

PRE-LESSON

#2 – Identity and Tradition

This 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!



**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 someone might 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 tradition from a Native Nation!

Basket Weaving

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

Weaving is an example of Native American tradition. This basket is made by Mary Holiday Black, a Navajo weaver. Modern Navajo weavers have created a new type of baskets that include pictures to help tell a story. The women who weave them create their own designs used to tell stories, portray landscapes, and represent Navajo holy people.



Coiled story basket, 2007
Mary Holiday Black, Navajo
Sumac, horsehair
Collectors Council Purchase | UMNH ET454

For living Native American communities, some traditions are **millennial traditions**, meaning they have been practiced for generations, and are an important part of community and family interactions.

Discuss with a partner: What might be some other examples of millennial traditions? Does your family practice any millennial traditions?



Morning to Night Basket Series,
1999
Joann Johnson, Navajo
Sumac, dyes
Twin Rocks Trading Post Navajo
Basket Collection | ET513.D19,
ET513.D18, ET513.D21

When you visit the museum you will see examples of **millennial traditions**.

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.



1. Twined winnowing tray, date unknown.
Paiute, artist unknown
Willow
Collection Unknown | ET24333.2

2. Plains-style quilled moccasins, 1985
Linda Harrleson, Goshute/Shoshone
Hide. Glass beads, quills
Tony Taylor Collection | ET300.224





“At the Urban Indian Center, we provide a safe and positive place for urban youth who are at risk of losing contact with Native traditions and sacred experiences. By providing opportunities for three generations to interact and for youth to learn from elders we build stronger families. We promote school success and improved self – and cultural – identity, pride in heritage, and increased leadership skills. There is no other organization that brings together Urban and Tribal Native populations the way we do, to promote increased cultural understanding.” Eruera “Ed” Napia; Ngapuhi Tribe, Tai Tokerau, Aotearoa- New Zealand.

WRAP UP!

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

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!

