Cultural Artifact Assignment

Culture relates to language, values, traditions, dress, and music. It is therefore, not restricted to ethnicity. [Source: Webster Dictionary]

Overview:

Within each culture, there are many objects or artifacts that hold deep symbolic importance. These artifacts might represent an important historic event, reflect deeply held values, be part of important rituals or traditions, or serve as a reminder of a key part of life within that culture.

The purpose of this assignment is to learn more about each other and the cultures represented in our classroom and our society, as well as to gain practice developing and delivering a speech. This share is also intended to help break down stereotypes of difference and to help us see people from cultures other than our own as unique individuals.

Your cultural artifact should teach us about (1) the artifact that is the focus of the speech, (2) the culture from which the artifact comes by sharing how the artifact represents important values and traditions in that culture, and (3) who you are as a speaker. For the purposes of this speech, you are welcome to choose any culture that you belong to; for example, a few of the cultures that other students have shared about in the past include Peruvian culture, nail art culture, breakdancing culture, Mayan culture, marathoner culture, motorcycle club culture, gang culture, deaf culture, Latina cooking culture, foodie culture, audiophile culture, and many, many more.

For this assignment you will need to choose a physical item that is readily available to you that is an important part of and represents important values in your culture. You may take a picture of the physical object with your smartphone. You are not required to bring the physical artifact with you. On a piece of paper/notecard explain how the object represents the culture and the culture’s values, not just how the object is used within the culture.

You should decide whether your share/notes should include a demonstration of the use of the item. In the past students have chosen to include a few of the following demonstrations: how to braid cornrows, how to get out of quicksand, how to drape a sari, how to do salsa dancing, etc.

Research:

For this assignment, most of the knowledge will come from things that you already know. A lot of the information about the artifact is likely to have been passed down to you from your family and culture. Thus, you are not required to use other sources for this assignment. However, you might find it helpful to do additional research to better understand the events or artifact about which you are speaking. You might choose to interview family members or others with knowledge of and experience with your topic. You might also choose to do research at the library and find reliable webpages with information about your topic. If you choose to do additional research, you should be careful to cite your sources in your written response.

All participants whom complete the Cultural Artifact Assignment will be eligible for an AWSOME EWU SWAG gift.