



Objective

Students will compare their education opportunities with their peers in developing countries and analyze the effect of living without these opportunities. Students will learn the cultural differences that have contributed to these differences and express their opinions and thoughts on the subject.

Academic Expectations Fulfilled

1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.11, 1.12, 1.16, 2.14, 2.16, 2.17, 2.19, 2.20, 3.6, 3.7, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

Introduction: Journal Entry

Write the following topics on the board and ask students to respond to two of the topics in a journal entry. Allow 5-10 minutes for writing, then ask for volunteers to share their responses.

- Think about what your gender automatically means in the United States. What are some of our society's expectations for your gender?
 - What kinds of jobs do people expect you to fill, if any?
 - What expectations do you have of yourself?
- Do you think you will marry?
 - Do people (your family, community, society) expect you to marry at or by a certain age?
 - Will your parents or other family members help you choose your spouse? Why and how?
- Do you feel that your gender will prohibit or enable you to do certain things throughout your life? How?
- Do you think people all over the world would answer the same to these gender expectation questions? How does culture affect our daily lives? Our future?

Activities one and two are part of the online PBS Frontline World Series. It has been adapted for this Books as Bridges lesson plan. For more information or to see the full lesson guide, please visit http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/educators/geography_kyrgyzstan.html.

Activity 1: Women in Kyrgyzstan

Use the introductory journal entry to begin discussion on the topic of bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan. Begin by asking the students for some volunteer responses on the marriage topic. Discuss marriage in the US, what it means and how it occurs. Ask students what factors are important when choosing a spouse. How important is love when choosing the person to marry? In the discussion, point out that culture plays a key role in how families are formed and in the roles that are played by men and women.

Discuss how views and perspectives in different countries heavily depend upon culture. Before bringing up bride kidnapping, locate Kyrgyzstan on a map and use the following facts to provide background information on the country. For more facts and statistics, please visit: <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/kyrgyzstan/facts.html>.



Activity 1: Women in Kyrgyzstan (cont.)

- Kyrgyzstan is a multiethnic state with a population of 4,892,808. It is home to more than 90 nationalities. The nation is 65 percent ethnic Kyrgyz, 18 percent Russian, 13 percent Uzbek, 2.5 percent Ukrainian, 2.4 percent German and 11.8 percent of other national origin.
- As of 2002, 30 percent of Kyrgyz live in urban areas, and 65 percent live in rural areas.
- The yurt was the traditional movable, tent-like home of the nomadic Kyrgyz, and it is still used today as the herding economy continues in the country. The yurt is a strong symbol of national identity -- the design of Kyrgyzstan's flag is based on the structure's circular smoke opening.
- A distinctive part of the Kyrgyz national costume is the kalpak, a tall, embroidered felt hat.
- The Kyrgyz economy has had a difficult time transitioning out of communism. Fifty-five percent of Kyrgyzstan's population lives below the poverty line. The average annual income in Kyrgyzstan is \$280.
- The Kyrgyz Republic is located in Central Asia. Commonly referred to as Kyrgyzstan, it is one of the former Soviet states in the region that gained independence in 1991, along with Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- The smallest "Stan" -- it's slightly smaller than South Dakota -- Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked nation of 79,400 square miles (198,500 sq km), bordered by China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Use the video provided by PBS to "invite your students to a Kyrgyz wedding." Click on the "watch video" link here:
<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/kyrgyzstan/>.

PBS also provides a transcript of the documentary, which can be found at: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/about/episodes/303_transcript.html. Scroll down to "Kyrgyzstan: The Kidnapped Bride."

Topics for discussion after watching the video (Provided by <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/kyrgyzstan/>):

- According to estimates, up to a third of all ethnic Kyrgyz women in Kyrgyzstan may have been wedded in nonconsensual bride kidnappings.
- What does the practice of bride kidnapping tell us about Kyrgyzstan culture? What do U.S. courtship and wedding traditions tell the world about American culture? What are the similarities and differences?
- What power do culture and tradition have in the persistence of bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan? What geographic, social and economic conditions influence this practice? How might globalization and increased contact with other culture groups impact the bride kidnapping ritual? Is it likely that this tradition will continue in the next generation? Why or why not?
- How did various women shown in the video respond to the practice of bride kidnapping? Be sure to discuss the behaviors of the potential brides, the mothers of the potential brides and the women in the potential groom's family. Why did some women support and others reject the practice of bride kidnapping? Do kidnapped brides in Kyrgyzstan who accept the wedding scarf truly consent to the marriage? Why or why not?
- What role does peer pressure play in the tradition of bride kidnapping, for both the bride and groom? How do family wants and needs affect decisions that individuals make? What happens to the kidnapped brides who refuse to go along with the wedding? Closer to home, how does peer pressure influence the decisions that students make in their lives?



