

Guidelines for teachers

Cultural heritage



What is cultural heritage?

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is defining Cultural Heritage as *"both a product and a process, which provides societies with a wealth of resources that are inherited from the past, created in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations."*

The term cultural heritage encompasses different categories of heritage such as:

Tangible:

- Movable: paintings, sculptures, manuscripts, books, musical instruments
- Immovable: monuments, buildings, suites, architectural work
- Underwater: artifacts, vessels, shipwrecks

Intangible:

- Oral traditions and expressions: language, storytelling, songs, poems, music traditions
- Performing arts: dance, folklore, theater
- Social practices: rituals, festive events, religious ceremonies
- Knowledge: practices concerning nature and the universe, traditional craftsmanship, cuisine

Natural Heritage:

- Natural features: physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view (rural landscapes, coasts and shorelines, agricultural heritage);
- Geological and physiographical formations: delineated areas, which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding value from the point of view of science or conservation (natural habitat, marine ecosystems, sanctuaries and reservoirs);
- Natural sites: delineated natural areas of outstanding value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty (zoos, aquaria and botanical gardens).





Why is cultural heritage important?

According to UNESCO, the notion of heritage is important for culture and development as it constitutes the ‘cultural capital’ of contemporary societies.

It contributes to the continual revalorization of cultures and identities and it is an important vehicle for the transmission of **expertise, skills and knowledge** between generations.

It provides inspiration for **creativity and innovation**, which result in contemporary and future cultural products.

It has the potential of promoting access to and **enjoyment of cultural diversity and enriching social capital** by shaping an individual and collective sense of belonging, which helps supporting social and territorial cohesion.

It has acquired great **economic significance** for the tourism sector in many countries, while at the same time engendering new challenges for its conservation.

Protecting Cultural Heritage

UNESCO (Culture for development indicators) also highlights the following:

Cultural heritage is inherently linked to the **most pressing challenges that humanity faces** as a whole: these range from climate change and natural disasters (such as loss of biodiversity or access to safe water and food), to conflicts between communities, education, health, migration, urbanization, marginalization or economic inequalities.

Tangible as well as Intangible and Natural heritage are “**fragile wealth**”, and as such they require policies and development models that preserve and respect its diversity and uniqueness since, once lost, they are **nonrenewable**.

Cultural heritage is considered “essential for promoting peace and sustainable societal, environmental and economic development”.





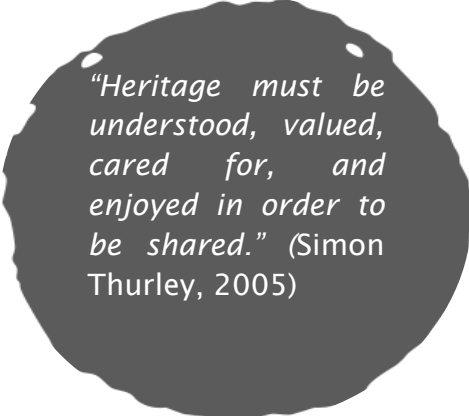
Natural Nations Cultural Heritage resources kit

Research suggests that species' cultural heritage has the potential to inspire lasting conservation actions, in the nowadays industrialised society.

Therefore, Natural Nations collected a series of local names, stories, song etc that reflect cultural heritage related to pollinating insects, birds and plants in each partner nation, to help teachers explore this topic and instil curiosity about nature in cultural heritage across nations, with their students.

The cultural heritage sheets can be used as inspiration before or after carrying out the surveys, to get to know more about the species students might find on their school grounds.

Inspire care and love for nature through stories of the past brought into the present.



"Heritage must be understood, valued, cared for, and enjoyed in order to be shared." (Simon Thurley, 2005)





Do it yourself!

If you are a teacher and want to carry out your own research with your students about a particular species, you can do the following:

1. Choose a bird, pollinator, minibeast or plant with your students. It can be the species of the week/month! You can choose a species that you recently encountered in your school grounds.
2. Split students in groups and give them different topics to investigate at home about the species such as:
 - Origins of the name in different countries
 - Folklore stories, myths and legends
 - Sayings and what their explanation
 - Search for songs, poems and games
 - Traditions linked with the species
3. Give them a week to carry out the research at home with their families. Advise them to ask elderlies, check in books and use internet. It's important to engage also with families to increase more awareness.
4. Suggest them to look for information not just from their countries, but also from other countries.
5. Collect all the information from students, share the findings, discuss with them!
6. Discuss with your students any matters that can be controversial too. There are instances when historical facts in culture can result in negative perceptions about a species. Make sure that you highlight the benefits of the species and the differences between reality and myths. All species have a role to play in nature, and students should learn how to appreciate every living creature and act better in the future. (See example in the annex).
7. Play the games, tell stories, sing the songs and have fun! (See example in the annex).
8. Make a nice wall or poster and share with other classes all your discoveries and why not, with the families too.
9. Periodically, choose another species your class is interested in or encountered whilst carrying out the surveys.



Annex

Cultural facts vs reality

Since the story of St. Paul being bitten by a snake when he first set foot in Malta and hurling it into the fire, snakes have had a poor reputation on the island. Christian biblical reference associates snakes with lies, evil and temptation, when in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve fall victim to sin.

However, in other cultures, like ancient Greece, Egypt and indigenous North America, snakes can also symbolize fertility, rebirth, renewal or immortality.

Unfortunately, nowadays movies and other media play a role in creating snakes' bad reputation too.



But the reality is that snakes are necessary for the environment like any other animal!

In agricultural fields, cat snakes, for instance, are a great way to control rodents naturally without having to resort to using rat traps or laying down poison which can be expensive and time consuming. Cat snakes are carnivores which means they won't damage any crops or plants. As they are so small, they can only eat small rodents such as mice and rats, ensuring that they're not a threat to humans, pets or live stock.

Like any other snakes, without them we would create an imbalance in the ecosystem as the food web relies on their presence, both as predators and prey for some species.

Investigate and don't let yourself be deceived by the negative perceptions or behaviour of the past.



Annex

A taste of folklore to begin with and get inspired!

The legend of the dandelion



The angel of the flowers had returned to earth and had begun to search the woods, gardens, and plains for the flower that might have been above all the others.

He reached into a land full of red and orange tulips, raised to the sky proudly and proudly, and asked them, "Where would you like to live the most?" The tulips replied, "The most We would love to be in the meadow of a castle, where our warm colours would contrast with the gray walls. We would love to be touched by a princess who will tell us how beautiful we are. "

The angel sadly turned his eyes away from the tulips and asked the rose, "What do you think might be your favorite place?" I am fragile and delicate and I could not do this alone. I need care and a welcoming shelter. "

Again, the angel of the flowers was sad, and went into the woods to a violet, which he asked, "Where would you most like to live your life?" "Here, in the woods, where I am hidden by "Everyone's eyes," Violeta replied, "the stream cools my roots, and the trees shelter me from the bitter heat of the sun."

However, the angel did not like what the violet said and crossed the earth until he came to a dandelion trapped deep in the meadow. The angel asked her, "Where would you like to live the most?" "I would like to live along the roads and in the meadows, but also among the stones in the city, so that I can make anyone happy with my fluffy flower." You are the flower I like the most "exclaimed the angel, adding:" You will bloom wherever spring first appears and you will be called the flower of children ". (Romanian folklore)

