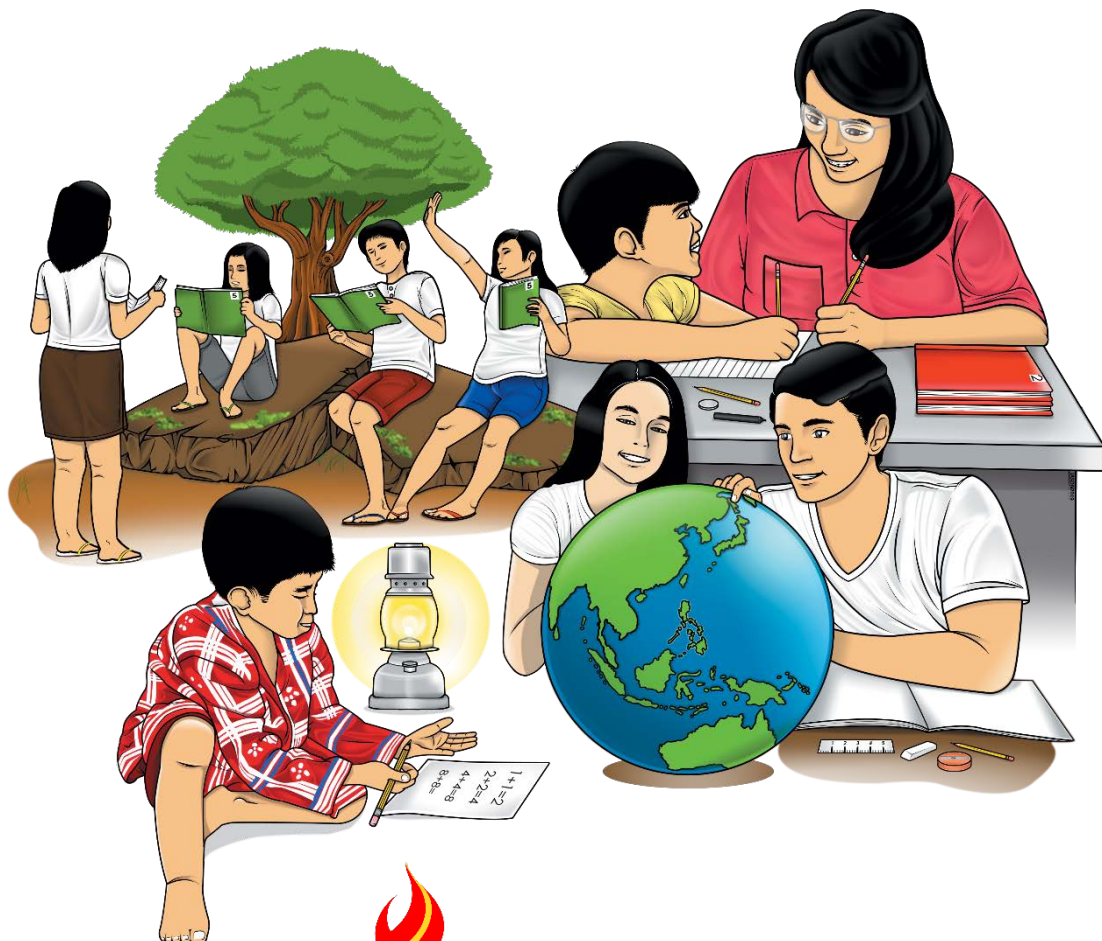


Senior High School

# Understanding Culture, Society and Politics

## Quarter 1 – Module 3: Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism



**Understanding Culture Society and Politics**  
**Alternative Delivery Mode**  
**Quarter 1 – Module 3: Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism**  
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Senior High School

# **Understanding Culture, Society and Politics**

## **Quarter 1 – Module 3: Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism**

## **Introductory Message**

This Self-Learning Module (SLM) is prepared so that you, our dear learners, can continue your studies and learn while at home. Activities, questions, directions, exercises, and discussions are carefully stated for you to understand each lesson.

Each SLM is composed of different parts. Each part shall guide you step-by-step as you discover and understand the lesson prepared for you.

Pre-tests are provided to measure your prior knowledge on lessons in each SLM. This will tell you if you need to proceed on completing this module or if you need to ask your facilitator or your teacher's assistance for better understanding of the lesson. At the end of each module, you need to answer the post-test to self-check your learning. Answer keys are provided for each activity and test. We trust that you will be honest in using these.