Activity 1: Women in Kyrgyzstan (cont.)

- What is the impact of bride kidnapping on the brides themselves? How is the bride's identity and future determined by the experience of being kidnapped? How might students respond in a stressful situation that involves a decision with lifelong consequences?
- Should bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan be considered a human rights violation or a complex cultural tradition that Westerners simply don't understand?
- *PBS offers a "React" conversation online at <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/react/kyrgyzstan/react.html>. To help stimulate conversation, share some of the quotes from this discussion.*

Ask your pen-pals!

Write a letter to your pen-pals and ask about their marriage/courtship customs. Explain some common customs in the United States, and think about what traditions your family practices relative to dating and marriage. Does religion play a significant role? What about tradition? Are there some practices/customs that honor the elder people in your family?

Alternative:

Research dating and marriage customs in your partner country. Write a letter to your pen-pal to ask if they will follow these customs. In your letter, explain US customs. Try to find some similarities between the two.

Activity 2: Comparing the Role of Women

This lesson's information is provided by the Public Broadcasting System's website and has been adapted to fit this Books as Bridges lesson. For more information, please view the PBS Frontline World Series website: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/educators/culture_kenya.html.

To begin this activity, poll the class to learn which household responsibilities are completed by males versus females. Pass out the handout on page 5 and ask the students to think about how the responsibilities are divided in their homes. Then, ask who usually handles specific tasks. For example, "Raise your hand if a male takes out the trash in your home. Raise your hand if a female takes out the trash. Finally, raise your hand if both males and share the task of taking out the trash in your home." As the students tally the class responses on their handout, create a simple chart on the board.

Suggested tasks to document:

Cooking	Earning Money	Repairing	Caring for Children	Playing Sports
Laundry	Cleaning	Yard Work	Managing Money	

Ask, "What conclusions can we draw from this?" Are there roles that are typically filled by females in the US? Are there roles that are typically filled by males? Do you think people in all parts of our country would answer the same? Do you think it has always been this way? Discuss how the role of women has changed in the United States, including the ability of women to work outside the home, participate in politics, acquire an education, have access to equal legal protection and healthcare, and choose their own clothing and styles.

Questions for discussion:

How do equal rights and access to equal education affect a nation?

Do you think our country would look the same today if rights for women had not changed in the past?

How has the change in women's rights affected our culture?



Activity 2: Comparing the Role of Women (cont.)

Explain that many women in the world still do not have the rights that women in the United States enjoy. Cultural and regional differences create many unique laws and lifestyles all over the world. Discuss how religion often affects law-making and lifestyle as well. For example, in the US, the first amendment guarantees the right for the people to practice any religion of their choice, but forbids the government to advance the interest of any one church or faith.

How does culture affect law-making?

*Discuss these laws and ask the students to guess why they exist. Remember that some laws may not be as strictly enforced as they once were, but are an important part of culture nonetheless. Please note that "Seuling, 1988" refers to the book, *It Is Illegal to Quack Like a Duck & Other Freaky Laws*, by Barbara Seuling.*

In Kiluken, Liberia, it is illegal to carry a white rooster while passing through town. (Seuling, 1988)

*According to the article, *A Continent without Borders: Africa's Influence on African American Artists*, by Nnamdi Elleh, white roosters, bulls, goats, and sometimes white distilled spirit kola nuts are among the ingredients of sacrifice to gods, beings, and deities in the spirit world. (<http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/5aa/5aa207c.htm>)*

In some Bantu tribes of West Africa, a marriage is legalized by payment of cattle to the bride's father. If the marriage ends in divorce, the cattle must be returned. (Seuling, 1988)

How does this tradition compare to dowries in American history? Why would it be important for a man to give something to the bride's family? In many African communities (and other rural areas around the world), the women in a home do a great deal of work for the family. Perhaps it is the loss of the female's contributions in a home that require the groom to trade goods for her.

