



## Conversation Curriculum

### Living in America – Cultural Differences

**Learning Objective:** To relate to other students and to use the language of comparisons by discussing differences and similarities of life in the U.S.A. with life in other countries.

**Warm-Up Activity (15 minutes):** As students arrive, hand each of them 7-10 of the “Foundations” cards. Each card has a picture of an activity or situation that are considered commonplace in the U.S.

Have them sort their cards into 3 piles:

- 1 pile being activities that were common to do in their home countries.
- 1 pile of things that are common or normal to do in the USA
- 1 pile of things that they did not think were common in either

Acknowledge that there may be cards that fit into both of the first two piles. Once they are finished, have them discuss with the person sitting next to them what is taking place on the cards, and why they placed them in that pile.

**I do/ We do activity (15 minutes):** Go around the room and have each student describe a few of their cards; ask:

- What is the picture of and what is taking place?
- Was this something that people did in other countries in which you have lived, or have you only seen it in the USA?

- Adjust the time of this activity for how many students are in class, if there are few students in class, you may have them describe all of their cards.

- Make three lists on the board, one of the things from the cards that are new to students since they moved to the USA, and one of the things that are common or similar to their home countries or places they have lived.

- Have 3 students write an item under both lists

**They do Activity (15 minutes):** have students get into pairs. If possible, get students into cross-language pairs.

- Model this activity with a student – Take 5 “foundations” cards and ask:
  - Do you do this in the USA? Where? How?
  - Did you do this in other countries where you have lived? Where? How?
  
- Low-level students can continue doing this activity
- Have each pair do this for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, write these questions on the board and have them ask each other:
  - What are some things that are different about living in the USA than in other places you have lived?
  - What are some things that are similar?
  - What are some things that you like about living in the USA? Why?
  - What are some things you find frustrating about living in the USA? Why?
  - Have you lived in different cities within the USA? How were those different from Minneapolis?
  - How were those other cities in the USA similar to Minneapolis?

Encourage students to draw on the examples on the board that the class came up with. For three minutes, after both students have shared all questions, or if time is running out, have some students share what they learned about their partner with the class.

**Journal Writing (10-15 minutes):**

What do you miss most since moving to the USA?

What parts of living in the USA do you like the most?

Describe a part of life in the USA that you wish was different? (For example, treatment of the elderly or food choices)