In addition to the material in the main text, Notes to the Teacher are also provided to our facilitators and parents for strategies and reminders on how they can best help you on your home-based learning.

Please use this module with care. Do not put unnecessary marks on any part of this SLM. Use a separate sheet of paper in answering the exercises and tests. And read the instructions carefully before performing each task.

If you have any questions in using this SLM or any difficulty in answering the tasks in this module, do not hesitate to consult your teacher or facilitator.

Thank you.



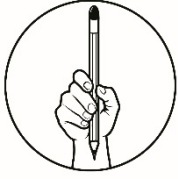
## ***What I Need to Know***

This module was designed and written with you in mind. It is here to help you master the nature of Understanding Culture Society and Politics. The scope of this module permits it to be used in many different learning situations. The language used recognizes the diverse vocabulary level of students. The lessons are arranged to follow the standard sequence of the course. But the order in which you read them can be changed to correspond with the textbook you are now using.

The module is about the importance of cultural relativism in attaining cultural understanding (MELC Week 3).

After going through this module, you are expected to:

1. describe your own culture and compare it to the culture of others;
2. determine the difference between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism;
3. shows the ill effects of ethnocentrism; and
4. become aware why and how cultural relativism mitigates ethnocentrism.



## ***What I Know***

**General Direction:** Read the following items carefully. Write the letter that corresponds to your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Which of the following phrases describe cultural relativism?
  - a. having no concept of right or wrong
  - b. comparing how other cultures are related to others
  - c. believing that western culture is superior from Asian culture.
  - d. measuring behavior as it is regarded in the person's own culture
  
2. Why does ethnocentrism lead to dehumanizing others?
  - a. there is no way to determine right or wrong
  - b. other people may be treated as savage and morally corrupt
  - c. native people usually want to be colonized by superior cultures
  - d. believing that their own race is superior over the others makes one morally corrupt.
  
3. Genital mutilation or female circumcision is a practice of many tribes in Africa as a significant rite of passage for women. A lot of progressive countries think that it is unhygienic and wrong. This kind of thinking is an example of
  - a. cultural relativism
  - b. ethnocentrism
  - c. xenocentrism

For numbers 4-8, identify whether the given statement is an example of ethnocentrism or cultural relativism. Write letter **A** if it is a sample of ethnocentrism and letter **B** if it is a case of cultural relativism.

4. Cannibalism is morally wrong because it defies God's commandment of thou shall not kill.
5. Korean culture is better than our culture because a lot of Filipinos try to imitate and adopt this culture.
6. Apo Wang-od tattoo arts should be honored because of its deep meaning and historical connections on their past culture.
7. It is just right to call the corona virus as Chinese virus because it started on their country.
8. Nothing is wrong with the religious belief of others like worshipping things related to nature like forest, rivers, moon, stars and others.

For numbers 9-10, classify the following practices as right or wrong from the point of view of a relativist. Write letter **A** if it is right, and letter **B** if it is wrong.

9. Going to albularyo (quack doctors) to seek medical help.
10. Same sex marriages

For numbers 11-15, classify the following statement as true or false. Write letter **A** if it is TRUE, and letter **B** if it is FALSE.

11. At some point of our lives, we tend to become an ethnocentric in a given situation.
12. Cultural relativism promotes greater appreciation of cultures that an individual might encounter along the way.
13. Ethnocentrism refers to the evaluation of other people's culture from one's own point of view and describing them in one's own terms.
14. Hate crimes and terrorism can usually traced back to religious conflict and misunderstanding.
15. When we laugh at someone because of his wrong dictions of the dialect we speak. This is an example of cultural relativism.



## What's In

Before we proceed, let us go back with some of the important concepts about culture, which is the focus of our discussion.

According to E.B. Taylor; culture is a “complex whole,” which encompasses beliefs, practices, values, attitudes, laws, norms, artefacts, symbols, knowledge, and everything that a person learns and shares as a member of a society.

Likewise, a society is understood or sometimes judged based on their culture. What comprises a culture? Let us refresh our mind by answering the matching type test below.

*Source: Wikimedia Commons. From Popular Science Monthly 26 (1884): 145. Public Domain.*

Match the correct description in **Column A** to the aspect of culture in **Column B**.

