

Assessment 1 Instructions: Cultural Artifact Analysis

Choose an artifact and then analyze it (in 2-3 pages) using the four steps provided for analyzing artifacts. Build your problem-solving skills by following the steps to analyze cultural artifacts and articulate your own self- and social-awareness through looking at the experiences of yours and others.

Introduction

The calling of the humanities is to make us truly human in the best sense of the word.

– J. Irwin Miller, *Industrialist*

What makes humans... human? Part of the answer lies in the very different ways we express ourselves and our experiences (through art, architecture, music, religion, literature, and more). With over 7.6 billion people on planet Earth, understanding how those expressions connect and distinguish us from one another is a critical part of becoming better citizens of the world (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

Just a few generations ago, the odds of people interacting from completely different backgrounds or communities were small. But in today's digital world, we have instant access to communities and cultures unlike our own. As we all come together to live, work, and share experiences, it is becoming even more important that we understand our perspectives and the perspectives of others so that we can all collaborate when facing complex issues.

In this course, you'll explore how different cultures and groups demonstrate their unique perspectives on what it means to be human. As you do, you'll discover how broadening your perspective will help you better collaborate with others and solve problems in today's global world. Overall, you'll develop three skills that will help you adapt to a global world. They are:

- **Problem-solving:** As you examine the art, literature, and music of other cultures, you'll use critical thinking to frame problems, explain other people's viewpoints, and create solutions informed by diverse and ethical perspectives.
- **Relationship building:** While learning about cultures across different time periods, you will discover that even the earliest humans understood the importance of working with others.
- **Self-awareness and social awareness:** Recognizing your thoughts, emotions, and intentions is a uniquely human trait, which is why it is fundamental to the study of humanities. By managing your responses to unfamiliar experiences and being open to new perspectives, you will better understand the people you encounter in your personal and professional life.

As you use these skills together, you'll become better equipped to build collaborative relationships and solve diverse problems in a global workplace. You'll also gain the awareness you need to recognize how social and cultural differences may impact the ways you interact with others.

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In this assessment, you will learn more about the benefits of studying humanities and discover how you can strengthen your problem-solving, relationship-building, and self- and social-awareness skills in this course and beyond.

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

– Wayne Dyer, author, and motivational speaker

Tacos or lasagna. Sushi or curry. Pickles or kimchi. The foods we were exposed to as kids—by our families, communities, religions, and geographical locations—shape our preferences as adults. And it's not just about food. Our backgrounds influence the perspectives we have on music, literature, television, art, and more. By acknowledging this influence, we become better able to consider how the perspectives of others with different cultural backgrounds might also differ from our own.

In this assessment, you will also strengthen your problem-solving and self- and social-awareness skills by exploring strategies that will help you examine artifacts from other cultures more objectively. Being able to recognize how perspectives affect the way we see the world will also help you better understand other points of view so you can tackle the challenges you face at home, work, and school and make the best decisions for your future.

Changing your perspectives will not only transform you but also the whole world.

– Ji-Hae Park, violinist

Who was your favorite musician when you were a child? Are you still a fan of that artist today? You may still be an avid admirer, or you may cringe at the music you used to love. Either way, your perspective of that artist has probably changed over time. Your perspectives on music, art, culture, and more are constantly evolving as you grow, meet new people, have new experiences, travel, and learn more about the world around you.

Lastly, in this assessment, you will also continue to strengthen your problem-solving skills as you examine the personal and cultural experiences that influence the choices you make. You'll also hone your self- and social-awareness skills by learning how to manage your reactions to things that may initially surprise you. As you explore more about your perspectives and how they are influenced by your experiences, you'll be better able to consider new perspectives, look at cultural artifacts objectively, and navigate through difficult issues at work or with friends.

Now get ready to explore other cultures, broaden your perspective, and discover what makes humans... human.

