OVERVIEW: Clothing is one element of culture that reveals information about people/society. Clothing can tell us “who” by revealing information about gender and socio-economic status, “when” and “where” as it evolves over time and space, and “what” by disclosing information about the society’s values, religious beliefs, etc. This project broadens perspective outside of North-American borders. Students will create a mini-magazine for another country. Besides creating the cover, which should give the reader a glimpse into the other country’s culture (including but not limited to clothing), students will create an article or two describing specific and unique elements of the other country's culture. (E.g.: how the government affects culture, restrictions and limitations for certain people in that society, different clothing based on socio-economic status, etc.) Magazines are fairly influential in American society. They tell us about the latest and most popular music, clothing, hairstyles, etc. By doing this project, students will construct their own definition of “culture” and become more aware of other cultures.

SUGGESTED COLLECTION PIECES: 2001.107.01.AB (Quaker Wedding Dress)
2001.55.01 (Swastika Dress)
2001.55.07 (Nursing Corset)
73.244.02 (Delaware Indian Vest)
78.167.01 (Benedict Macy’s Hat)
89.97 (Baptismal Gown)

OBJECTIVES: Learners will...
- Define “culture”
- Ask questions about a piece of clothing from the collection
- Analyze how those questions lead us to more questions about the culture
- Research a given culture or a specific part of culture
- Create a mini-magazine about their research

DESCRIPTION:
1.) Preparation. Construct a class definition of “culture” including elements/examples that define culture. Things to consider:
   a. What components comprise different cultures?
   b. How can we tell cultures apart from one another?
   c. How is culture decided? Who decides?
2.) Discuss. After students have finished constructing their class definition of culture, show the pieces of clothing from the collection. Discuss how even a small amount of information about each article of clothing leads us to more information (and questions to answer) about the culture in general or about the person who wore the clothing. In order to practice this question-asking technique, ask students to give some examples of questions they have about the culture based on the observations they are making as a class about each piece of clothing. For example, the student
might say, “I am noticing that this article of clothing does not have much color. How does this culture perceive colors and/or colorful clothes?”

a. Also show samples from old magazine covers such as Vogue, Couture, and/or Harper’s Bazaar. *Note: If you show old magazine covers from websites, be careful of the advertisements that show up on those websites. Modern day magazine covers are much more revealing than “the old days.”

b. Magazine covers often time lead us to similar questions about the articles of clothing themselves. At the same time, magazines tell us a lot about a given culture and/or time period.

3.) The Project. Decide whether the students will complete the project in groups or individually, and assign as needed. Each student or group of students will create a mini-magazine about another culture. The mini-magazine should include a cover, and one or two articles on the inside of the magazine. (Students can create mini-magazines for different countries in a region or continent, OR students can create mini-magazines for various culture elements based on the definition of culture that they created as a class: clothing, music, food, religion, sports, entertainment, etc. Either way, you will end up with a class set of mini-magazines about different countries in a region or about various cultural elements for one specific culture.)

Students should research their magazine’s focus (either country/culture or cultural element) prior to creating the magazine itself. Quality research is essential for accurate information. Encourage students to properly cite their information (using MLA, APA, or some other citation style) in their magazine if appropriate. Depending on the course and your students, you may want to require that they turn in part of their research in addition to the final magazine product.

Once the mini-magazines are completed, allow students to share them with one another and/or the community. You could either do presentations of each mini-magazine or a gallery-walk, where people get to walk around and look at each mini-magazine at their own pace.

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS:

Formative Assessment. As students begin their research, the teacher should observe the students’ research skills. The teacher may decide to do mini-lessons during the project that teach about various research skills depending on their students’ knowledge-base about research.

Also, as students begin researching and creating their mini-magazine, their definition of culture may change. This will be an on-going process as students continue to learn about culture. Have a place in the classroom where students can note their modifications to the definition. For example, if you’ve posted the class definition of culture on a bulletin board in your room, leave one half for the students to write on directly. This can be there place to note how they want to modify the definition of culture AND why they think the definition should be modified.
**Summative Assessment.** The mini-magazine will serve as a summative assessment. How you choose to complete the project (country/culture or cultural element) will affect how you choose to grade the project. For either choice, a rubric would work well and could be given to the students prior to starting the project as a way to explicitly display the guidelines and expectations for the project. This will vary from teacher to teacher.

Although writing is already included in this assignment, you may consider asking student to include an abstract-like reflection with their project. This would be a place for students to reflect on their learning process and the change in their thinking as a result of completing the project. Suggested questions: What was challenging about this project? Describe something you learned that you did not know before? Did you learn anything about the other culture that changed your thinking? What did you learn about American culture by completing this project?