face Claire. “Does your family hang lanterns at home, too?”

“We usually hang up a few during our Chinese New Year celebrations. My mom has large red lanterns she likes to put in our front window.”

“So, I guess Chinese New Year always falls on January 1, right?”

“Actually, the date for Chinese New Year changes every year! It’s usually sometime in late January or in early February, but the dates are different year to year.”

“Why is that?”

“In Chinese culture, we use a different calendar than the Western calendar. The Western calendar usually has 365 days, but ours has somewhere between 353 to 355 days. So, our Chinese New Year dates change every year!”

Natalia thinks about that for a little bit as the two friends keep walking down the lantern-lit aisles. It seems there is a lot she doesn’t know about her friend and her family’s cultural celebrations!

“Can you tell me a little more about what you and your family do at Chinese New Year?” Natalia asks.

Claire pauses, thinking before responding.

“Well, there are so many traditions, it’s tough to know where to start! I mean, every Chinese New Year, we put up lots of decorations. We hang red lanterns and these couplets, or posters, around our homes.

“Red is a good luck color in our culture, so you’ll spy a lot of red in our houses at Chinese New Year! We also always have a big family dinner. That’s an important part of our celebrations. It’s a time for all of my family to gather around and spend time together.

“We also set off firecrackers and fireworks at the first minute of the new year,” Claire

continues. “We do that to scare away any evil spirits hanging around.”

Natalia’s eyes are wide. She says, “All of this sounds absolutely incredible!”

Claire smiles wide and says, “You’ll have to join us at our celebrations next year!”



Connections

Visit a Pow Wow

Have you ever taken part in a powwow? It is a time for American Indians and their friends to come together. They celebrate their culture through song and dance. A powwow is a chance to respectfully learn about American Indian culture. This is especially true as they are open to the public.

Powwows usually last one to four days. They begin with the grand entry. This is when everyone enters the arena. There are singers who sing a number of songs. These are often sung in their native tongue. Dancers dance to the songs. They usually wear traditional outfits. But sometimes they wear outfits that they have updated to reflect changing times. The powwow

is partly a way to honor the past of American Indians. And a powwow also showcases a look at the future with a proud song.

The Great Mohican Pow-Wow in Ohio takes place twice a year. This powwow is hosted on the Mohican Reservation near Loudonville. You and any of your friends and family are all welcome to attend! Remember, when attending a powwow, it’s important to be respectful. Follow the etiquette of a powwow. It’s vital to be on time, for example. Dances are led by a head man and head woman dancers. You are asked to follow their lead. Respect the procedures if you attend. And, ask questions if you’re unsure how something should be done.





Diverse Communities in Ohio

Ohio is a diverse state! We have a number of different communities. And, each community has its own culture and celebrations. Let's learn about a few of them!

In Cleveland, Little Italy is a vibrant neighborhood. In the 1800s, many Italian families began moving to Ohio. They settled in Cleveland. Many moved into places along and near Mayfield Road. This became known as "Little Italy"!

Many Italian families are Catholic. They celebrate Catholic Holy Days. This includes the Assumption of Mary. This Holy Day is celebrated each year in August with a festival in Little Italy. It's called the "Feast of Assumption." It is a free festival that's enjoyed by many. It is a great chance for people to try traditional Italian food. During the festival, restaurant booths line Mayfield Road. There's a wide menu for everyone to enjoy!

The festival begins with a service in the Holy Rosary Church. The festival then ends with brilliant fireworks. The festival is religious. But it's also a celebration of Italian culture. It's a way to celebrate the history of the neighborhood in a fun and engaging way.

Over in Dayton, there's another international festival you can check out every year! It is called "A World A'Fair." It is a celebration of many cultures. It's hosted in the Dayton Convention Center. This festival started in 1978! It showcases food and customs from over 30 different countries. Booths are set up in the indoor space. Each country has its own booth. Most booths have a selection of food for you to try. You can taste a falafel sandwich from Lebanon. Or you can try dumplings from China. You can even sip a drink from Germany!

Food isn't the only item on display at this festival, though. You can also purchase cultural items. For example, you can often find jewelry from India, Ireland and Scotland. There's pottery from Poland and books from Japan. A World A'Fair is a great chance to "meet" new cultures from around the world, all under one roof!