Description	Aspect of Culture
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Family is the most important unit of this aspect of culture. Through family, children learn how they are expected to act and what to believe in.</li><li>2. It usually answers basic questions about the meaning of life.</li><li>3. This is considered the cornerstone of culture. It is the way of communicating and understanding each other.</li><li>4. These products of human imagination usually help people to pass on their culture's basic beliefs.</li><li>5. It maintains order within a society and protects it from outside threats.</li><li>6. This refers to how people use their limited resources to satisfy their wants and needs.</li><li>7. It is the rules of behavior that enforce ideas as right or wrong.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Arts and literature</li><li>b. Customs and traditions</li><li>c. Economic systems</li><li>d. Forms of government</li><li>e. Language</li><li>f. Religion</li><li>g. Social organizations</li></ol>

Check your answers and make sure you are very familiar with the key terms listed before we start another lesson.





## What's New

### Am I Different?

Fill in “Me’ and My Culture” table by describing how you behave and practice your own culture under similar circumstances.

“Them” and their culture	“Me” and my Culture
<p>Marriage A man can have multiple wives. He can share his wife to his brothers and visitors as a sign of hospitality. (Eskimos)</p>	<p>Marriage</p>
<p>Behavior When entering a nearly empty movie theater or public vehicle, you are rude when you do not sit beside the only person in the theater or public vehicle. (South Africa)</p>	<p>Behavior</p>
<p>Hand Gestures The V- hand gesture is an offensive sign in United Kingdom, Australia, and South Africa. In Japan, China, and South Korea, using this symbol with the palm facing the person means he/she is looking cute in picture.</p>	<p>Hand Gestures</p>
<p>Child-rearing In order to control their population in difficult environments, Eskimos sometimes kill their children if they could not take care of them. They also kill females more than males. (Infanticide)</p>	<p>Child-rearing</p>
<p>Religion Individuals practicing Hinduism believe in millions of gods and goddesses. All are responsible for governing their lives, destiny, and fate.</p>	<p>Religion</p>
<p>Reading text Hebrew and Arabic books are read from right to left.</p>	<p>Reading Text</p>
<p>Table Manners Europeans and Americans use spoon and fork in eating, while Chinese and Koreans use chopsticks.</p>	<p>Table Manners</p>

## And so I am Different

1. What can you say about the culture of these people?

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2. Are their respective cultures the same as your own culture? In what ways are they similar and in what ways do they differ?

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3. Do you think that the cultures of these groups are bad? Why or why not?

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4. Can we consider some of their cultural practices as right or wrong? Explain.

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5. Which of the two sets of cultures is the best, their cultures or your own culture? Why?

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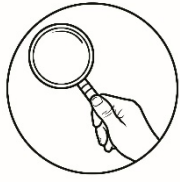
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6. If one culture behaves in a particular act, does it mean that all cultures can behave the same way? Discuss further.

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## ***What is It***

In this part of your journey, we provide something for you to deepen your understanding about culture.

Please continue reading with comprehension as you discover further knowledge that will help you out in your quest on the remaining phases of this lesson.

### **What is Ethnocentrism?**

Ethnocentrism is a belief that one's own culture is better than others. They tend to compare, evaluate, and even judge other people's ways based on the values and standards set in one's own culture. Their worldview is based on the beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and values shaped by one's language, behavior, customs, values, religions and other aspects.

Due to ethnocentric beliefs, many people are blinded from seeing things in another perspective. Ethnocentric people tend to dislike or make false judgment on other cultures. They tend becoming biased and judge another culture as bad and wrong.

Even though we deny it, most of us are ethnocentric at some point in our lives. Some do not even realize that they are being ethnocentric at that moment. Below are some of the examples of ethnocentrism:

- a. The American society sees themselves as a world leader. As a result, they interfere in the political affairs of other countries and try to control them, leading to misunderstanding and miscommunication amongst nations which sometimes result to war.
- b. During the time of Adolf Hitler, Germans believed that they are a superior race. This led to the death of 6 million Jews whom they considered as an inferior race.
- c. European countries go beyond their ethnocentric biases and saw non-European cultures as uncivilized and underdeveloped countries of savages and barbarians. They used this perspective to justify colonialism and imperialism.
- d. Cases of hate crimes and terrorism violence can usually be traced back to religious conflicts and misunderstandings.

### **Cultural Relativism as the Opposite View**

Cultural relativism is a belief that cultures are equally complex. There is no such thing as superior or inferior culture.

Cultural relativism is very important in studying the culture of other people. It is a way of viewing the beliefs, values, and practices of a culture from its own

viewpoint. Another way to say this is that others should understand an individual's beliefs and activities in terms of that person's own culture.

