

# Celebration

A unit in ten lessons, grades K-12

## Stage 1 – Desired Results

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>ESTABLISHED GOALS</b></p> <p><b>Content Standard:</b><br/>- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content</p> <p><b>Cultural Standards:</b><br/>-acquire and pass on the traditions of their community through oral and written history<br/>-gather oral and written historical information from the local community and provide an appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance</p> | <i>Transfer</i>   |   |
|  | <p><i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in community celebrations in body, mind, and spirit.</li> </ul>  |   |
|  | <i>Meaning</i>  |   |
|  | <p><b>UNDERSTANDINGS</b><br/><i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language, customs, and celebrations shape the identity of a community.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do communities pass down from generation to generation?</li> <li>- How do communities celebrate?</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Acquisition</i>   |   |   |
|  | <p><i>Students will know...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to write informative/explanatory text.</li> <li>- How to listen and learn from Elders.</li> <li>- Their role in passing on the traditions of their community.</li> </ul> | <p><i>Students will be skilled at...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talking and writing about community members and relationships.</li> <li>- Describing community celebrations and their cultural significance.</li> </ul> |

## Stage 2 – Evidence and Assessment

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Evaluative Criteria</b> | <b>Assessment Evidence</b>   |
|                            | <p><b>PERFORMANCE TASK(S):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write about a community celebration in the first-person singular narrative style.</li> <li>- Write about a community celebration in the first-person plural narrative style.</li> <li>- Write about a community celebration in the third-person narrative style.</li> <li>- Write about a community celebration in the second-person narrative style.</li> </ul> |
|                            | <p><b>OTHER EVIDENCE:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Types chart with evidence</li> <li>- Journals with reflections on culture and celebration</li> </ul>  |

## Stage 3 – Learning Plan

*Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction*

**Preparation:** 2-3 weeks prior to the launch of the unit.

- Contact Elders about sharing local knowledge (see Cultural Notes). Ask specifically about the taking of photographs and the recording of audio that would only be used for student stories. If permission is given, select older students who will photograph and record audio that will go into a shared folder for use by any

student who wants to add media for future reference. (This unit is one of a series of twelve that includes units on both photography and podcasting. High-quality cameras and audio recording equipment are available on loan from Project Grad).

- It is likely that when brainstorming, your students will list Christmas and Easter activities as their favorite celebrations. Since this is a unit on understanding the role of celebrations as a source of cohesion in the community, the activities can be done near any significant community celebrations.
- You could tie this unit into other informative writing work, as needed. Perhaps your students need additional practice with some element of informative writing such as organization or transitions, which can be incorporated as part of the revision process once their pieces are drafted. This is an authentic writing task that should be meaningful writing work for students because of the cultural significance of the theme.
- The sequence of lessons begins with the first person plural “We” not singular “I” because a noted Yupik educator shared that one way to notice a non-native person is that they almost always speak in the singular. In contrast, it is more common for Native people (especially Elders) to use the plural.

### **Day 1: Activity Focus - We Celebrate Christmas**

- *Prep:* Gather books using first-person narration from the kit: [We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga](#)
- *Hook:* It’s no secret: life can be very hard. Sad things happen. And yet, we love to celebrate. Why do people celebrate?
- *Discuss:* How do celebrations help you? How do they help your family? Our community?
- *Brainstorm:* What are your favorite celebrations? Why?
- *Chart:* Today we will focus specifically on how we celebrate Christmas. When does this celebration happen? What activities are involved and why? What happens first? How do the other activities follow in order? How does this celebration strengthen your spirit and tie you closer to the community?
- *Define:* First-person plural is when we tell a story or explain something and the narrator uses the word “we.”
- *Read:* [We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga](#)
- *Share:* [this example](#) of first-person plural.
- *Write:* Using the chart as a reference, tell the story of this celebration using the word “we.” Use a variety of sentences and only occasionally begin a sentence with “we.” Notice these are only activities. There are so many details that you can add to create a unique story: what are the smells? Tastes? How do people move? What is the dark or light like? What colors are there?
- [Example: On Christmas Eve, our whole family would meet at my grandparent's house. All eight cousins would decorate and would go into the dusty attic and pull out the boxes with the Christmas tree decorations. We would carry them carefully down the stairs. We would first take out the old Christmas records and argue about which one to listen to. Once the music played, it was so much fun to unwrap all the old decorations and hang them on the tree. We would sing along with our favorite carols and no one minded if someone sang the wrong note. While we decorated the tree Grandma was warming hot chocolate and putting cookies on some old plates that were decorated like Christmas wreaths.]
- *Share:* In pairs or groups of three, have students share their stories. Limited time? Students can read their favorite sentence or paragraph.

