

Defining American Culture
Photographic Parallels
and
The SAT Response

Subject: English language Arts

Grade Level: 9-12

Rational or Purpose: Using the photographs taken by Czech photographer, Jno P. Trlica, students will assess the diversity the photographs illustrate existed in 1920's Texas. Then students will compare and contrast Trlica's photographs with more current photographs of Texans and evaluate in what ways Texas has changed in how diversity is viewed.

Materials: Computer with internet access
Defining American Culture/ Investigating American ness
<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/teachingthetwenties/themeviewer.php?theme=culture§ion=investigating&subsect=&sov=1>.
Current photographs of Texas people/ diversity orientation

Lesson Duration: 3 class blocks

Objectives: English III

- 1A-C The student writes in a variety of forms
- 2A-E The student uses recursive writing processes
- 3A-E The student relies increasingly on the conventions of standard grammar
- 4A-F The student uses writing as a tool for learning
- 8A-D The student reads in varied sources including American literature
- 9A-B The student recognizes the shared characteristics of culture
- 10A-B The student responds to information and aesthetic elements
- 19A-C The student understands and interprets visual representations
- 20A-F The student analyzes and critiques the significance of visual representations

Activity: This is a good activity to explore the organizing the SAT Response

- Step 1: Share with students the format of the SAT Response; statement, defend, refute or clarify. Explain how it can be organized and used effectively.

- Step 2: Oral discussion: how do we define American ness?
Have students access Defining American Culture on the HRC site. Read and discuss the information offered. Then have students study the photographs taken by Jno P. Trlica. How do these pictures reflect American ness? What do the pictures reflect about diversity in Texas in the 1920's?
- Step 3: Working in small groups of 4-5 people, assign each group one of the photographs. Students will identify details in the photographs that suggest what life was like for families in the 1920's. What makes these people American, or not American? What details make these people interesting? Small groups will share their answers with the entire class.
- Step 4: Students are to bring to class pictures of Austin or Texas. They may be family pictures, pictures taken specifically for this assignment, or pictures from another source. Discuss how these pictures compare to Trlica's pictures. Do they illustrate more, or less, American ness? Working in their small groups, students will contrast these more current pictures with Trlica's 1920 pictures. Has Texas become more or less diverse? How do you know? Share with whole class
- Step 5: Students will respond in writing to the following SAT prompt. They have only 25 minutes to respond.
Defend, refute or clarify the following statement:
- Texas has gained in appreciating diversity since the 1920's.**
- Modifications: *Slower Learners* should be allowed more than the usual 25 minutes to respond.
- Accelerated Learners* might look at all of the various pictures, locate their own pictures and establish a common theme for them all and then use details from all of the pictures to support their ideas. It might not be necessary to work in small groups- they might work in partners.
- Student Product: SAT Responses and discussion
- Closure: Read Responses aloud and discuss details, looking closely at unusual or interesting responses.
- Assessment or Evaluation: Use the SAT Evaluation score guide

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