In many parts of India, communities hold large celebrations for people marrying animals. (Seuling, 1988)

While it is believed that no country legally allows the marrying of animals to humans, there are many tribes and communities that practice these marriage to ward off omens and other negative effects. In one particular case, a nine-year-old Indian girl married a dog. The tribe elders said she would be free to marry a man later in life without having to divorce the dog. (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3004930.stm)

Among the Ifugao people of Luzon, in the Philippines, it is against the law for outsiders to pass through a rice field while it is being harvested. (Seuling, 1988)

The Ifugao people created great rice terraces that are a very popular tourist attraction in the northern region of the Philippines. Because of the tourist popularity, the Ifugao people are forced to make laws to protect the quality of the rice.

It was a serious crime in ancient Athens for a person to own an olive tree. The penalty for cutting down an olive tree was death. (Seuling, 1988)

In ancient Athens, olive trees were considered sacred and the fruit belonged to the state. (Seuling, 1988)

If a man in China wears a green hat, it means his wife is cheating on him. (New York Times,

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/30/business/business-travel-beware-of-green-hats-in-china-and-other-cross-cultural-faux-pas.html?pagewanted=1>)

The phrase "wearing a green hat" in Chinese sounds like the word for "cuckold," so a green hat on a Chinese man is said to mean that his wife is cheating on him. (<http://www.scrippsnews.com/node/26365>) (A cuckold is a man whose wife is cheating on him.)



Activity 2: Comparing the Role of Women (cont.)

In Puritan New England, children were not allowed to play on Sunday. Swings were chained and barred, and only books with religious themes could be read.

Discuss how religion strongly affected lives in the United States in the colonial times. In addition to this law, many more were part of the everyday Puritan life.

Continue this activity by discussing how religion and traditions continue to rule in lives of people around the world. Invite your students to spend some time in Nigeria, a country populated by mainly Muslims in the north and Christians in the south. Play the PBS Frontline video on this webpage: <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/kenya/thestory.html> (click "Watch Video")

Use the handout on page 8 for video comprehension during or after the viewing.

1. Traditionally, who was allowed to run in Kenya? *Men only, until recently.*

Why do you think this was the case? Historically, Kenyan women were responsible for the many household tasks. Therefore, their time was considered more valuable doing those tasks, rather than pursuing talents like running.

2. Why did Lornah start her running camp? *Lornah started her ladies' camp to empower women and inspire courage, both in running and in their daily lives. She hoped not only to impact their running future, but to teach them confidence as well.*
3. What are the traditional roles for women in Kenya? *As Lornah explains, women are traditionally responsible for cleaning, farming, lunches (caring for children), laundry, cooking, and raising the farm animals.*

Do you think it's easy for women in Kenya to attend Lornah's camp? Do you think their families, friends, and communities are supportive? Why or why not? As the narrator explains, Nancy's husband is of rare character. As in Lornah's experience, most thought she was crazy for running and breaking traditions. Families and communities that are rich in tradition or are not accepting of change would not be supportive of women leaving their families to join a running camp.

4. Why do Nancy and Ruth attend Lornah's camp? *Nancy runs to have her own life and be less dependent upon her husband. Ruth runs to gain her "own properties," and become less of a burden on her parents. Both women run for independence and to gain a sense of self-worth.*

Do you think all of the runners at the camp attend for similar reasons? Because they are breaking such strong traditions, it is probable that many of the women are running for the same reasons.

5. How does Lornah believe that the lives of runners in her camp are changed? *By giving the women runners in her camp the courage to be successful, Lornah believes she shows the women their potential to change their futures. By inspiring these women, Lornah hopes that inspiration will spread the lives of many Kenyan women will be changed for the better.*

Do you think the runners' lives are positively impacted? How? (Answers will vary)

Activity 3: Why?

The following activity on gender awareness is based on information provided by Media Awareness Network. It has been adapted to fit this curriculum. For more information or to view the entire lesson, please visit their website at <http://www.media-awareness.ca>. Copyright 2008 Media Awareness Network. All rights reserved.

Begin this activity by asking your students why they believe it is a struggle for women in Kenya to gain independence. Discuss the effect of stereotypes, then begin this activity.