Dayton also hosts the Jewish Cultural Festival. It is a free family festival. It features a variety of activities. Guests are invited to learn more about Jewish culture through talks. The festival also has a stage that features Israeli folk dancing. People can listen to music from Jewish songwriters and singers. There's also plenty of Jewish food if you're hungry!

Challah and brisket are usually on the menu. Mandel bread and much more is also usually baked for people to enjoy. There is also a petting zoo. It features animals from Israel. There's even a camel. The festival is meant to be open and fun for a wide range of ages. It's a chance for everyone to learn more about the Jewish faith and culture.

Back in Cleveland, there's another unique festival. The Cleveland Asian Festival runs over a weekend in May. Asia is the world's largest continent. It includes 48 different countries! Each country in Asia has its own culture and customs. This festival serves as an introduction to a few different cultures in Asia.

The festival has an Asian Food Court. It has food from a few different countries. You can try a "banh mi" from Vietnam. Or you can taste a dish from Thailand or China. A fashion show runs every year, too. It is called the "Colors of Asia." The show features traditional garments from different Asian cultures. Have you ever been curious about what kind of recreational games are played throughout Asia? Well, you can head to the Activities Pavilion! There, you can try Chinese chess and the Game of Go. The Festival also hosts the Egg Roll Eating Contest. People can see just how many egg rolls they can fit in their stomach! The festival offers a chance to see a bit of Asia. Hopefully, guests leave with a better understanding of Asian culture.

Festivals are fun for everyone! They're also a chance for people to learn about a culture they might not know much about. All these festivals are welcoming to all. They invite people to explore and enjoy new activities. They give people a chance to try new foods. There is also a showcase of different music you might not have heard before!

Ohio is a diverse state. Learning about other cultures helps people connect. When we learn more about other cultures, it helps us understand new points of view. And, this helps us to build a tolerant state!



Courtesy of TastyPoutine
Dayton Convention Center

Courtesy of Ponceesponce
Holy Rosary Church

Courtesy of Erik Drost
Feast of the Assumption

Dumplings

Challah

Courtesy of Amos Gil
Israeli folk dancers

"Colors of Asia"

Courtesy of Tim Evanson
The Cleveland Asian Festival Food Vendors

Game of Go

The Amish

The Amish are a religious group that lives in Ohio and a few neighboring states. The Amish choose to live differently than most other people. They are dedicated to their community and support one another.

The Amish History

The Amish are a Protestant religious group that came to America in 1730 from Europe, where they had suffered religious persecution. Their immigration to the U.S. brought religious diversity to the areas they settled. They heard about William Penn and his idea of religious tolerance in the Pennsylvania colony. Today, many of the Amish live in and around Holmes County in northeastern Ohio.

The Amish Way of Life

The Amish have decided to live very much as people did in the 16th and 17th centuries. They have chosen this way of life because they believe it keeps them humble and keeps them from being vain. The Amish follow a set of laws called the Ordnung, which tells them how to live their lives. One rule says unmarried men cannot have facial hair, but once married, men must grow a beard. The men are not allowed to have mustaches.

These are some common expectations, but the rules vary from community to community.

Rules of the Ordnung

The Amish dress simply in homemade clothes. Men wear pants that have no creases or cuffs. They hold their pants up with suspenders because belts are forbidden. Women wear long-sleeve dresses with a cape and apron. How much technology the Amish use depends on the order they belong to. Stricter groups like the Old Order Amish do not usually use electricity. They can ride in cars but cannot drive or own one. Many New Order Amish do use electricity, own a car, use modern farm machinery and can have a telephone in their home.

Amish Education

Amish children go to school within the Amish community and are taught by one of the Amish mothers. They do not continue school after the eighth grade. At school, students learn English. The Amish usually speak Pennsylvania German, sometimes called Pennsylvania Dutch. This is a unique dialect of German spoken in Amish communities.

Amish teenagers will often go outside

of the community and taste what life outside their community is like. Rumspringa is a time when many Amish teenagers choose to go out into the world and discover what life is like outside the Amish community. Rumspringa ends when the person decides to give up the outside world and return to the community for baptism. Most Amish do choose to return.

The Amish Community

The Amish strive to self-sufficient, or to take care of themselves. Almost everything they need, they produce within their community. However, the Amish often own stores and run businesses in local communities. They are considered highly talented carpenters.



What is culture?