- Cultural relativism promotes greater appreciation of the cultures that an individual might encounter along the way.
- Cultural relativism is a good way to rehearse the norms and values of a society --- a requirement that one must subscribe to, regardless of his/her cultural origin.
- It means that the function and meaning of a trait are relative to its cultural setting.

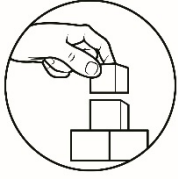
To understand better the main difference between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, an illustration was provided below:

*Hello, I am Ben. I am an ethnocentric. I always believe that my culture is superior from others. I often use my own culture to judge others. I consider their beliefs and practices as savage or corrupt. Most of the time I tend to discriminate others, bully them for their practices, and get into conflict with them.*



*Hello, I am Lisa. I am a cultural relativist. I believe that culture of people must be looked at in terms of the world these people inhabit. I try to look at their culture based on what their practices bring in to them. If Eskimos kill their infant sometimes, I believe that there is a practical reason why they do that. That is why for me, culture is relative. There is no right or wrong, and I don't have the right to say if it is good or bad.*





## ***What's More***

### **Activity 1**

People tend to be more tolerant of another culture's customs when they understand and learn the meaning behind them. In order to understand an unfamiliar culture, social scientists conduct researches. The best way to do this study is to experience that culture by living with people practicing it. Additionally, this experience should be done for a long period.

In this activity, you will be asked to conduct a simple case study examining the culture of other people that is somehow different from yours. If you are an Ilocano, the subject of your study could be people who identify themselves as Tagalog, Bisaya, Bicolano, or another ethnicity. If you know someone who belongs to an indigenous group of people, it is much better to have them as subjects. Since you are not allowed to go out at present because of the threat of COVID-19 pandemic, look for someone who is near to your place or whom you have contact with through social media.

Be guided with the following questions as you write your case study:

1. Describe the group of people that you chose. Who are they? What do they do? Where did they come from? What do you know about them?
2. Discuss their way of life in terms of:
  - a. Social organizations
  - b. Language
  - c. Religion
  - d. Arts and literature
  - e. Economic systems
  - f. Values, beliefs, and traditions
3. Summarize what you have learned using the 3-2-1 chart below:  
3 Things I learned from them  
2 Things I found interesting  
1 Thing I realize

### **Activity 2**

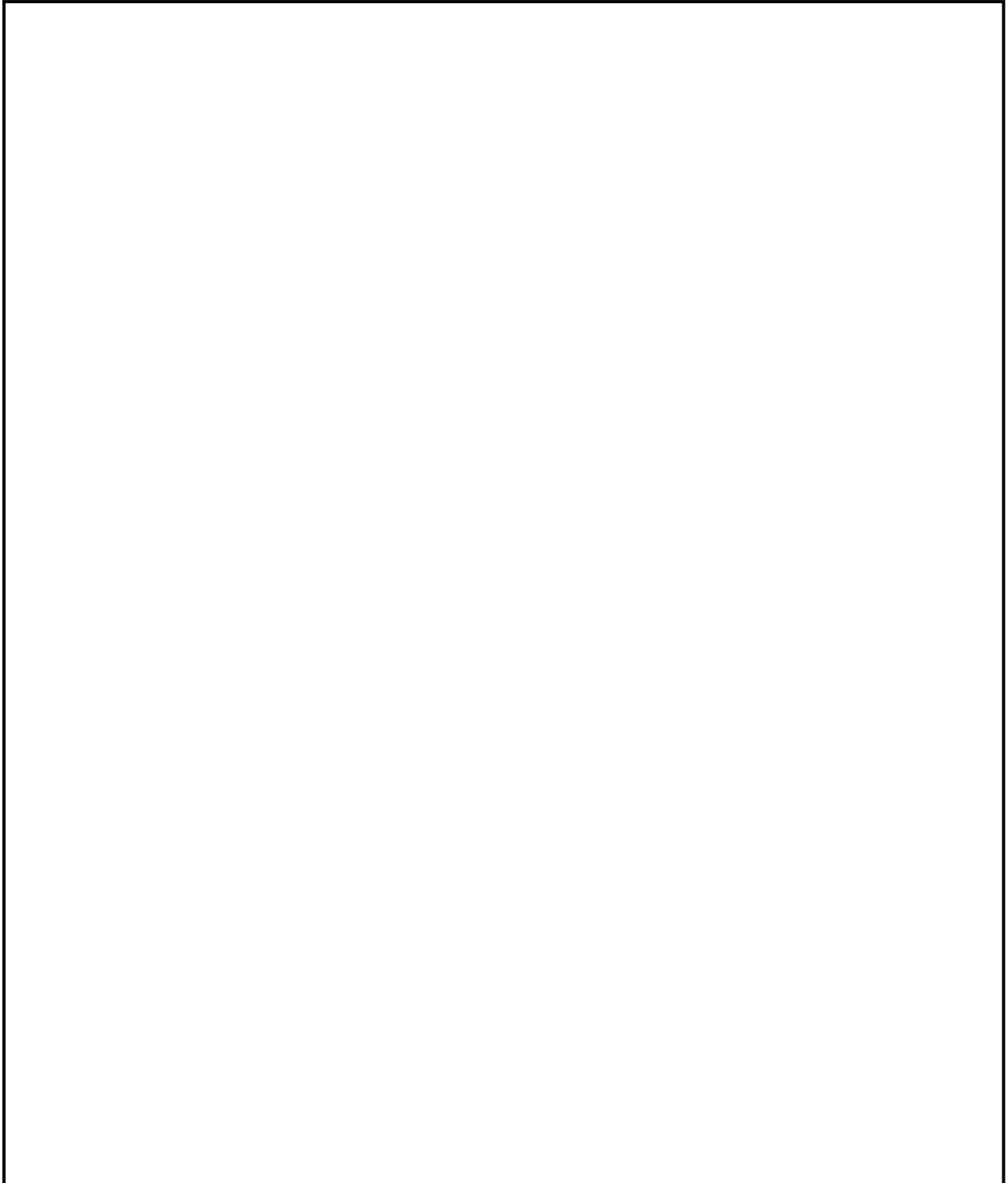
Give 5 situations on how cultural relativism mitigates ethnocentrism. Below is an example to give you an idea.

