IGNITEMYFUTURE

Celebrate Together

Guiding Question: How could we improve the world?

Ignite Curiosity

- What role do holidays play in your life?
- Have you ever noticed that some holidays from very different cultures might have some things in common? Why do you think that might be?
- How could learning about different holidays bring people together?

In this lesson, students use the computational thinking strategies of decomposition and abstraction to find the commonalities among different holidays. In **THINK**, students act as club leaders who are planning a cultural celebration. They will work in groups to select a cultural holiday with which they might not be familiar. Each student group should select a different holiday. Each group will then research its holiday and put together a shopping list of all of the items they would need to host their celebration of this holiday. In **SOLVE**, student groups use the computational thinking strategy of abstraction to reduce each holiday to its primary component or idea and pare down their shopping list to the essential components. In **CREATE** students partner with two other groups to create a triple Venn diagram that identifies the similarities and differences among their three celebrations. Then, they create a shopping list that will work for all three events, combining them into one big celebration. In **CONNECT**, students gain insight into how holidays can introduce people to new cultures and cultural ideas, bring communities together, and lead to greater understanding of different cultures. This can lead to discussion of careers in sociology and anthropology, politics and community planning and the arts.

Students will be able to:

- **Evaluate** cultural celebrations by abstracting holidays into their primary components or ideas,
- **Analyze** relevant information about cultural celebrations, and
- **Create** and implement a problem-solving process that maintains and integrates the most essential parts of different cultural celebrations.

SUBJECTS

English Language Arts
World Languages

COMPUTATIONAL THINKING PRACTICES

Decomposition
Abstraction

COMPUTATIONAL THINKING STRATEGY

Developing and
Using Abstractions

MATERIALS

Holiday List student handout

Holiday Research
student capture sheet

Triple Celebration
student capture sheet

Celebration Storyboard

Devices with access to the
Internet (optional)

Students act as club leaders who are planning a cultural celebration.

1 **Read** the following scenario to students:

Imagine this: you are part of a student club that is planning a holiday celebration. Your school has one big event space that student groups use for planning events, and that space is triple-booked! Two other student groups are looking to celebrate their own cultures' holidays in that space. Can your group partner with the other groups to find the common ground among the different holidays and host one big celebration?

Ask students to think about their favorite holiday. Then, point out that many different cultures tend to have similar holidays at similar times. For example, Christmas and Chanukah usually fall in the middle of winter, while Ramadan and Paryushan Parva take place over the summer months. Other holidays have similar customs. For instance, Lunar New Year and Dia de los Muertos both involve parades.

Inform students that they will be using a computational thinking skill called decomposition to break down holidays into their component parts. Ask for suggestions on what the components of a holiday might be (food, music, dancing, etc.).

2 **Distribute** the Holiday List student handout and the Holiday Research student capture sheet. Have students divide into groups, then direct each group to choose a holiday from the Holiday List student handout and research that holiday (students can use Internet-accessible devices if you have them in your classroom). Have students write down the information they have learned, as well as a shopping list for all the items they would need to celebrate that holiday.

Teacher Note: Remind students that open sources like Wikipedia are not reliable, but they can use any links from a Wikipedia entry as a jumping-off point for their research. If students are having difficulty finding reliable sources, suggest sites such as Time and Date's worldwide holiday list. Students can find information about most of the holidays on the Holiday List handout by clicking the United States link in the North America column.

3 **Lead** students to consider the following questions while creating their holiday shopping list:
- How can decomposing a holiday help plan a celebration for that holiday?
- What are some component parts of the holiday that are important to consider?
- Why is it important to explore holidays with which you are unfamiliar?

4 **Challenge** students to identify and summarize the problem that needs to be solved. Remind them of the original scenario, in which they are looking for the common ground among three organizations that have triple-booked the celebration space in their school. Ask them how decomposing holidays to learn more about them can help solve this problem.

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Student groups use the computational thinking strategy of abstraction to reduce each holiday to its primary component or idea and pare down their shopping list to the essential components.

1 **Distribute** the Holiday Abstraction student capture sheet. Explain that abstraction is another computational thinking skill that reduces complex ideas to their most important components. This strategy is a great way to solve many problems with one solution. Explain that students will abstract their chosen holiday into its most essential elements to make it easier to combine it with other holidays for a shared celebration.

2 **Instruct** students to review the information they gathered about their holiday within their group. They should agree on the most important idea or element of their holiday and write it on the Holiday Abstraction student capture sheet. Students should also include a brief explanation of why they chose that element for their abstraction—in other words, why they decided that element was the most important part of their holiday.

3 **Once each group has extracted its chosen holiday,** instruct students to review the shopping list they created for their celebration. Ask them which items on the list still apply to their abstracted holiday. Then, have them copy only those items onto the Holiday Abstraction student capture sheet.

