

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Purpose: This lesson will allow students to explore the meaning of stereotypes as well as the power of getting to know a person or people before making judgments. Once the lesson has been taught the principle can be applied to any area of the world being studied or in this case, Costa Rica.

Learning Objective(s): The student will

- Recognize stereotyping and its effects on people’s thinking and behavior;
- Identify general and specific characteristics of a particular group of objects.
- Review key ideas about Costa Rica.

Standards:

| National | New Mexico | Texas |
|---|---|--|
| IV. What is the relationship of the US to other Nations and to World Affairs? B. How has the US influenced other nations and how have other nations influenced American politics and society. 1. Impact of the American concepts of democracy and individual rights on the world. | Strand: Civics & Government Content Standard III: Students understand the ideals, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship and understand the content and history of the founding documents of the United States with particular emphasis on the United States and New Mexico constitutions and how governments function at local, state, tribal, and national levels. 5-8 Benchmark III-B: Explain the significance of symbols, icons, songs, traditions, and leaders of New Mexico and the United States that exemplify ideals and provide continuity and a sense of unity. | 6.16 A-B; 6.21; 8.24; 8.25; 8.30;WG.17A; WG.23 |

Materials Needed: Enough lemons for every group of 3 or 4 students to have one; copies of the Agree/Disagree worksheet for each student

Time Frame: One class period

Procedure:

1. Ask the students to brainstorm what they know or what they think they know about Central America and specifically the country of Costa Rica. Record these ideas for future reference.
2. Organize the class into groups of two or three students each.

3. On a table in the middle or front of the classroom, place the lemons. Ask students to suggest general characteristics of the lemons (yellow, citrus fruit, contain seeds, sour). As students offer characteristics, write their responses on the board.
4. Have each group select a lemon from the table. Each group should study its lemon and note its distinctive characteristics (blemishes, grower labels, and so on). Allow approximately five minutes for this step.
5. Collect all the lemons and place them back on the table. Then ask one person from each group to come to the table and pick out that group's lemon. (This usually presents no problem—the lemons have become distinct and individual to the groups.)
6. Ask for comments from the students about the process. Help students understand that the point of the activity is to show how easy it is to group things and people into categories without paying attention to individual characteristics. There is little harm in doing this with objects, but when we do this with people it is called stereotyping, and it prevents us from seeing people as individuals as well as truly getting to know and understand them.
7. Pass out the Agree/Disagree worksheet and have each student fill it out the section marked PRE to the best of their ability. After completing the worksheet, allow time for the students to read or research about Costa Rica to verify their answers to complete the section of the worksheet marked POST.
8. Debrief the activity by explaining to the students that when they marked their answers first, they were probably using previously believed ideas and possibly stereotypes to answer. The second time, they based their answers on facts and personal knowledge. Conclude the activity by asking the students the following questions:
 - What was the biggest surprise about Costa Rica?
 - What was the most interesting thing you learned about Costa Rica?
 - Would you want to visit Costa Rica? Why or why not?

Adapted from "A World of Difference," North Texas-Oklahoma Regional Office of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

AGREE or DISAGREE

Directions: Read each statement below. If you agree that the statement is true mark "Agree" in the PRE columns. If you don't think it is true mark the "Disagree" PRE columns. After completing all statements, research to find the actual answers. Mark that final answer of "Agree" or "Disagree" in the POST column. If required, be prepared to defend your final choice of answers.

| PRE | | | POST | |
|--------------|-----------------|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Agree | Disagree | Statement | Agree | Disagree |
| | | 1. The east and west borders of Costa Rica lie on a seacoast, just like the United States. | | |
| | | 2. Costa Rica means "rich coast." | | |
| | | 3. Costa Rica has the longest span of uninterrupted democracy in Latin America. | | |
| | | 4. Costa Rica is the first country in the world to constitutionally abolish its standing army. | | |
| | | The state religion in Costa Rica is Roman Catholic. | | |
| | | Tourism is one of the major parts of the economy of Costa Rica. | | |
| | | Costa Rica has one of the highest literacy rates in Latin America. | | |
| | | 5. The Costa Rican constitution guarantees universal public education. | | |
| | | 9. Citizens of Costa Rica are required to vote by the country's constitution. | | |
| | | 10. Earthquakes, hurricanes, and active volcanoes are the most prevalent natural disasters facing Costa Rica. | | |

KEY: AGREE or DISAGREE

ALL STATEMENTS ARE TRUE.

| Statement | Agree | Validation |
|--|--------------|---|
| 1. The east and west borders of Costa Rica lie on a seacoast, just like the United States. | X | The east coast of Costa Rica lies on the Caribbean Sea and the west on the Pacific Ocean. |
| 2. Costa Rica means "rich coast." | X | This is the translation of Costa Rica, referring to the importance of both to the economy |
| 3. Costa Rica has the longest span of uninterrupted democracy in Latin America. | X | Costa Rica has strived to have a democratic government since they became independent in 1838. The last fifty-nine years have been ones of uninterrupted democracy. |
| 4. Costa Rica is the first country in the world to constitutionally abolish its standing army. | X | Costa Rica adopted this in the Constitution of 1949. They do have police forces for internal security. |
| 5. The state religion in Costa Rica is Roman Catholic. | X | This is the religion provided for in the Constitution-over 76% of the population are Roman Catholic. Title VI-Article 75 proclaims that the Roman Catholic Church is the state religion. |
| 6. Tourism is one of the major parts of the economy of Costa Rica. | X | While the economy relies on agriculture a great deal, Costa Rica has become one of the leading tourist destinations in the western hemisphere. |
| 7. Costa Rica has one of the highest literacy rates in Latin America. | X | The literacy rate of Costa Rica is 96% and is one of the highest in Latin America according to the CIA Fact Book. |
| 8. The Costa Rican constitution guarantees universal public education. | X | Universal public education is guaranteed in Title VII, Articles 77 and 78 of the Costa Rican constitution. |
| 9. Citizens of Costa Rica are required to vote by the country's constitution. | X | Chapter II, Article 93 makes voting a "primary and compulsory civic function." |
| 9. Earthquakes, hurricanes, and active volcanoes are the most prevalent natural disasters facing Costa Rica. | X | According to CIA Fact Book, earthquakes and hurricanes have been natural disasters in the area in recent years. Additionally, there are four volcanoes, two of which are active. The last eruption occurred in 1963-65. |