Activity 3: Why? (cont.)

Divide the board into two parts, one labeled “Be a man!” and the other, “Act ladylike.” Ask the males in your class to explain what it means to “be a man.” Record their answers as accurately as possible, using the words and phrases they use. After several responses, ask the females in the class for their opinion on what “Be a man!” means. Do the same for what it means to “act ladylike,” only ask the females first, followed by the males.

Once the answers have been recorded, explain that each are “gender roles.” Ask the class why they have these perceptions and from where these roles are learned. Consider people in entertainment, sports, media, etc. Instead of “movies,” ask students to site specific titles.

Ask students if they strive to fit into these gender roles. If so, why? How are these stereotypes enforced? What sort of “put-downs” are used when a male/female doesn’t fit inside the gender box?

Questions for discussion:

Do you think people in other cultures view these stereotypes and actions as weird or unacceptable?

How do these roles fit into our culture?

What might the women runners in Kenya think of these stereotypes? What might their husbands think? What might the men in Kyrgyzstan think? The women in Kyrgyzstan think?

Think back to the different laws discussed before the Kenya video. Are any based on stereotypes?

What can you do to end some of the negative stereotypes associated with gender?

Activity 4: Learn From Your Pen-Pals

Ask the students what they can learn about gender in your partner country through writing to their pen-pals. Be mindful to respect culture when selecting appropriate questions.

Additional Resources:

The United Nations Population Fund: <http://www.unfpa.org/gender>

UNICEF: <http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation>

[http://www.media-](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/body_image/gndr_stereo_body_image.cfm)

[awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/body_image/gndr_stereo_body_image.cfm](http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/body_image/gndr_stereo_body_image.cfm)

It Is Illegal to Quack Like a Duck & Other Freaky Laws, by Barbara Seuling. E.P. Dutton, New York, NY. 1988.



Name: _____

Video: A Wedding in Kyrgyzstan

Take notes on the role men and women play in the Kyrgyzstan wedding.

The Role of Men in a Kyrgyzstan Wedding

The Role of Women in a Kyrgyzstan Wedding

Answer the following questions either on the back of this sheet or on a separate piece of paper.

1. Why is a bride important for the Kyrgyz man? Why is a husband important for the Kyrgyz woman?
2. What are the ladies' reactions in the beginning? Do they change later? Do you think this happens every time?
3. Think about the two brides who did not agree to their weddings, then think of Fatimah's mother's response. Also consider the differences in the viewpoints of people who live in the city and those who live in the mountains. What are the laws regarding bride kidnapping? Do you think the wedding culture in Kyrgyzstan is changing? Why or why not?
4. What are some of the reasons women accept their forced marriage?
5. The couple at the end of the video appear happy. Do you think this means that the kidnapping should be acceptable? Why or why not?

For more information, please visit <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/kyrgyzstan/>.



Name: _____

Worksheet: Comparing the Roles of Men and Women

Think about the following tasks in your own home and who completes them. For each task that a male in your home usually does, place an X under the “Male” column. Do the same for tasks usually completed by females. For tasks which are completed by both men and women in your home, place an X under the “Both” column. Use the last two rows to add two of your own household tasks, then check the “male,” “female,” or “both” column.

Family Member Who Completes Tasks

	Male	Female	Both
Cooking			
Laundry			
Earning Money			
Managing Money			
Cleaning			
Household Repairs			
Yard Work			
Caring for Children			
Grocery Shopping			
Sports			

What conclusions about gender roles in the US/Kentucky can you draw from this activity?

Do you think these roles have always been the same? What do you know about US history that proves that these roles have/have not always been the same? Use the back of this sheet for more space to answer.



Name: _____

Video: Comparing the Roles of Men and Women in Kenya and the United States

1. Traditionally, who was allowed to run in Kenya?

Why do you think this was the case?



2. Why did Lornah start her running camp?

3. What are the traditional roles for women in Kenya?

Do you think it's easy for women in Kenya to attend Lornah's camp? Do you think their families, friends, and communities are supportive? Why or why not?

4. Why do Nancy and Ruth attend Lornah's camp?

Do you think all of the runners at the camp attend for similar reasons?

5. How does Lornah believe that the lives of runners in her camp are changed?

Do you think the runners' lives are positively impacted? How?