References

BrainyQuote. (n.d.). *Ji-Hae Park quotes*. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/jihae_park_567503

BrainyQuote. (n.d.). *J. Irwin Miller quotes*. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/j_irwin_miller_201641

BrainyQuote. (n.d.). *Wayne Dyer quotes*. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/wayne_dyer_384143

Overview

Throughout the assessments in this course, you will have opportunities to analyze cultural artifacts and/or works of art. A cultural artifact is something created by human beings reflective of their society, such as an article of clothing or ancient pottery. A work of art can include something created by an artist, such as a painting, sculpture, film, poem, or photograph. You are encouraged to choose something meaningful to you. You can select cultural artifacts or works of art of interest to you in general. In addition, there is an optional text in the course, *Exploring Cultures*. This optional text has many works of art and artifacts that you may select, too.

For this assessment, you will have a chance to practice your problem-solving and self/social-awareness skills as you analyze how culture shapes our perspectives and impacts decision-making.

You will also explore how your personal experiences and perspective may have influenced your reaction to the artifact or work of art. By using these strategies, you'll:

- Be better equipped with information to help you make more objective and informed decisions.
- Solve complex problems and think through situations related to diversity and ethics.
- Build relationships and collaborate in the workplace and at home.

As you follow these steps to analyze a cultural artifact or work of art, you are actively practicing the process of thinking through a problem and breaking it down into its parts.

Additionally, self-awareness, social awareness, and articulation are critical in navigating the workplace and working with others, whether at work or home. This assessment will leverage what you have learned about the human experience and understand what perspectives you hold and how they impact the choices and decisions you make.

Instructions

For this assessment, first choose a cultural artifact or work of art, and then, in 2–3 pages of writing, analyze it using the strategies you've learned from the provided resources.

1. Start by writing an introductory paragraph that describes which artifact you chose.

- Describe the artifact itself. Identify additional information about the artifact such as the artist or musician, when it was created, and materials used.
 - If it's a painting, what materials were used?
 - If it's a piece of music, how long is the piece?
 - If it is a cultural artifact or work of art, what is it and what society it reflected?
- Explain what about it appealed to you, including things about yourself that might influence why you chose it.

2. Describe the historical and artistic contexts of the artifact or work of art.

- Describe the historical context such as the time period, the place, and reasons the artist might have had for creating the artifact.
- Describe the artistic context such as the visual and aural techniques and symbols. Include reasons that explain why these techniques were used.

3. Connect to the cultural values conveyed through the artifact or work of art.

- Identify two cultural values that you believe the artist was trying to convey through the artifact or work of art.
- Relate the artist's cultural values to your own. Examine the similarities or differences that you see between your cultural values and the artist's cultural values.

4. Reflect on what you learned about how culture shapes our perspectives and impacts the decisions you make about the meaning of the cultural artifact or work of art.

- Explain how your cultural perspective shaped your response and connection with the artifact or work of

art.

5. Write in a well-organized and concise manner that adheres to the rules of grammar, usage, mechanics, and formatting.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Your submission should meet the following requirements:

- **Length:** 2–3 pages of text, in addition to a title page and reference page.
- **Written communication:** Written communication should be free of errors that detract from the overall message.
- **Formatting:** Format your submission with a title page, double spacing, and a reference page.
- **Citations:** Cite sources according to APA rules. Review [Evidence and APA](#) for more information on how to cite your sources.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assessment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies and scoring guide criteria:

- Competency 1: Analyze personal cultural bias.
 - Describe the artifact or work of art.
- Competency 3: Analyze cultural differences and similarities of people globally.
 - Connect to the cultural values conveyed through the artifact or work of art.
- Competency 4: Analyze the role of culture and artistic expression in human thought and behavior.
 - Reflect on what you learned about how culture shapes our perspectives and impacts the decisions you make about the meaning of the cultural artifact or work of art.
 - Describe the historical and artistic contexts of the artifact or work of art.
- Competency 5: Address assessment purpose in a well-organized text incorporating appropriate evidence and tone in grammatically sound sentences
 - Write in a well-organized and concise manner that adheres to the rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics.



SCORING GUIDE

Use the scoring guide to understand how your assessment will be evaluated.

[VIEW SCORING GUIDE](#) 