

# PRE-LESSON

## #3 – Identity and Tradition

This fall's tour pre-lesson explores **Identity in Art and Culture** through a series of short 10-minute “**bell-ringer**” activities.

You can do one activity each day the week before your UMFA/NMHU tour or do them all at one time!

**UMFA**  
UTAH MUSEUM OF  
**FINE ARTS**



**NATURAL HISTORY**  
MUSEUM OF UTAH  
Rio Tinto Center | University of Utah

# What is Tradition?

With a partner, talk about these questions:

- What does **tradition** mean?
- Do you have any traditions in your culture or family? Why do you think they are special?
- How do these traditions connect you to other people?

Share some of these traditions with the whole class and notice if other people have different traditions.

By sharing your traditions with others, you can express yourself and share your perspective. By learning about other people's traditions, you can explore the experiences of others. People practice old and new cultural traditions.

With a partner, talk about these questions:

- Why might someone continue, change, or reject traditions?
- Throughout history, some groups of people have forced other people to stop practicing their traditions. How would you feel if someone did this to you? Would you keep sharing your traditions anyways? This is a form of **resistance**.

Let's take a look at a Maya tradition!

# Huipil Weaving

Describe the patterns and colors you see. What do the patterns remind you of?

Weaving is an example of Maya tradition. Huipil designs are always changing. The women who weave them create their own designs, but also include some traditional elements.



*Huipil* – Chiapas, Mexico





For living Maya communities, some traditions are **millennial traditions**—meaning they have been practiced for thousands of years—and are an important part of community and family interactions. Some traditions are **ancestral traditions**, meaning that they honor or communicate with ancestors.

Do you think huipil weaving is an example of a millennial or ancestral tradition?



<http://remezcla.com/features/culture/maya-womxn-in-la/>

When you visit the museum, you will see examples of both kinds of traditions. Some examples are the **millennial** tradition of **daykeeper** ceremonies and **ancestral** traditions such as **god pots**, which are ancestral offerings.



Why do you think it is important to continue practicing traditions like these?

Let's read a real story to explore the importance of practicing traditions.



J. Christenson, Allen "Who Shall be Our Sustainer?" *Expedition Magazine* 51.1 (2009): n. pag. *Expedition Magazine*. Penn Museum, 2009 Web. 01 Nov 2018 <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=8445>

Photo credit: Danita Delimont <https://www.diomedia.com/stock-photo-north-america-mexico-chiapas-naha-selva-lacandona-the-last-lacandon-mayan-shaman-image4482874.html>



*Photo Credit: Yvette Montoya*

<https://fierce.wearemitu.com/identities/las-fotos-project-exhibition-guatemalan-teens-document-maya-women-culture-los-angeles/>

“I had felt connected to being Guatemalan, but I was not really in touch with being Maya. I grew up surrounded by stories of Guatemala and pictures of my mom in her Corte and huipil on her wedding day, but my grandma never really mentioned the richness of Maya culture or history to me. I realized I had been so oblivious to all the struggles that my people have gone through. Today I feel proud of my indigenous heritage.” **Mayán Alvarado-Goldberg** is a 16-year-old Guatemalan-Jewish girl who lives in Los Angeles.

# WRAP UP!

After our discussion today, why do you think it might be important to continue practicing traditions?

How does sharing traditions let us express our individual and cultural identities?

Write a short paragraph about one of your traditions and one of your classmate's traditions. Talk about the similarities and differences, and why both are important.

Keep thinking about traditions until you come visit the museums! We look forward to seeing you!

**Thank you to our generous sponsors!**

