



Respecting Other Cultures

SOCIAL INSTRUCTIONAL WRITING

Directions: In this activity, your teacher will read the directions and questions out loud. You will read any passages or additional information to yourself. Then, you will write down your responses. Remember to write in English.

This chart describes two cultures in different countries: Mexico and Spain. Read through the information on the chart, and then use the chart to answer questions one and two.

Culture	The Culture of Mexico	The Culture of Spain
		
Official Language(s)	Spanish	Castilian Spanish, Basque, Catalan, and Galician
Popular Foods	Quesadillas, huevos rancheros, tamales, tostadas	Paella, gazpacho, jamon Ibérico, tortilla Española
Government	Republic of federated states (President)	Parliamentary monarchy (King is the Head of State, Prime Minister is the Head of Government)
Religion	Roman Catholic	Roman Catholic
Major Holidays	National Day of Spain (October 12)	Día de la Independencia (Independence Day, September 16)
Most Popular Sport	Football (soccer)	Football (soccer)
Currency	Peso	Euro



1. Use the chart on the previous page to answer the questions below.

A. What is the official language of Mexico?

B. Who rules Spain?

C. What is a popular dish in Mexico? How about in Spain?

D. What is similar about religion in Mexico and Spain?

E. What is different about holidays in Mexico and Spain?

SAMPLE



2. Compare the two cultures mentioned in the chart. Write three to five sentences about how the two cultures are similar and different. Use information from the chart to help you.

SAMPLE

Directions: *In this writing activity you are going to read a passage. Then, you will write about what you have read. Remember to write in English.*

 **Holidays Around the World**

In America, major holidays include Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Christmas. Even if your family does not celebrate any of those—or other major holiday—perhaps it’s because you come from another culture which has its own celebrations and traditions.

Chinese New Year, also known as Lunar New Year, is celebrated in China. In countries with Chinese populations, this holiday is also observed. The exact date varies from year to year, but Chinese New Year always falls during the winter months. There are multiple ways Chinese New Year is honored. Communities share in lion dances and fireworks displays. Families share special meals, and children are given money in red envelopes for good luck. In China, the celebration sometimes lasts for weeks. It’s a happy time as everyone welcomes the new year.



Each year, Muslims take part in Ramadan, a holy month commemorating when Muhammad received the words of the Koran. Ramadan takes place during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. During this period of time, Muslims fast during the daylight hours, pray, and read the Koran. At night, they share festive meals called *iftars* with family and friends. Many courses are served at the iftar, starting with dates or apricots with water or sweet milk. Vegetables, breads, and meats follow.



When Ramadan ends, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr. Often shortened to Eid, this holiday lasts for one to three days. Families eat sweet foods, go on trips, and give each other gifts, wishing each other *Eid Mubarak* (Blessed Eid).

The Day of the Dead, or *Día de los Muertos*, is a holiday celebrated on November 1st and 2nd in Mexico. These dates coincide with All Souls’ Day, brought to Mexico in the 1500s by Spanish invaders. The honored guests on this holiday are dead ancestors. It’s a day to celebrate their memory. Altars are built to draw the spirits back to the family. These altars might contain photographs, their ancestor’s favorite foods, or items that meant a lot to them.



Families then celebrate their ancestors with a large feast, often taking place at a graveyard. People eat, drink, sing songs, and clean the tombstone. Papier mâché, clay, or plastic skeletons are made and posed all around the villages to remind the community that death is part of life. Often the skeletons are posed having fun, making food, or playing an instrument. Everyone gets to celebrate!



3. On the next page, you will write a personal narrative about your culture. You can use information from the passage, but make sure everything is written in your own words. Write at least eight sentences.

Think carefully about these questions to get ideas for your writing:

- Where does your family come from?
- What are some of your favorite traditions?
- Why is it important to celebrate your culture?

Use this space to organize your ideas. You can make notes, an outline, a web, or any other kind of graphic organizer. Add details.

