

Guide and Reference

TEACHER DISCUSSION GUIDE AND REFERENCE

Step 1: Engage

Ask students to define some specific ways the ethos (i.e.: cultural "spirit," "character," or "tone") of a people, civilization, or system might be revealed.

Some possible responses include:

- prevailing behavioral patterns;
- rituals;
- design of government - strict control or individual freedom;
- nature of leadership;
- class structure or lack thereof;
- attitude toward education;
- fashions;
- concept of luxury;
- patterns in use of leisure time;
- interior design;
- technology;
- architecture, both design and materials used in construction;
- food; what is most valued; nature of indigenous fine and performing arts and crafts;
- materials used in arts and crafts;
- themes and forms of literature.

What forces, in your perception, help shape and sustain cultural attitudes, habits, values, institutional designs, concepts of morality, roles, and rituals?

Some possible responses include:

- ethnic bonds;
- religion;
- school;
- laws;
- nature of court system;
- formal documents such as a constitution;
- war;
- family outlook and practices;
- visual art;
- the oral tradition of storytelling;
- myths;
- legends;
- dance;
- enduring works of literature

Ask students to draw from their knowledge of history to identify examples of how such fusion changed or reshaped the "ethos" of a culture.

Some possible responses include:

- strong infusion of Greek culture into Roman culture;
- fusion of Christianity/Paganism;
- fusion of Christian/Anglo-Saxon culture;
- impact of the Crusades;
- French influence in England after the Battle of Hastings, 1066 A.D.; American culture (E Pluribus Unum)

Step 2: Build Knowledge

Ask students to give examples of specific cultural realignments brought about through the infusion of a conflicting ideology or the cultural impact of conquering or being conquered.

Some possible answers, depending on grade level and previous work in ancient Greek sources, include:

- the incredible range and intellectual richness of Greek philosophical thought recorded in writing;
- the compelling narratives of Greek myths;
- the aesthetic beauty of the architecture, vases, coins, and sculpture;
- the draw of formal patterns and imaginative and universal themes of Ancient Greek literature;
- the haunting themes and forms of the three great Tragedians;
- Homer's written narratives culled from oral tradition that read like history and speak to man's desire to learn about the past.

As "research scholars," students will be searching for specific evidence of ancient Greek influence on such areas of modern life as:

- concepts of government and law;
- postures on such issues as morality, metaphysics, behavioral models, and social patterns;
- theories of logic, science, medicine, math, education;
- the nature and value of sports; patterns of rhetoric, of the heroic and the well-lived life;
- inspirational designs in architecture and the arts, a rich heritage of formal literature;
- music theory and musical instruments;
- inspiration for dance;
- and the origin and nature of the compelling narratives and provocative images of myths and legends threaded throughout all genres of modern arts expression.

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