



THE COMPASS

An Interdisciplinary Forum for Sharing Personal
Stories about Culture and Identity

Crafting a Culture Story

Culture is the collective customs of a social group. Social groups vary from person to person and shape people's identities in unique ways. Whether your culture revolves around race, ethnicity, family, your community, or shared experience, you have a valid and important story to tell.

There is no correct way to craft your culture story. However, your story should focus on what has shaped your identity.

Your culture story should be about your personal experiences and interactions with the world. Think about your story in terms of "I" statements, such as "I feel," "I'm observing," or "I care about."

Brainstorming

A good way to develop your story is to set a timer for yourself for two minutes. In five minutes, write on a piece of paper what things matter to you. Only write single words.

Ex: Heritage, Loyalty, Family, Trust

Take a thirty second break.

Then set a three minute timer. Expand from what you wrote and write phrases from those words.

Ex: Heritage and family recipes

Take a thirty second break.

Then take five minutes to write complete sentences based on these phrases. Focus more on why these topics are important to you.

Ex: I care about heritage because when my grandmother taught me our family recipes, this made me feel more connected to my ethnicity.

Questions to Ask Yourself

Sometimes it is helpful to consider questions about yourself or your identity. While these questions aren't applicable to everyone, thinking about some of them may help you craft your story.

1. What is your name? Why were you given that name? Does your name have a meaning?
2. Which communities do you consider yourself a member of? Which nation? Which ethnic group? Which hobbies or athletics? Which organizations? Which identities?
3. What defines your culture? Is it food? Music? Art? A specific historic factor?
4. What has shaped your identity?
5. How does your family interact?
6. Has traveling been a large part of your identity?
7. Have you ever experienced culture shock?
8. How has your hometown impacted you?
9. What part of your identity are you least comfortable sharing with other people?
10. What part of your life are you most proud of? Who helped you achieve this?
11. How do people in your town interact with each other?
12. Do you have a disability that has greatly impacted you?
13. What is your purpose? What is your single biggest thing? Why?
14. Are you a part of a less-represented community?

Formatting Your Culture Story

1. Introduce yourself. What is your name and where are you from?
2. How are you connected to a meaningful feature of your culture? For example, maybe you and your grandmother cooked together when you were younger, and it helps you remember your nation of ethnic origin.
3. What are your observations about this facet of culture? For example, describe the specific recipes you made. What did they look like? What was the sensory imagery?
4. What is your emotional response to this cultural facet? How has it impacted your life and outcome?
5. How will this impact you in the future?

Recording Your Culture Story

The Compass publishes recorded audio and visual cultural stories. Your culture story should be 2-5 minutes in length. To record your culture story, it is ok to use your computer or phone to record. It is a good idea to read through your culture story script beforehand. Here are some tips:

1. Find a quiet location to record.
2. Try to be close to the recording device to get the best audio quality.
3. Record inside rather than outside to prevent wind noise.
4. If you are recording a video, record horizontally.
5. Try to have proper lighting. This means that your source of light is in front of you and your background isn't backlit.
6. Do a test of the video and audio beforehand.

You will be asked to provide a photo alongside your video to be used as a thumbnail on your audio or video recording. This photo should be high-quality and clearly depict your face without extraneous accessories such as hats, sunglasses, or distracting jewelry.

Sharing Your Culture Story

The Compass shares culture stories on our website, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. If you want to share your culture story with The Compass, submit your story at this Google Form: <https://forms.gle/nGMHzu4oEupnXzCf9>

Completing the form designates that you give permission to The Compass to share your name, general location, and audio/video on our platforms. Submitted stories may be edited for brevity or to improve sound quality as needed.

You will be notified when your story is published.

Any questions should be sent to website.the.compass@gmail.com.