

Unit 3: World Cultures and Fashion

Key Concept:

Students will understand the relationship between the personal fashion choices they make and how they relate to society and cultures of the world.

Essential Questions:

- How does our culture, community, and social group affect our fashion choices?
- What articles of clothing are revered or considered sacred? Why?
- How is fashion perceived in various cultures around the globes?

Activity 1: Spiritual and Aesthetic Meaning of Clothing in Various Cultures

Step 1-Examine and evaluate(Source: See full lesson and handouts by Robin Lewis at <http://www.uen.org>)

images or actual objects of sacred and aesthetically beautiful clothing objects from other cultures such as: Kimonos, Burkas, Saris, and Wompanoag ceremonial regalia. (In our case, we also invited a student who is from the local native American tribe to come in to visit the class wearing his ceremonial regalia and describe what each piece is made from, how it was made, and what they represent.)

- Kimonos –
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimono> (includes diagram of kimono parts)
<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/virtual/kimono/kimono01.html>
<http://store.doverpublications.com/0486990125.html>



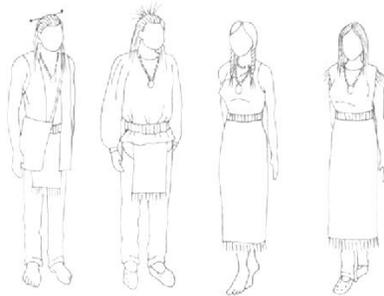
- Burkas- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burka>
Ban on burquas- do you support it?
<http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2009/07/ban-on-burkas-.html>



- Saris- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sari>



- Wompanoag ceremonial regalia.- In my school, we have a population of students that are from the local Native American Wompanoag tribe. I invited one student to come in to visit the class wearing his ceremonial regalia and describe what each piece was made from, how it was made, and what the different parts represent. Here is a website about Wompanoag clothing: <http://3sunthanksgiving.com/resources/1621-clothing/>



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Figure 1 Claude Monet's portrait of his wife wearing a Kimono

Step 2- Kimonos have inspired artists for centuries such as in this example by Claude Monet. Students will draw or create kimonos from clay or folded paper. See lesson plans here:

<http://www.cantonart.org/52>

<http://www.incredibleart.org/Files/Cathy-Japan.htm> or

<http://applesloveorangespdx.blogspot.com/2010/02/clay-kimonos.html>

1. Alternate project: Students can make or draw a sacred fashion object from their own or another cultural background on the croquis of their choice.



One student's examples of multi-cultural croquis.

Activity 2: Body Decoration –

This amazing website made by the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery has a rich collection of images and objects about [body decoration in cultures from around the world](#). It includes examples of piercing, tattooing, painting, shaping, and scarring that is done to beautify the human body, and what cultures they originate from in history. This is eye opening for students to realize that fashionable present day tattooing and piercing is derived from this. There are informative, interesting, engaging topics and interactive

activities for students to do online such as [*The Changing Shape of Female Western Bodies*](#) . This rich website includes curriculum links, discussion topics, and even a premade student quiz for art educators to use. This activity could be done as homework followed by a class discussion the next day, or if you can book a computer lab at school to look at this website as a class.

For a follow-up activity students can create a tattoo design using pencil or pen and ink, or draw body decoration on a croquis of their choice.

Activity 3: Mehndi Hand Designs



Students can research about the art of mehndi, and the traditional and modern reasons behind it.

Background on Mehndi: The art of henna painting on the body, has been practiced in parts of India, Africa and the Middle East for centuries. Dried henna plant leaves are made into a paste that produces a temporary dye that lasts up to three weeks. This dye is used to make designs to decorate the skin – usually on hands and feet. Mehndi has traditionally been used to adorn wearers for wedding ceremonies and other cultural celebrations. Designs can be intricate and include elements like flowers, swirls, dots and teardrops. How do Mehndi designs vary from culture to culture?

Students can make the designs on their own hand(s), a partner’s hand, or trace their hand on paper and put the designs inside. Another option is to pour plaster into rubber gloves and paint the designs on once they are dried into sculptures. One student commented “Oh, they are kind of like Zentangles for hands”. For tutorials and designs go to:

- To do the [real henna design](#) on real hands click on this link.
- [Free Designs for henna hands](#) .
- Go here for a lesson plan on the [henna designs out of traced hands on paper](#) .
- **Technology Alternate:** Assign this as homework or go to computer lab with class. Students can do a [mehndi design digitally](#) at this game site.

Fashions with Multicultural Influence:



Origami-inspired belts

Activity:

Option 1: Create a kimono with a Japanese design, painted, sculpted out of clay or as a collage. You can follow this [clay kimono lesson plan](#), or research and create Japanese fans with this [Japanese Fan lesson plan](#), which are an important fashion accessory.

Option 2: Students research and draw a croquis with designs inspired by the aesthetics of another culture.

Here are some inspirations of cultural influences from contemporary fashion designers:

[100 Enticingly Ethnic Editorials](#)

[Edgy Asian Fashion](#) and [Cross Cultural Couture](#), [Multi-Cultural Inspired Fashions](#)

Assessment: Students can do a self-assessment reflection worksheet. How well does student apply multicultural aesthetics to their artwork? Does the work clearly demonstrate qualities and characteristics of another culture?

Another option is to do a 3-2-1 Exercise- Have students describe 3 new things they learned, 2 questions they still have, and 1 opinion they have now.