### **Day 2: Activity Focus - You Celebrate Christmas**

- *Prep:* Gather books using second-person narration from the kit: [The Snails Spell](#)
- *Review:* First person plural. Note the sense of togetherness and community in that voice of “we”. Highlight some favorite lines from that lesson. Ask students to share a favorite part from their own writing.
- *Hook:* Read [The Snails Spell](#). What is different about the voice in this story? How does it make you feel? How might you experience this story differently if it had been written using “we”? Why might an author choose the “you” voice?
- *Teach:* Second-person narration, using the same procedure from yesterday’s lesson.
- *Update:* The chart from the previous lesson of the events of Christmas. What important things did we miss that you included in your story? Add these to the chart.
- *Challenge:* Write a brand new story about Christmas in our community using second-person narration. Think about good sentence variety so that not every sentence begins with “you”.

- *Circulate*: discuss and assist. Help students avoid a direct rewrite of yesterday's writing by just replacing "we" with "you"--challenge them to think about how second-person narration may perhaps feel more universal. Purposefully highlight other details or features of the holiday that didn't surface in the previous lesson so that this is a unique piece of writing. Focus on helping students bring the reader into their "shoes" to experience the celebration.
- *Share*: In pairs or groups of three have students share their stories.

### **Day 3: Activity Focus - They Celebrate Christmas**

- *Prep*: Gather books using third-person narration from the kit: King Island Christmas
- *Review*: Second-person plural. Note the sense of putting someone into the story in that voice. Highlight some favorite lines from that lesson, perhaps from student writing.
- *Hook*: Read King Island Christmas. What is unique about the voice in this story? How does it make you feel? How would this story be different if it had been told using "we" or "you" instead? Why might an author choose the "we" voice?
- *Teach*: Third-person narration. The narrator is omniscient, or all-knowing, which means they can travel across space and time. The narrator also knows things the characters might not know about themselves or each other.
- *Update*: The chart from the previous lesson of the events of Christmas. What important things did we miss that you included in your story? Add these to the chart.
- *Challenge*: Write a brand new story about Christmas in our community using third-person narration. Think about good sentence variety so that not every sentence begins with "they"
- *Circulate*: discuss and assist. Again, help students avoid a direct rewrite. It may be helpful to suggest focusing on writing about just one specific element of the celebration in detail instead of the entire holiday.
- *Share*: In pairs or groups of three have students share their stories.

### **Day 4: Activity Focus - I Celebrate Christmas**

- *Prep*: Gather books using first-person narration from the kit: I Am Every Good Thing!
- *Review*: third person plural. Note the sense of knowing everything about the story in that voice. Highlight some favorite lines from that lesson. Invite students to share their favorite lines from their writing.
- *Hook*: Read I Am Every Good Thing! What is different about the voice in this story? How does it make you feel?
- *Teach*: First-person narration.
- *Update*: The chart from the previous lesson of the events of Christmas. What important things did we miss that you included in your story? Add these to the chart.
- *Challenge*: Write a brand new story about Christmas in the community using first-person narration. Think about good sentence variety so that not every sentence begins with "I". Think about what parts of your experience you wish others understood better or could learn about you. This is your opportunity to share your own opinion about this celebration and teach people about your own experience.
- *Circulate*: discuss and assist. Again, help students avoid a direct rewrite. It may be helpful to suggest focusing on writing about just one specific element of the celebration in detail instead of the entire holiday.
- *Share*: In pairs or groups of three have students share their stories.

### **Day 5: Activity Focus - Revise one piece of writing**

- *Hook*: Now that you've written four different pieces, let's reflect on what you've accomplished and how each narration style makes each story unique.
- *Review*: Have students reread all four drafts using the different narrative voices. Highlight class procedures for revision. Pair younger students with older helpers.
- *Select*: One story for revision, editing, and publishing. Is this your best piece of writing, or perhaps the one that needs the most help? How can you prepare your writing to be the best it can be? Our goal is to describe our community's cultural traditions for ourselves but also with a larger audience.
- *Provide*: Work time and assistance as needed.
- *Share*: What did you add or change in your writing? How does that improve your ability to teach a larger audience about these traditions?

Later in the school year...