Ex.

1. I don't have the right to judge my classmates who don't say po or opo disrespectful. There are places in our country where they don't really use these words as a sign of respect like the Cebuanos.
2. Muslims are generally peace-loving people based on their religious belief that is why it is not right to brand them as terrorist. I have personal friends where I learn that most of them do not want war. Like us they also want lasting peace among all the regions in the Philippines.

### **Activity 3**

Create a slogan that promotes respect and tolerance towards other cultures all over the world. A slogan that will make people aware of the ill effects of ethnocentrism such as cultural misrepresentation, perception bias, bullying, discrimination, intolerance, war, genocide, and others

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to write their slogan. The box occupies most of the page below the instructions.



## ***What I Have Learned***

### **“T-M-L Phrase”**

Complete the following phrases.

The **Topic** was about

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It **Matters** because

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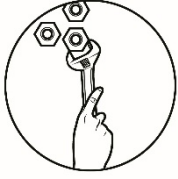
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I've **Learned** today that

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## ***What I Can Do***

### **#i-beg to Disagree because**

State your reason why you beg to disagree to the given statements below. You have to remember that you are a **CULTURAL RELATIVIST**; you have to place yourself in the shoes of these people in order to understand them better. Culture is not good or bad, neither it is right or wrong, but instead it is relative.

1. One society can call another society as evil such as those nations where terrorist live. These places are also called an “axis of evil”.

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2. Western culture is superior and opposite of non-Western culture.

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3. When you don't say “po” at “opo,” you are impolite.

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4. The Mangyan tribe of Mindoro are backwards people because they are uneducated.

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5. We have to avoid going to places like Siquijor and Capiz because monsters called Aswang infest these places.

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6. Eating Dalagang Bukid, Salagubang, Palakang Bukid and other organisms are not healthy.

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7. Ilocanos are thrifty because they are poor.

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## **Assessment**

Read the following items carefully. Write the letter that corresponds to your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

For numbers 1-5, identify whether the given statement is an example of ethnocentrism or cultural relativism. Write letter **A** if it is a sample of ethnocentrism and letter **B** if it is a case of cultural relativism.

1. People in my own culture could learn a lot from people in other cultures.
2. Korean culture is better than our culture because a lot of Filipinos try to imitate and adopt this culture.
3. Indigenous people should learn to change their old and traditional ways of life in order to be happy and successful.
4. Filipinos' religious traditions like celebration of fiestas should be banned because it is just a waste of time, energy, and resources.
5. The Aetas of Zambales, the Mangyans of Mindoro and other Filipino tribes have different religious beliefs. Their Gods are manifested on the different forms of nature like trees, mountains, rivers, volcano, their dead ancestors, and many more. These beliefs do not make them a lesser group of people, and we must see that there is nothing wrong with them.

