

Joys and Challenges of Holidays

Gathering Evidence from the Text

Lesson Packet #7 – November 2015

The Change Agent <changeagent.nelrc.org>

Description: Use the graphic organizer we provide (p. 36) or create your own to help students analyze four essays about holidays. They will investigate the text to find what the author says are "fun aspects" of the holiday as well as "challenging aspects" of the holiday, and they will write a paragraph based on the essays. The four essays are: "Christmas Changed" (also available in [audio](#) on *The Change Agent* website) by Diana Solorzano, "Taking the Good with the Bad" by Gregory Parker, "Celebrating Eid" by Nuzhat Jahan, and "My Diwali" by Sue Byman. The holidays also represent diverse religious traditions -- Christmas (Christian), Eid (Muslim), and Diwali (Hindu) -- so these texts also lend themselves to social studies explorations, such as geography, world religions, immigration patterns, and more.

Level: These texts are levels 7-8 (grade level equivalent). CCR standards addressed are Level D (GLE 6-8.9)

Purpose: The aim of this activity is to provide students with engaging, relevant stories that help them practice the important CCR skill of using evidence from the text to be able to explain what the author is saying.

CCR Standards Addressed:

Reading Anchor 1: Read closely to determine what the text says; make logical inferences; cite specific textual evidence.

Level D: Quote accurately. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Writing Anchor 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Level D: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. Use words and phrases to create cohesion and clarify relationships among claims, reasons, and evidence – eg., furthermore, consequently, specifically, in addition. Provide a concluding statement that follows from and supports the argument presented.

Writing Anchor 2: Write informative /explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Level D: Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; develop the topic with relevant facts, details, and quotations. Use appropriate transitions.

Materials: PDFs of four articles from *The Change Agent* plus the graphic organizer we provide or your own version.

Classroom Steps:

1. Read the four articles.
2. Use *The Change Agent's* (or your own) graphic organizer to detail the joys and challenges that the writers identify in their stories.
3. Ask students to develop a topic sentence based on the information they have collected from the articles. The topic sentence should not be too specific or too general. Students should be able to back it up with evidence from these texts. They should use a minimum of two texts. Some examples of possible thesis statements: "Holidays often include both joys and challenges." "For immigrants, holidays can have special challenges." "Holidays can be great ways for families to connect, but they can also cause tensions because they are expensive."
4. Students should develop an outline that includes details from the text to back up their topic sentence. Then they should develop a paragraph based on the outline. They should make revisions based on feedback.
5. **Possible extensions:**
 - a. Research the holidays and the religions they come from.
 - b. Do the other activities listed on the pages to extend knowledge – for example Eid is tied to the phases of the moon. Take this opportunity to study the phases of the moon
 - c. Build in geography by looking up the "birthplaces" of the religions talked about, the current concentrations of those religions, immigration patterns that helped those religions travel around the world, etc.

Find more *Change Agent* lesson packets at <changeagent.nelrc.org>, as well as PDFs of magazines on a wide variety of themes, articles in audio, CCR-aligned activities, and more. All of that is available for the price of an online subscription: \$20 per teacher per year.