

Essential Question:

What does "childhood" mean? Are all children "children"?

Curriculum Questions:

What are the commonalities of childhood that transcend geographic area?

How does childhood in other areas compare to my own childhood?

What can I learn about myself from studying children of other cultures?

Rationale:

"Global" is a term frequently applied to today's society. As developing members of that global society, students must be able to deal with concepts and apply skills across a broad range of disciplines. It is no longer enough to come to an understanding, no matter how complete, of how things apply in one's own backyard. That "backyard" now spans continents and oceans. It can no longer be acceptable to focus on how an occurrence or issue affects only that portion of the world directly within reach. Decisions made and actions taken locally can have worldwide ramifications.

Young people must become conscious of the global essence of this world society in which they will soon participate, and realize the potential impact that they will have on its future. They should also begin to develop the skills that will best serve them as active members of a world community. Investigative strategies are critical tools in the construction of knowledge and the evolution of understanding, empowering their owner to move beyond reliance on neatly prepackaged information. Equally important is the ability to communicate thoughts, supported opinions and ideas in a coherent and interesting manner, using both written and spoken language.

The unit "Childhood" begins to address both the concept of global awareness and the development of research and communication skills 'necessary for successful participation in today's world. Through this unit and its assessment opportunities, students will engage in independent and group learning, develop research strategies and translate their learning into formal informational presentations as well as artistic and written interpretations. They will be exposed to the lives of children from several regions of the world, and will be encouraged, through reflection, to personalize and internalize their learning. They will know the feeling of creating something and giving it away in order to make a difference elsewhere, and will emerge from this experience with a new perspective, having taken a step outside of themselves, however briefly, to touch other children of the world.

Standards Addressed:

English Language Arts (ELA) Intermediate Level

Standard 1: Students will read, write, listen and speak for information and understanding.

Indicators:

- 1.1 - interpret, analyze and synthesize information from a variety of non-fiction sources
 - use a variety of strategies for selecting, organizing and categorizing information
 - distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information
 - relate new information to prior knowledge and experience

1.2 - produce oral and written reports

- establish an authoritative stance on a subject and provide references to establish validity and reliability of information
- organize information according to an identifiable structure - develop information with appropriate supporting material, excluding extraneous material
- use the process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading (the "writing process") to produce well-constructed informational texts
- use standard English for formal presentation of material

Standard 2: Students will read, write, listen and speak for literary response and expression.

Indicators:

- 2.2 - write stories, poems, literary essays and/or plays that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice
 - use standard English effectively

Standard 3: Students will read, write, listen and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Indicators:

- 3.2 - present (in essays, position papers and speeches) clear analysis of issues, ideas, texts and experiences supporting
 - . their positions with well-developed arguments
 - develop arguments with effective use of details and evidence that reflect a coherent set of criteria
 - use standard English, precise vocabulary and presentational strategies effectively to influence an audience

Representative Samples of Student Work

Mexico

As beautiful as the sunset,
As camouflaging as a mask,
These are all qualities of Mexico, You may ask.

As joyous as a child,
As petite as a flower, All of these things,
Are here to this hour.

As exquisite as the Sierra Madre, As fragrant as perfume,
These are all beauties, That you may assume.

As swift as a hummingbird,
As keen as a bat, There is no other country, With treasures like that.

(excerpted from an audiotape)

Life in Argentina is more than manageable for everyone, especially children. Children have few responsibilities. They may have to feed their family pets or clean their room...similar to the chores children in the United States do. The children of Argentina also have a lot of enjoyment playing sports. They play soccer all the time. It is the national sport in Argentina and is enjoyed by everyone. Another game enjoyed by Argentinean children is pato. It is a game similar to polo.

Education in Argentina is good and children learn a lot. They have ten minutes between each class to socialize with each other. The schedule of their classes is somewhat different... They go to school in shifts. One shift is in the morning and the other is in the afternoon.

