

Organizing Information

Growing Up Adopted

Between October 1, 2007, and September 30, 2008, a total of 17,438 children joined families in the United States through international adoption. Read “Growing Up Adopted” (pp. 6-7) to learn about the challenges and rewards that adopted families face. Then use the lesson plan below. It was written for *JS* by Karen Kellaheer, a substitute teacher in Warren County, New Jersey, and former Scholastic editor.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- work together to organize information.
- complete a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two cultures of an internationally adopted teen.
- create a bar graph to show countries of origin for children adopted internationally.

ACTIVITIES

After students read “Growing Up Adopted,” divide them into pairs to work on the following activities.

Activity 1: Two Cultures

1. Review that a Venn diagram is a graphic organizer that makes it easy to compare and contrast two or more things. Draw a simple Venn diagram on the board or interactive whiteboard to remind students how one works.

2. Have pairs recall from the article the two cultures that play a role in Juliette Ferdschneider’s life (Jewish and Chinese), then create a Venn diagram of ways in which Juliette honors them.

3. In the left lobe, students should note facts about how

Juliette celebrates her Jewish culture; in the right lobe, facts about how she celebrates her Chinese culture. In the area where the ovals overlap, they are to note how she honors both cultures. Encourage students to revisit the text to find details for their diagrams.

4. Review the completed diagrams as a class. (See p. T-4 for an example.) Discuss: Why do Juliette and her mother think that it’s important to celebrate both cultures? Do you agree? Explain.

Activity 2: Graph It

1. Have pairs create a bar graph showing the Top-5 countries of origin for children adopted to the U.S. for the year ending September 30, 2008. (Use graph paper.)

2. List the following statistics on the board (or see adoption.state.gov/news/total_chart.html):

Top-5 Countries of Origin for Adoptions to the U.S.

Guatemala	4,123 adoptions
China	3,909 adoptions
Russia	1,861 adoptions
Ethiopia	1,725 adoptions
South Korea	1,065 adoptions

3. Remind students to include a title for the graph and to label each



Karen Kellaheer

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN KELLAHEER

axis. When they have finished their graph, invite them to write a question that other students will be able to answer from the graph. Have pairs trade questions.

4. Challenge pairs to research one country on the graph and name an economic, political, or social factor that might lead to high rates of intercountry adoption. For example, many Ethiopian children are orphaned because of AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, or starvation.

ASSESSMENT

Have each pair share with the class one surprising fact that they learned about international adoption.

Note: Speak Sensitively

When discussing adoption with students, use language that shows sensitivity. Adoption educator Robin Hilborn suggests: “birth mother” instead of “real mother”; “biological child” instead of “own child”; and “chose adoption” or “placed for adoption” instead of “gave up.”