**Day 6: Activity Focus - I, We, You, They Celebrate Easter**

- *Hook:* Back in the fall, you said that your two favorite celebrations were Christmas and Easter.
- *Discuss:* How do celebrations help you? Your family? Our community?
- *Brainstorm:* What is special about Easter?
- *Chart:* When does this celebration happen? What activities are involved in this celebration and why? What happens first? How do the other activities follow in order? How does this celebration strengthen your spirit and tie you closer to the community?
- *Review:* All four narrative styles from the lessons about Christmas.
- *Share:* An exemplar in each style from student writing on Christmas. Highlight stories with good sentence variety and/or especially strong descriptions of meaningful cultural traditions.
- *Choose:* Have students decide on the one narrative style that they will use to write about Easter. Why do you think this narration style will be the best fit for you and for this celebration?
- *Write:* Using the chart as a reference, tell the story of the Easter celebration. Use a variety of sentences and only occasionally begin a sentence with the pronoun “I, we, you, or they.” Notice these are only activities. There are so many details that you can add to create a unique story: what are the smells? Tastes? How do people move? What is the dark or light like? What colors are there? Consider modeling this first before students start writing, possibly with the narration style that most students found most difficult the last time they wrote about Christmas.
- *Share:* In pairs or groups of three have students share their stories. Consider grouping students who have chosen the same narration styles, or students who have all chosen different ones.

**Day 7: Activity Focus - Revise Easter piece of writing**

- *Hook:* Today we will go through the same revision process that we used for writing about Christmas to prepare your Easter writing for a larger audience.
- *Review:* Have students reread the previous session’s writing on Easter, perhaps pairing students who used the same narration style. Highlight class procedures for revision. Pair younger students with older helpers.
- *Provide:* Work time and assistance as needed.
- *Share:* What did you add or change in your writing? How does that improve your ability to teach a larger audience about these traditions?

**Day 8: Activity Focus - Writing an Introduction**

- *Review:* Point out that this unit started out with three questions: Why do people celebrate? And what celebrations are important to you and why? Today students are going to write your own answers to those three questions about celebrations in general. This piece of writing will become the introduction to either a printed or electronic (PowerPoint, Google Slides) version of their celebration writing that includes both the Christmas and Easter pieces.
- *Prep:* ask an older student to build two demo multimedia presentations: 1) one page with text and photo in a word processor and 2) two or three slides with text and photo that could be used in the next optional session to share their writing with a larger audience.

**Day 9-10: (Optional) Activity Focus - Making a Multimedia Presentation**

- *Review:* Images and audio recordings made by older photographers and sound recorders, available through the shared folder if you worked with an Elder to learn about celebrations prior to starting this unit. These are examples of other multimedia formats that students could use to teach others about these celebrations, passing them on to others. What narration pronouns did the Elders use? Why were they effective tools for teaching?
- *Share:* Two demonstration projects by an older student who you have previously consulted and is willing to serve as an exemplar. Highlight the similarities and differences between the writing and the multimedia projects and prompt the older student to explain their thinking process.
- *Pair:* Older students with younger students to transform their celebration writing into multimedia presentations. If your middle school-aged students have the skills then let them work alone. If they need additional skills to be successful, run a mini-workshop or pair with an older student as needed.

- *Select*: Three projects - one each by high, middle, and elementary students - to share with consulting Elders, village entities, and other community leaders. Ideally, this would happen in person, perhaps as part of the focus celebration itself (i.e. Christmas recording shared at an in-person community Christmas celebration).
- *Reflect*: What is something new you learned or noticed about our celebrations as a result of this unit? Why is it important to pass on our celebration traditions? Why are they important to our community and our culture? Which narration style felt most appropriate to you for this task? Which tool did you prefer for sharing this information, writing or a multimedia form? Why?

## Cultural Notes

*General guidelines for school and community success  
and space to make notes specific to your community*

### Asking for help from Elders

- Ask a trusted colleague about the accepted community norms for requesting help from an Elder. These may include the following considerations: making a personal visit, using a liaison, establishing first contact via phone or email, or having a conversation about a visit while at the store, post office, or other community space.
- You are asking an Elder to walk around the community with the class and share community knowledge of locations and resources and their uses. Account for the physical demands of walking and speaking loudly enough to be heard outside.
- Also, ask for permission to make an audio recording of what the Elder shares on the walk. Explain that the students will use the recording as a resource to help them learn. This part about a walk is different from the info at the beginning of the unit—does it have to be a walk? or just some sort of recorded conversation about celebrations in the community?

## Resources in Kit

### Books:

[We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga](#)

[The Snails Spell](#)

[King Island Christmas](#)

[I Am Every Good Thing](#)

## Extensions