The government in Argentina helps children a lot. They make laws to protect children. Some of the laws are on child labor...Overall, life in Argentina is similar to life in the United States.

INTRODUCTION

You are part of a team that has been commissioned to research, analyze and report on the lives of children in an area that is NOT a middle class, United States suburb. The focus of this study will be education, family & home conditions, leisure and economics. You will visit both the public library and our school library to gather information.

Once you have completed your research, you will write diary entries in the voice of a child from your targeted country or region. In addition, your group will be asked to present its findings at a Children's Conference. During the course of your presentation, you will identify a powerful issue of childhood in the country or region that you researched, as well as propose an action that could be taken or a potential solution for the issue. How well you present your facts and ideas will determine whether or not you receive funds to help your chosen cause. Finally, you will design, separately and collectively, pieces of a Childhood Mosaic. This will have." both a school and a community viewing and will provide the funding for the cause that is chosen from the Children's Conference.

You will be provided with materials designed to aid you in your research and the organization of your information. Additional pieces will be added as we progress through t this unit.

Enclosed, you will find:

- List of Suggested Countries / Regions Research plan
- Research Packet containing sample graphic organizers, a research log (one per team member), and a list of resources (one per team member)

Soon to come:

- Diary explanation Diary rubric

Third installment:

- Panel presentation plan
- Rubric for Children's Conference panel presentation

Last, but not least:

- Mosaic display description
- Mosaic display proposal
- Mosaic display feedback forms
- Mosaic display rubric

RESEARCH PLAN

Name	Area of Research	Potential Resources	Choice of Graphic Organizer(s)
	family & home conditions		
	education		
	economics		
	leisure		

Planned schedule of research (where and when):

DIARY

Now that you've completed your research, it's time for you to take on the persona of a child from your targeted country or region. To do this, you must combine all of the information from the members in your group and use it to help you create a life for this child.

Through a minimum of FIVE diary entries, you will allow your reader to get to know both you and your lifestyle. These entries may occur over a one month period, or they may be spread out over the past year. In your entries, you must incorporate facts about family life and home conditions, economics, education and leisure time activities. Rely on your research to guide you, but be sure to disguise all facts as part of a child's life, YOUR life.

You may want to spend some time with other members of your group to get information that you need. You should also refer back to the list of "Attributes of a Diary" that we brainstormed earlier this year. Other resources available to you are your Golden Goblet diaries, your own journals and the List of Resources written by members of your group.

As always, you will be using a rubric to guide your self and peer editing sessions.

Representative Samples of Student Work

(transcribed exactly as written)

July 6, 1996

Dear Diary,

This is the first entry into this diary. I was given this diary because my mom thought that it would be an interesting way for me to express my thoughts and feelings. I live in Buenos Aires. I live with my two brothers Miguel and Paco, my sister Maria and my parents.

I started this journal today because something very special has happened. Today the soccer team from Argentina won the World Cup. My soccer team went to the game. Everyone on my team thought that it was great. We even met the team captain Daniel Pasarella. He is my hero. When I grow I want to be just like him

July 21, 1996

Dear Diary,

Yesterday was our family reunion Everybody came, all my relatives were there. We went to a park and played all sorts of games. My favorites were football and tennis. Me and Piere, my cousin, went out on the lake in a rowboat. When we were out on the lake, we went fishing and caught dinner, five big fish. They were delicious and everyone enjoyed the fish.

March 23, 1997

Dear Diary,

I know I said that I thought that my job would only get easier, but I was wrong. My job has gotten even harder. It seems as though I am getting into trouble everyday. Today I got my pay taken away for two days, because was late for work. My pay getting taken away is really not good for my parents. I really can't believe that I was so childish as to be late for work. I forgot to tell you yesterday, that I was slapped in the mouth because I yawned. I was slapped because yawning is a sign of hunger, which is impolite to show to strangers. I am getting really tired now, so I will talk to you tomorrow.

Bye for now,
Maria