
Finding a Common Thread: How Young People Spend Free Time Around the World

Objective:

You will be able to...

- Share your favorite way(s) to spend free time, and what these activities mean to you and your community.
- Compare and contrast between how you spend free time and how other young people in different countries spend free time.
- Evaluate how geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic contexts impact the way young people spend free time.
- Identify cross-cultural connections between yourselves and young people around the world through shared interests and activities.

Warm-up:

1. Find your current location on a map of the world and place a marker there. Write down your answers to the following questions:

- a. How would you describe where you're from to someone who has never been there?

- b. What kinds of activities do you like to do for fun? Why?

2. Now, place a marker on each of the following locations: Brazil, Tibet, California, and Syria. Fill out the following table:

1. Are these places far away from where you currently are?	
2. What kinds of activities do you think the people who live in these places do for fun?	
3. Think about the children and young people in these places. What do you think you might have in common with them? What questions would you want to ask them?	

Background:

The way that young people around the globe spend their free time often crosses geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic divides. Shared activities also form a bond among people in their local communities, and can connect them with others who have similar interests around the world.

This lesson plan will help you form those global connections by exploring news stories about what young people do for fun in four different countries.

Introducing the Reporting:

Resource 1: “How Schools in Brazil Are Teaching Kids to Eat Their Vegetables” (Spending time outside)

Look at the first image in the document “Photos: How Young People Spend Free Time Around the World,” which is from a news article by Rhitu Chatterjee’s for *NPR*. Then, read the excerpt from Chatterjee’s article.

After reading, write down your answers to the following questions **on a separate sheet of paper**.

1. How do you spend time outside?
2. Can you connect with the students working on this garden? Are there any gardens in your community or does any member of your family have a garden?
3. Has there ever been a time where you thought you wouldn’t like something, like a vegetable or fruit, and then when you tried it, you found out it was something you enjoyed?

Resource 2: “Tibet Is Going Crazy for Hoops” (Playing a sport)

Look at the second image in the document “Photos: How Young People Spend Free Time Around the World,” which is from a news article by Louie Lazar for *The Atlantic*. Then, read the excerpt from Lazar’s story.

After reading, write down your answers to the following questions **on a separate sheet of paper**.

1. What kind of sports do people play in your community? Which ones are team sports, and which are individual sports?
2. How do you think people in your community benefit from sports? How are people benefiting from basketball in Tibet?
3. Think about the role of women in Tibet and Tibetan sports. How do you think the role of women in your neighborhood sports culture compares?

Resource 3: “Ballet and Bullets: Dancing Out of the Favela” (Practicing art)

Look at the third image in the document “Photos: How Young People Spend Free Time Around the World,” which is from a news article by Frederick Barnas and Rayan Hindi’s story for *VICE*. Then, read an excerpt of the article.

After reading, write down your answers to the following questions **on a separate sheet of paper**.

1. Is dancing important in your group of friends, neighborhood, and/or community? When and where do people dance? How do they dance?

2. Dancing is a form of art, as well as a sport. What is your favorite form of art, and what have you learned by practicing it?
3. What do you have in common with the ballerinas in the Brazilian favela? How might your circumstances/experiences be different?

Resource 4: “Visiting Day” (Family time)

Look at the fourth image in the document “Photos: How Young People Spend Free Time Around the World,” which is from a news article by Jaime Joyce for *Time for Kids*. Then, read an excerpt from Joyce’s story.

After reading, write down your answers to the following questions **on a separate sheet of paper**.

1. Have you ever had to travel for a long time to go see your family? What kind of transportation did you take to get there?
2. Have you ever had to spend time away from the people who usually take care of you?
3. How do you think children feel when they visit their family members in jail or prison? How can you connect with them?

Resource 5: “In Syria, All Girls Want Is Safety and School” (Studying)

Look at the fifth image in the document “Photos: How Young People Spend Free Time Around the World,” which is from a news article by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon for *PRI's The World*. Then, read an excerpt of the article by Tzemach Lemmon.

After reading, write down your answers to the following questions **on a separate sheet of paper**.

1. Have you ever been unable to go to school? How did it make you feel? How do you think you would feel if you didn't have the option to go to school for months or years at a time?
2. According to the story, why is it sometimes harder for young women and girls to go to school than it is for young men and boys?
3. How do you think young people might feel when they are caught in the middle of a war? How might their lives be affected?

Closing Reflection:

Write down your answers to the following questions **on a separate sheet of paper**.

-
1. What similarities did you find between the way you spend free time and the way young people from around the world spend their free time?
 2. What new information did you learn about challenges young people are facing in other countries? How are they navigating these challenges?
 3. Using details from the stories you explored, what connections can you make between your life and the lives of young people from around the world?