

# Cultural Fair

## A Resource Guide

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# Cultural Fair

Milliken's Cultural Fair Resource Guide provides teachers and students with step-by-step instructions and suggestions, information, guidelines, and forms to take them from the earliest stage of choosing a social studies topic to the final display of their projects at a cultural fair.

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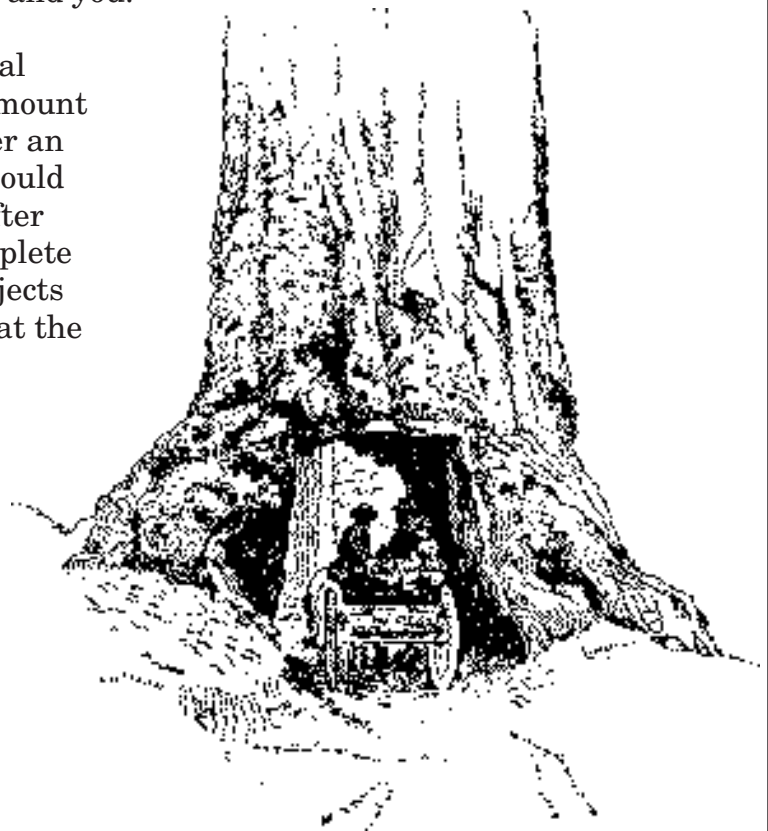
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# Cultural Fair

## An Introduction

1. Through step-by-step instructions and suggestions, this guide provides students with the information, guidelines, and forms to take them from the earliest stage of choosing a project to the final display of their projects at a cultural fair.
2. At the outset, students need to be provided with a clear understanding of what a cultural project should include. As they become familiar with the process and confident with the expectations of a cultural project, they will be willing to take on more responsibility. This makes the teacher's role simpler and more manageable.
3. It is up to the teacher to decide how much of this guide's material to use. You may choose to give some of the material verbally rather than using handouts. You may also wish to use the forms selectively, handing them out only where you see a student needing reinforcement in a particular area. These decisions will depend upon your preference and the maturity level of your students.
4. When recruiting judges for your fair, remember that you may have as many as one-third drop out on the morning of the fair. If you plan for this, you should still be able to have one judge for every ten projects, a reasonable ratio.
5. It is important to direct students to think about their projects well in advance of the time they will actually begin working on them. Given the time to explore various issues, they will be more likely to choose something they are really interested in with more satisfying results for both them and you.
6. A comprehensive and effective cultural project is the result of a significant amount of invested hours by each student over an extended period of time. Students should be given at least six to eight weeks after they have chosen their project to complete it. If the time period is too short, projects will probably look "thrown together" at the last minute.

**May your cultural fair be  
high in quality and  
headache-free!**



## Related Activities

The following are related activities which you may wish to include in and around your cultural fair.

1. Ask foreign students from a nearby university to display costumes, maps, handicrafts, and cultural artifacts during the fair.
2. Ask local choruses, dance groups, church choirs, musical groups, dance bands, magicians, comedians, and foreign students to perform programs during the fair.
3. Ask local businesses, banks, restaurants, and stores to place prize-winning or unusual projects in their display windows or inside their businesses immediately following the fair for at least two weeks.
4. Run an art contest for advertising posters and handout fliers, or coordinate this task with your school's art classes. Have computer classes design and produce the fair awards and prizes.
5. Have an international food fair as the concessions at the fair.
6. Ask the foreign student office or international visitor program at a local university to set up a display at the fair.
7. Ask the American Field Service (AFS) and other similar organizations to set up a display of their international exchange or travel programs for middle or high school students.
8. Have art students make welcome banners and directional and participant signs for the fair, as well as flags of the represented countries to put over each student's display.
9. Show slides of previous and/or other schools' cultural fairs.
10. Have guest speakers in class for some weeks before the fair to discuss unusual customs, dress, government systems, foods, occupations, language, and other cultural differences in foreign countries.
11. Study foreign writers and books for several weeks before the fair. Coordinate your studies with language and literature teachers, or arrange team-teaching sessions.
12. Have a learned parent or local professor lecture on your city's history early in the fair process to raise interest in possible projects.
13. Organize field trips to local points of historical interest.
14. Choose a different country each week as a thematic unit for your class. Begin the week with an open discussion about the country, and spend 30 minutes or so each day focusing on one area of the country's culture.

# Levels of Exploration

Many cultural projects can be tailored to meet the ability and educational level of individual students. By narrowing the focus, a complex subject may be simplified. By expanding the scope and direction, a simple project may be made more complex.

For example, in regard to family origins:

Students in grades three through six may simply interview their parents, grandparents, and other close relatives, describe how and where they have traveled or migrated from, and show some tools used by the interviewees at an earlier time in their lives.

Students in grades six through eight might collect various personal histories, do some historical research, describe historic journeys taken by their ancestors, tell why those journeys were taken, and prepare maps and lists of utensils and tools taken on the trips.

Advanced students (grades 8+) may do all of the above and go on to discuss the cultural and historical reasons for the journeys, how they related to national migrations, and how their family histories fit into the overall picture. They can also research their family roots in their country of origin, why their ancestors left that country, and how the emigration of their ancestors related to international movements. In addition to maps and lists, advanced students might collect and display photocopies of research materials, old photographs, historic handicrafts, and so on.

Moving from simple observation to more involved explanations of contexts and relationships takes the problem from the **what happened** level to the **how it happened** and **why it happened** levels—from the simple to the complex, and from the local to the national and international levels.