4 **Remind students** that they are looking for two other holidays that could share the same celebration. Instruct the groups to meet with one another and each group to find two other groups that have chosen a holiday that would be compatible with theirs for the shared celebration, using their abstractions as a guideline. Encourage students to consider many different possibilities for compatible holidays: time of year, religion, similar customs, and so on.

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Students partner with two other groups to create a triple Venn diagram that identifies the similarities and differences among their three celebrations, then create a shopping list that will work for all three events.

1 **Once students have determined** which three holidays will be included in their group celebration, hand out a copy of the Triple Celebration student capture sheet to each group. Instruct them to fill in the three-way Venn diagram at the top of the worksheet with the decomposed characteristics of their chosen holidays.

2 **Instruct** students to label each Venn circle with one of the three chosen holidays. They should then write characteristics that only apply to one holiday in that circle's non-overlapping section. Next, students should write characteristics that apply to two holidays in the overlap between those two circles. Finally, students should write characteristics that apply to all three holidays in the overlap between all three circles.

3 **Once students have completed their Venn diagrams,** direct them to look at the characteristics all three holidays share. Encourage them to discuss these commonalities and to draw their own conclusions about the cultures in which the holidays are celebrated. Do they have more commonalities or more differences? What is the best way to show and celebrate these common elements?

4 **Direct** students to review the shopping lists for all three holidays, then think about what items they would need for a celebration that could include all three. Direct them to use abstraction, comparing their lists to the characteristics in the center of their Venn diagram, to pare their list down to the essential items.

5 **Distribute** the Celebration Storyboard. Direct students to use the storyboard to either write or draw an outline of their planned triple-holiday celebration. Encourage them to be creative, thinking of interesting and unexpected ways to combine the three holidays, and to include specific details. Remind them to focus on the abstracted holidays and shopping lists.

Select one of the strategies listed below to help students answer these questions:

- **How do this problem and solution connect to me?**
- **How do this problem and solution connect to real-world careers?**
- **How do this problem and solution connect to our world?**

1 **Write** the three questions on PPT or flip chart slides and invite students to share out responses. Display chart paper around the room, each with one question written on it. Ask students to write down their ideas on each sheet.

2 **Assign** one of the questions to three different student groups to brainstorm or research, and then share out responses.

3 **Direct** students to write down responses to each question on a sticky note, and collect them to create an affinity diagram of ideas.

How does this connect to students?	How does this connect to careers?	How does this connect to our world?
Students may be aware that some of their friends celebrate different holidays than they do. This can be particularly apparent during times of the year when many cultural celebrations are happening at once. In this lesson, students will learn how computational thinking strategies like abstraction and decomposition can help us better understand one another.	**Sociologists and anthropologists** use holidays to gain an understanding of the cultures they study. **Community Planners and local Politicians** can help bring communities together and solve problems by celebrating holidays on a community level. **Teachers** use holidays to introduce students to new cultures and cultural ideas. **Artists and Journalists** use holidays as inspiration for works of art and news stories. Holidays are particularly popular for makers of film, animation, and television.	Communicating among different cultures is a part of our daily lives. Holidays can serve as a positive way to introduce people to cultures outside their own. Understanding the underlying ideas beneath the individual details of holidays can help people see the similarities among these holidays and the cultures that celebrate them. This, in turn, leads to a greater understanding of the underlying similarities of various cultures and greater acceptance of people from different cultures.

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National Standards

English/Language Arts

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.A
Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.B
Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.C
Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1.D
Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES:
WORLD READINESS STANDARDS FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES

Cultures: Interact with Cultural Competence and Understanding
Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.

Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives:
Learners use the language to investigate,explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

Comparisons:
Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence.

Language Comparisons:
Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Cultural Comparisons: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the culture.

National Standards

Practice 4: Developing and Using Abstractions
Abstractions are formed by identifying patterns and extracting common features from specific examples to create generalizations. Using generalized solutions and parts of solutions designed for broad reuse simplifies the development process by managing complexity.

Holiday List

Choose one of the holidays from this list to research.

- **Chanukah**
- **Christmas**
- **Cinco de Mayo (Fifth of May)**
- **Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)**
- **Diwali**
- **Doll Festival**
- **Dong Zhi (Arrival of Winter)**
- **Earth Day**
- **Easter**
- **Eighth Moon Festival**
- **Halloween**
- **Holi**
- **Ikore**
- **Kwaanza**
- **Lammas**

- **Lunar New Year**
- **Marzanna**
- **May Day**
- **Nowruz**
- **Passover**
- **Purim**
- **Ramadan**
- **Rosh Hashanah**
- **Sankrathi**
- **St. Lucia's Day**
- **Sukkot**
- **Thanksgiving**
- **Valentine's Day**
- **Water Festival**
- **White Day**

Some questions to consider when researching your holiday:

- What culture celebrates this holiday?

