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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2011 Volume IV: The Big Easy: Literary New Orleans and Intangible Heritage

The Responsibility Is Ours: Preserving Intangible Heritage

Guide for Curriculum Unit 11.04.09, published September 2011
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In this cross curricular (social studies/geography and English) unit, adolescent English Language Learners capture/learn/appreciate the uniqueness of a place — of their home country — a place to which they most likely will never return. I argue it is their responsibility to preserve the intangible heritage of their homeland for themselves and their families so that it is not forgotten. Students will read literature that highlights the uniqueness of New Orleans as a model to inspire two sets of writings (1) descriptive pieces that demonstrate the uniqueness of *their original place*, their homeland and, (2) where they are now. The author's personal Peace Corps journal entries also will serve as a model for students to see the cultural aspects including the good and the bad physical and human characteristics of a place still provide for a loveable place. It is essential for them to understand that space can be crafted. They have agency in defining their place. In doing so, they will have opportunities to focus on these two places and to develop their writing skills in English.

(Developed for ELL Social Studies, grade 6; recommended for Middle School Social Studies Courses - benefits ELL/ESOL students but could be modified for all middle school students, grades 6-8)

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