

Activity 1: Invention

In “The All-American Slurp,” the Lin and Gleason families face a similar problem—how to master the table etiquette of an unfamiliar culture. Whenever you join a new community—by going down the street to a new school or across the world to a new country—you are likely to meet unfamiliar traditions, rules, and customs. What traditions set your school apart? How could you help new students adjust to your school’s rules and customs?

Plan a guide to your school for new students. First decide how you’d like to organize the guide, such as chronologically, beginning with the first day of school, or by category. Think of categories you can include, such as Classroom Rules, Common Areas, Cafeteria Etiquette, Clubs and Sports, Special Events. Think about things that were new to you when you arrived, or that are specific to your community, such as

- dress codes
- special occasions
- how the cafeteria works
- sports, clubs, or other activities or traditions

Add helpful or humorous illustrations to your guide.

Activity 2: Investigation

Three of the main scenes in “The All-American Slurp” center on food and culture: at the Gleasons’ house, the Lins’ house, and at the Lakeview restaurant. What do you know about the eating habits of a culture beside your own?

On the Internet, at the library, or in your own home, research the eating habits and customs of a particular culture. Use the following questions to guide your investigation:

- What types of foods have been traditionally served at the various mealtimes?
- What is the source of the food—the sea, local farms, or elsewhere?
- Do families or groups of people always eat together?
- What utensils and dinnerware were used in the past and are used now?
- How long does the food preparation take?
- Are there separate customs for guests? What are they?

Use the information you have discovered to write a guidebook. Include a menu for a traditional meal and a recipe for a traditional food. Share your guidebook with your classmates’ to discover similarities and differences.

Activity 3: Examining Perspectives

One of the themes running through Lensey Namioka's has to do with assimilation, the process in which one group takes on the traits of a larger group. Because the U.S. is a nation of immigrants, assimilation has always been an important issue here. Not surprisingly, it's an issue about which there is much discussion and disagreement.

Immigrants adapt to life in a new country through changes in language, dress, family roles, profession, education, etc. As with most change, something is gained and something is lost. Choose an example of a family or community of immigrants who have assimilated to life in the United States. What have they gained? What have they lost? Make a two-column chart showing these gains and losses. You may pull the information from personal experience, reading or viewing, or other research.