

### Key Terms

Culture: \_\_\_\_\_

Norm: \_\_\_\_\_

Symbol: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Read:** There are six agreed-upon characteristics of culture. These include things like culture is learned and shared among members. One of the most interesting and often delicious parts of field work is eating the local culture—I mean cuisine. I have even known anthropologists to select field sites based on what they would want to eat for the year or more that they will be in the field doing research. Food is so often a reflection of cultural practices, local ingredients and tools and materials available, and it exemplifies gender relations and norms. Have you given a lot of thought to what you eat? Most people eat the same approximately 30 things in their weekly food habits. Do you eat the same thing for breakfast every day? Maybe you eat out a lot for dinner and change up the cuisines you eat. Is there a type of food that you would like to try but have not yet because it intimidates you in some way (maybe the menus are all in another language, or there are risky ingredients or you can't control the level of spice or heat)?

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: A TASTE OF CULTURE

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**Note:** This can be assigned as a classroom discussion in a small class or in groups in a larger class. It may also be administered by assigning students to complete and reflect.

## FIELD WORK ACTIVITY

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**Read:** For homework go out to eat a cuisine that you have never tried before. Think outside the box and look for something that is way outside your comfort zone. If you are an adventurous eater, find a restaurant you have not yet tried and a dish or exotic ingredient that has not yet graced your plate. While there, think about the culture of the cuisine and how it might be reflected in the décor, language, ingredients, and preparation of the food. Feel free to ask your server or the chef questions about the meal and the culture surrounding your meal. Then answer these questions.

### Field Notes

**Question 1:** Where did you go, and why that restaurant?

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**Question 2:** Whom did you bring with you?

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**Question 3:** Was the meal culturally different from your own style of meal preparation, utensils, ingredients, traditions, and flavors? How so?

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**Question 4:** How was the experience? Did it take you outside your comfort zone?

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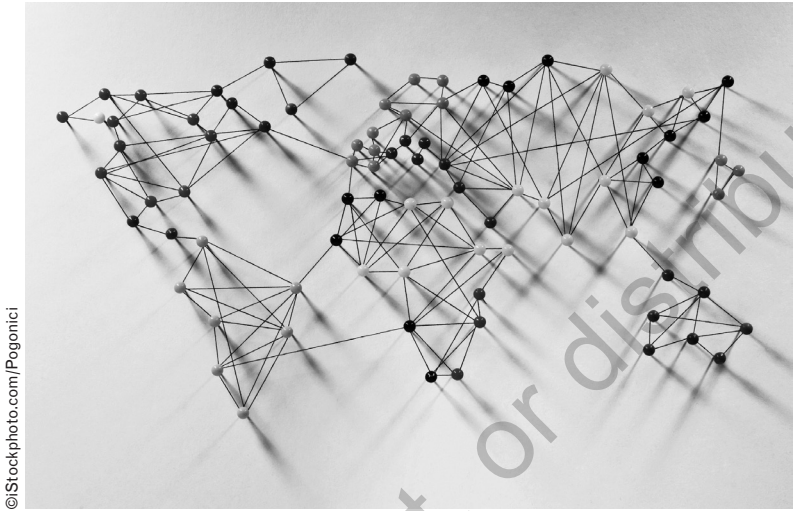
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**Note:** Students may discuss their experiences together in class. Have students get together in groups based on the cuisine they tried to talk about their dishes and experiences.

## INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY: WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

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**Note:** This can be a reflection assignment that students write and turn in or a forum quiz/post in their Learning Management System.

**Read:** In American society, “Where are you from?” is often a loaded question. It may mean simply what it says, and it is asking for a geographic location that you have lived. It may be that the person is really asking about the ethnicity, race, or home country of someone but does not know how to ask that. However, oftentimes it carries the implication that the person being asked is “not from here.” It can be a way of denying identity, asserting difference, and giving the message that someone does not belong. This is particularly the case when the person being asked does not look like or speak like the questioner. We often flounder in trying to ask people about their cultural heritage. Our connections to culture and family history can be very present or feel often distant and remain connected to older generations. Thinking about cultural history, generations in families often identify differently among them because of differences in personal experience, frequency of visits to a home country (or lack thereof), language fluency differences, and many other reasons.

**Question 1:** Define your culture. What cultures are you connected to? What history and heritage information do you have for yourself?

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**Question 2:** Do you feel connected to your culture? Why or why not?

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**Question 3:** Do your parents or grandparents feel more or less connected to the culture(s) you identify with?

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**Question 4:** Have you ever had the “where are you from” question and felt that it was used to make you feel different, uncomfortable, or like an outsider? What about that question or situation made you feel that way?

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