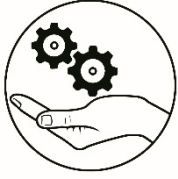
For numbers 6-7, classify the following practices as right or wrong. Write letter **A** if it is right, and letter **B** if it is wrong.

6. Arranged marriage
7. Polygamy or the practice of having multiple wives

For numbers 8-15, choose the best answer for each item. Write down the letter of your choice.

8. The attitude that other societies' customs and traditions and ideas should be judged in the context of one's own culture is known as \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Colonialism   b. Cultural Relativism   c. Imperialism   d. Ethnocentrism
9. People around the world should learn from the ill effects of the belief that one's culture is better than others. Which of the following is NOT an example of it?  
a. Hate crimes happen when people are killed because of their religious beliefs and practices.  
b. The Holocaust happened when Adolf Hitler ordered the mass murdering of the Jews.  
c. Slave trade happened when black African people were sold in Europe and the Americas to serve as slaves.  
d. Global warming is now happening and people from more developed and industrialized countries are more liable than people from underdeveloped countries.

10. What is the most important lesson we could get from studying cultural relativism?
- It is difficult or impossible to force your own religious beliefs onto another group.
  - When studying another culture, you must first convert to its religious beliefs for better understanding.
  - Something that is not good or prohibited in your own society might be good and perfectly acceptable in another society.
  - People tend to be more tolerant of another culture's customs when they understand and learn the meaning behind them.
11. Which of these is an example of ethnocentrism?
- A girl bullies her classmate for being clumsy.
  - A mother refuses to pay her daughter's prom gown.
  - A father is angry with his son for not doing his homework.
  - A westernized woman is looking down on a tribal woman for not wearing any clothes.
12. Having more than one wife is not bad from a Muslim point of view. In relation, people must see this custom within the context of Muslims' problems and opportunities. What kind of view is illustrated here?
- Barbarism
  - Cultural relativism
  - Egocentrism
  - Ethnocentrism
13. Which of the following is NOT a true statement about cultural relativism?
- It requires us to abandon the values of our own culture.
  - It unites us as one and make us even more proud of our own culture.
  - It makes it possible for us to explain how culture makes its people behave.
  - It requires people to consider many factors before they draw conclusions on other people's cultural practices.
14. You are an overseas Filipino worker who went to Japan for the first time. During the first few days of your stay, you are disoriented and frustrated due to your exposure to a very strange culture. What does this situation signify?
- Culture shock
  - Cultural diversity
  - Cultural relativism
  - Fear of culture
15. The Kwakintl Indians of North America lack electricity supply, and they seem to have a less fulfilling life. The Bushmen of the Kalchari are non-literate and they appear less intelligent. Relatively, you view your own culture as superior to them. What do the statements above explain?
- Cultural relativism
  - Ethnocentrism
  - Structuralism
  - Structural formalism



## ***Additional Activities***

### **#i-speak**

You are invited as a guest speaker for a certain event where the participants come from different places of different cultures. The topic assigned to you is religious beliefs and practices. Your task is to make a speech which you are going to deliver on the said affair. It should be composed of at least 3-4 paragraphs, whereas you are comparing your religious beliefs and practices with the participants' own without being biased.

Draft your speech below.

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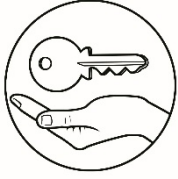
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Rubrics:

- 5 pts - Relevance of the speech to the given topic:
- 5 pts - Organization (Clearly and logically organized speech with an engaging introduction, a logically sequenced body with appropriate transitions, and a clear and convincing conclusion.

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10 pts - total



## ***Answer Key***

<b>What I Know</b>	1. A 2. B 3. B 4. A 5. A 6. B 7. A 8. B 9. A 10. A 11. A 12. A 13. B 14. A 15. B
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<b>What's In</b>	1. G 2. F 3. E 4. A 5. D 6. C 7. B
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<b>Assessment</b>	1. B 2. A 3. A 4. A 5. B 6. A 7. B 8. B 9. D 10. D 11. D 12. D 13. A 14. A 15. B
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