

“What Culture Means To Me” Essay Assignment:  
Mr. Asper  
ESL Tutorial/ESL English

***Culture* is defined as: 1. The ways of living built by a human group and transmitted to succeeding generations 2. Development or improvement of the mind, morals, etc. People have different ideas and definitions of the word culture. What I’m interested in for this assignment is, what is your definition of culture? What does culture mean to you?**

Write an essay about “What Culture means to me.” Some people decided that culture is about family, respect, cultural traditions like dancing, cultural celebrations like special holidays, language, religion, and many other possibilities. Think of a main idea like: “To me, culture is religion...” or something else that fits you better.

Please remember to include the three main parts of an essay (INTRODUCTION, BODY, CONCLUSION) and paragraphs (INDENT!) that are at least 4-5 sentences long.

The length of your paper should be one page typed. A word count for this paper would be to aim for around **500 words**. It is okay to go a little over or under, for example, 450 words, or 550 words.

Before you turn your paper in to Mr. Asper, you need to revise it carefully one time yourself. After I receive your paper I will correct your grammar, give you suggestions, and then you will do a final revision of your paper again and turn it in. Your final draft that you turn in for a grade will have a clean revision that you completed yourself, on top of a marked copy that we worked on together.

As your new ESL teacher it is important for me to get familiar with your writing strengths and weaknesses. For many of you, this essay will count toward your grade in both ESL Tutorial and also ESL English. So please do your very best job.

Here is how an essay in my class works:

**INDENT PARAGRAPHS! HAVE PARAGRAPHS!!**

size **12**

**Times New Roman** font

**single spaced**

one space after a period

**word count** = 500 words

YOUR NAME  
TEACHER NAME  
SUBJECT  
DATE

<<<<Your essay needs a **heading** written in the left margin

### What Culture Means to Me Essay

Paragraph 1: **Introduction** = Introduce your topic:

You are not writing about culture as a generic term. You are creating your own definition of culture. This means you will need to say: I am an American, or I am a Filipino, or I am Japanese... and then go on to tell us a little bit about your culture in your introduction. Your introduction does not have to be very long, so state what your culture is, where does it come from (including anything like countries, cities, states, or provinces), and then just move on to your thesis statement.

The word essay comes from Latin and refers to creating an argument. This is why essays need to have a thesis statement. A thesis statement is the sentence where you say what your paper will be about. For example:

#### **Thesis Statements:**

Culture is all about family. It is a family's **belief systems**, the **cultural traditions** that are celebrated, and the special **holidays and events** that occur in the year.

>>>**This person will write three body paragraphs. One about the belief systems they associate with their culture, another about cultural traditions they enjoy, and the last paragraph about special times of the year in their culture.**

Another example:

My culture is all about respect. I must be kind to others and **respect** my elders. I have to **practice faith** and be active in my church. I also need to **respect my family** and help them everyday.

>>>**This person will write three body paragraphs. One about practicing respect for others, especially elders, another about religious values, and the last paragraph about respect in the family as demonstrated by helping in the home.**

Paragraphs 2, 3, 4

These are your body paragraphs. You will want these paragraphs to be longer than your introduction and conclusion. This is where you get the writing of your essay done.

#### Paragraph 5: **Conclusion**

What makes a good conclusion? A conclusion answers the **SO WHAT?** question of your essay. So what? Why did I just read this? What is it you are trying to say? Don't just summarize the exact same things you just said in your essay. You have just written three really good paragraphs explaining three important aspects of your culture. Your conclusion should tie these all together. These three aspects of respect represent culture to me because... These three aspects of family represent culture to me because... A conclusion is a nice ending that explains where your ideas have been going in this essay.

Okay let me try...

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ESL Tutorial/ESL English  
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### What Culture Means to Me Essay

My culture comes from where I am from and where I was raised. I am an American. I was born and raised in Alaska. My ethnic background is German, English, and Scottish. Culture is all about family. It is a family's belief systems, the cultural traditions that are celebrated, and the special holidays and events that occur in the year.

My parents raised me with a lot of beliefs that have had an effect on who I am today. These are beliefs that don't just belong to my culture, but they come straight from the values of my family. I believe that women are more intelligent than men because my mother is a strong woman and my father is a humble man. I have been raised to be non violent and to practice peace, my family was never much in favor of the military. I was raised to believe that through hard work I could become successful and have a good life. I strive to do this every day and to be good at my life and my jobs. My family is a little bit religious. I don't really have a strong concept of God, however, I know that it is important to follow the golden rule and to treat other with dignity and respect. I believe that if you are a good person to others you will be rewarded for it in many intangible ways.

There are a lot of cultural traditions that my family has. Some are from my ethnic and cultural background and some are from the place where I was raised. I raise my son to have manners and to be well behaved. I raise him to know that hard work is important and that he is expected to put his best effort into things. He has to be clean. He has to be nice to others and to try and not be angry or have temper tantrums. I can get away with being a strict parent to him because he also knows that I love him more than anyone else. I go salmon fishing every summer with a subsistence fishing gillnet. I gather blueberries. I learned about exploring Alaska: boating, kayaking, rafting, and viewing wildlife. I know how to take care of animals. I have to stack the firewood and help out as much as I can around the house because my parents are older and it is hard work.

Holidays are when my family gathers and has a good time together. We gather every summer in Haines so that all the cousins can grow up together. Birthdays were always important events while growing up. My mom was excited to celebrate every holiday. Trick or treating on Halloween, hiding baskets on Easter, passing out cards to classmates on Valentine's Day, wearing green on St. Patrick's day, and of course loads of presents under the tree on Christmas morning. My parents always made holidays a big deal so now my son also gets to be excited for them every year.

My culture makes me a person that celebrates life. My family has a lot of good friends and we are usually a good part of the community. We take care of each other and try to treat others with respect. We like to go outdoors and have adventures. My belief systems, cultural traditions, and special events have made me a happy person who is fun to be around and who can have a positive impact on others. **581 words!**