Culture

What is culture, anyway? Well, it's all the things a group believes, what they do, and the way an ethnic, religious or social group behaves. It's not as confusing as it may sound. Think about your own culture. As Americans, we have a culture that is special to us. We tend to prefer certain kinds of music, fast food and TV. Not every culture likes those things. American kids like certain kinds of toys and books. Many cultures would think these things are totally boring and strange. On the other hand, if you would visit some other countries in the world they might do things that seem very strange to you, but is special to them.

We have many smaller cultures within our American culture that are very diverse. Christians celebrate Christmas. Jews celebrate Hanukkah, and many African Americans celebrate Kwanzaa. People love to come together to celebrate and enjoy the history that we share as a people. That's true if you are an American Indian girl in Arizona, a Dutch child from Holland or an aboriginal boy in Australia!



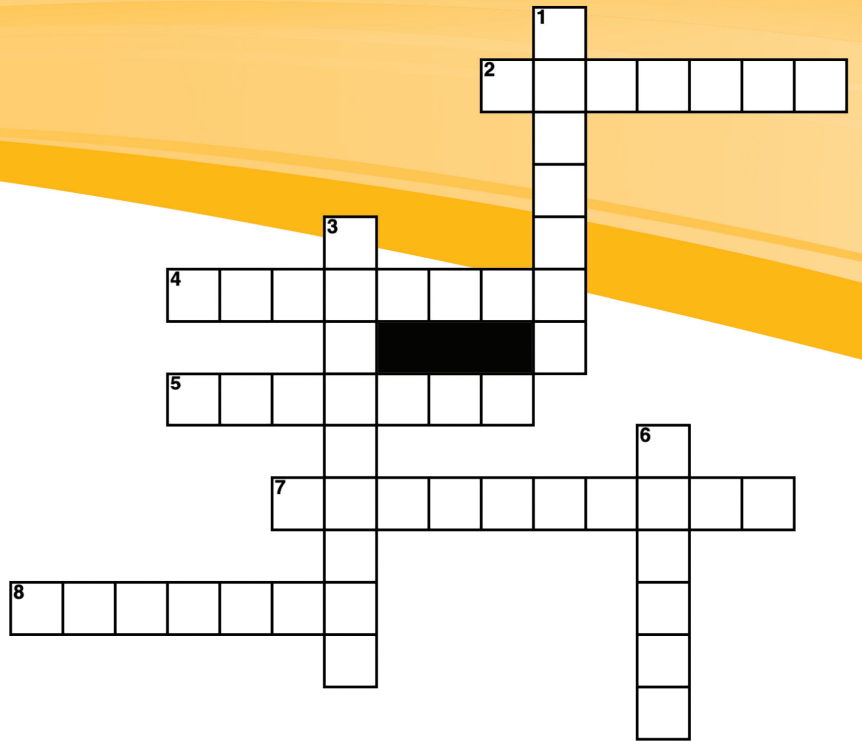
Name _____

ACROSS

- 2. a way of doing things
- 4. a chart showing days, weeks and months
- 5. having a variety of different people, places or things
- 7. practices or beliefs that are passed down from generation to generation in a culture
- 8. the way people of a particular community or region speak

DOWN

- 1. the customs or ways of life of a people, group, place or time
- 3. to do something special to remember a special day, event, or holiday like Christmas or a birthday
- 6. traditional meeting of American Indians often featuring song and dance



Culture Review

Activity

In every culture, there are celebrations! There is a sense of community in celebrations. They are a chance to remember your culture's history and be with loved ones. We've reviewed many different cultures in this week's articles. Here are a few of their celebrations listed below.

Fill out the chart below. First, consider what you know about each celebration. Then, ask yourself what you wonder about that particular celebration. Finally, conduct your own research!

Learn about each celebration. Research and answer the following questions for each celebration:

- When does the celebration happen?
- How long does the celebration last?
- What kind of activities happen during the celebration?
- What kind of food is eaten during the celebration?
- What are some important traditions in this celebration?

	What I know	What I Wonder	What I Learned
Rosh Hashanah			
Mid-Autumn Festival			
Kwanzaa			
Powwow			
Christmas			

Let's Write

Describe a cultural tradition you and your family celebrate. Make sure to include a description of what you do, why you do it, and when it is celebrated.

Think & Review

1. What similarities does Chinese New Year share with a holiday you celebrate?
2. What is one example of a rule to follow at a powwow?
3. How does society benefit from cultural festivals like these?
4. Explain what Rumspringa is.
5. What can we gain from sharing in another culture's celebration with them?