- Is this holiday religious? If so, with which religion is it associated?

- How old is this holiday?

- What time of year is this holiday celebrated?

- Who celebrates this holiday?

- What special items or activities are associated with this holiday?

Holiday Research Capture Sheet

Use this space to write information about your chosen holiday.

Your Holiday:

Holiday Information:

Holiday Shopping List:

Holiday Abstraction Capture Sheet

Which detail or idea about your chosen holiday is the most important?

Why did you choose this detail or idea?

Which items from your shopping list apply to this abstraction?

Triple Celebration Planning Capture Sheet

**Label each circle in the triple Venn diagram with one of the holidays in your triple celebration.
Then, fill in the diagram with ideas and elements from each holiday.**
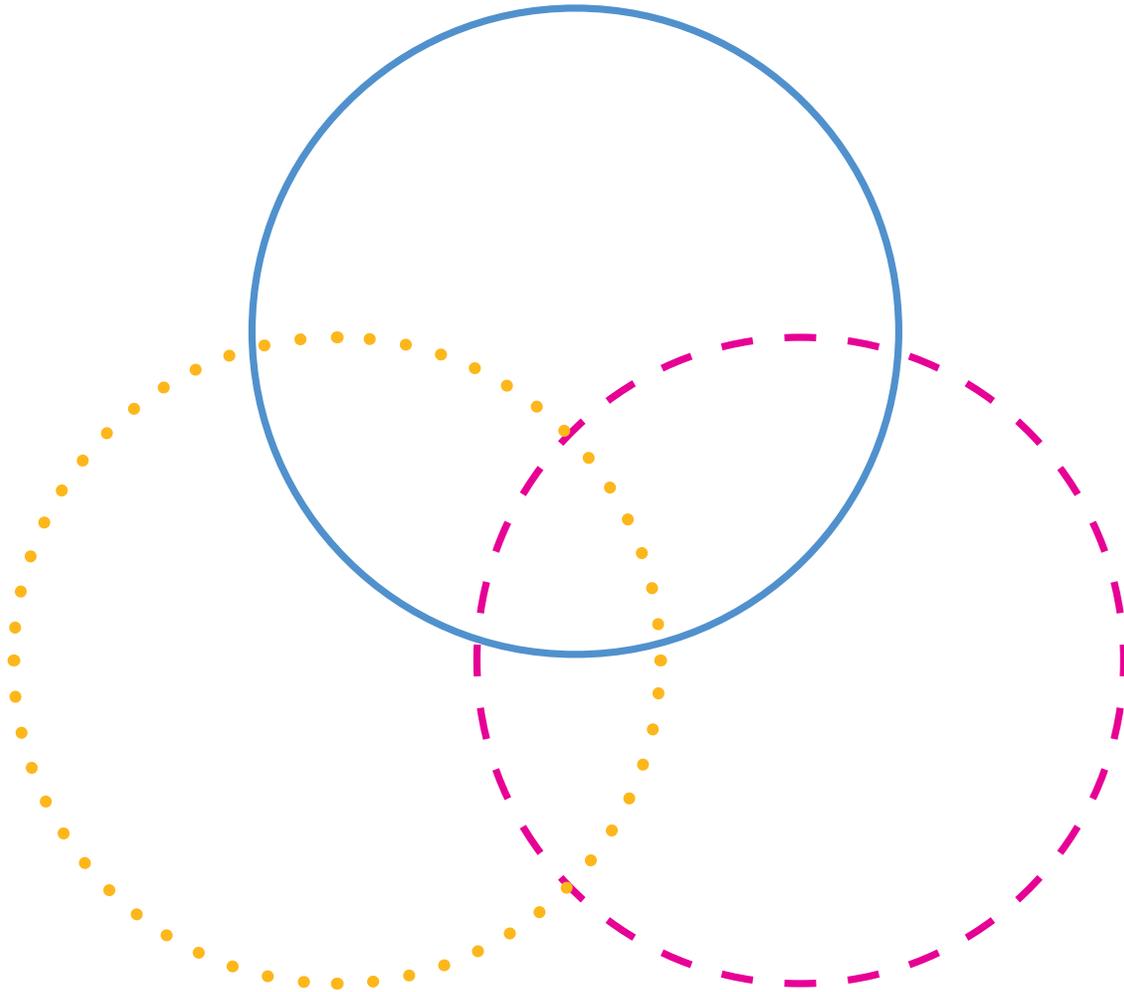
Then, use this space to write an updated shopping list for your triple celebration:

Celebration Storyboard

Use this space to write a detailed description or draw a storyboard for your triple celebration. Be sure to include specific details of each stage of the celebration and the names of all three holidays you are including.

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