



# LIBERATED ETHNIC STUDIES

MODEL CURRICULUM COALITION

## What's in a name?

**Time:** Days or Hours (1 day, 1-2 hours)

**Grade Level:** 7-12th

### **Purpose:**

Students will explore the topic of birth names, the significance of names, and how names reflect cultural knowledge and traditions. Students will explore and share about their personal name/s and learn about the names of their peers, which will nurture community building and the sharing of self. Students will engage in text and media to deepen their understanding of names, identity, cultural identity, and the importance of pronouncing each other's names correctly.

### **Enduring Understandings:**

- Names are part of our family's cultural knowledge, traditions, and legacies. Our names hold significance and the further exploration of one's name allows opportunities for the celebration of identity and family ancestry. The study of one's name also opens the door for conversations about the impact of colonialism and enslavement, as well as learning about one's pre-colonial self.
- Families and cultures hold a variety of naming traditions.
- Naming traditions have complex psychological, social, environmental and spiritual dimensions.
- Individual names can evolve, they can be earned, and they can inspire growth.
- Names can have great power, and the power of naming is a great power.

### **Essential Questions:**

- What stories exist about the origins of our names?
- What is in a name?
- What do our names reveal about our identities? What do they hide?
- What do our names reveal about our family's cultural knowledge, traditions, and

- legacies?
- What power do our names hold?
- Is there power in giving someone else a name?

**Essential Skills:**

- Students will be able to interrogate and explore the stories and teachings about their personal names.
- Students will share about their personal names and listen to the stories and reflections of their peers. Students will celebrate their identities and build intercultural relations.
- Students will examine themes such as culture, identity, assimilation,
- Students will reflect (writing and/or speaking) about names, the significance of names, etc. (see Assessment)

**Cultural Wealth (Yosso, p. 78):**

- Linguistic capital
- Cultural capital
- Social capital

**Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:**

- Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native peoples and people of color.
- Celebrate and honor Native peoples of the land and communities of color by providing a space to share their stories of struggle and resistance, along with their cultural wealth.
- Center and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, diasporic, familial, and marginalized knowledge.
- Challenge imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on the ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized levels

**Common Core Standards Alignment:**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas
- CA HSS Analysis Skills (9–12): Chronological and Spatial Thinking 3; Historical Interpretation 1.

**Materials:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Card stock paper</li> <li>● Wi-Fi access</li> <li>● Pens or markers</li> </ul>	
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**Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students :**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation</li> </ul>	
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**Critical Vocabulary:**

<b>CRITICAL VOCABULARY</b>	<b>Definition and Rationale for choosing this word, phrase, or concept</b>	<b>Idea for pre-teaching or front-loading the concept.</b>
legacy	<p>Something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.</p> <p>Something important that has been passed on to you from previous generations and ancestors OR Something you will leave behind for your future generations.</p>	Students will dialogue about something that has been in their family for generations, whether it is a material object or a family practice.
culture	<p>Socially transmitted patterns of action and expression. Material <a href="#">culture</a> refers to physical objects, such as dwellings, clothing, <a href="#">tools</a>, and crafts. <a href="#">Culture</a> also includes <a href="#">arts</a>, beliefs, knowledge, and technology.</p> <p>all the features of a people's way of life. customs. the usual way of doing things.</p>	Students will respond to an assessment prompt regarding their definition of culture.
Identity	the distinguishing character or personality of an individual that includes intersectionality of identities.	Students will compose an identity chart.

**C1: Cultural Ritual and/or Energizer**

**Title of Cultural Ritual/Energizer: In Lak'ech**

**Description:** Students and teacher/s will recite the poem “In Lak’ech,” offer a land acknowledgement honoring the Native and Indigenous communities where the course takes place, and offer an ancestor acknowledgement with the intention of connecting participants to their ancestral lineage and loved ones. This practice is done to begin each class. By reciting the poem, “In Lak’ech”, students and teachers are reminded of

the importance of interconnectedness, community, and solidarity. The poem also inspires a democratized space where all hold value, importance, and all hold a responsibility as creators of knowledge and agency.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Steps 1 and 2</b>	<p>Open the space for a land acknowledgement. This practice can take many forms in order to promote authentic expression, engagement, and contextualization. For more information about land acknowledgements, see Resources.</p> <p>Following the land acknowledgement, the teacher opens the space for an ancestor acknowledgement.</p> <p>Potential Prompts:            Who has been a formative person in your life that you want to honor today? Maybe you want to offer gratitude, just simply think about them, or maybe you want to dedicate your learning to them today? Who was/is this person? What makes them special? How can you continue to honor them and show gratitude for what they have offered you in your life? Why do you think it is important to honor, celebrate, and acknowledge ancestors?</p>	<b>1-2 min</b>

## C2: Critical Concepts

**Title of Lecture, Slidedeck/Presentation, and/or Activity:** Our Names and *How Alma Got Her name*


Step 3	DESCRIPTION	TIME
	<p>Explain to students that often your given names have meaning to their family ancestry and identity. Explain to your students that our parents spent a great deal of time selecting their names and that some of our names have special meanings. For example, our names could derive from our family elders or its honoring our legacies.</p>	<b>5 min</b>

## C3: Community Collaboration and/or Critical Cultural Production

**Main Activity(ies):**

Name tent  
 Facundo the Great  
 Narrative medicine

**Description:**

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Step 1</b>	<p>Hand out card stock paper (recommended size - 8.5 x 11) and have students do the following:            Fold the card-stock in half in order to create a name plate.</p>  <p>*Alternative for virtual setting - Students complete activity on a Google slide.</p>	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Step 2</b>	<p>Choose a side and write your first name in the center of the card with your pronouns. The name you choose to write can be your birth name, the name you have chosen for yourself, or one of the names that you utilize at this point in your life.</p> <p>*Extension - The students have the opportunity to write their name in a specific color and/or font. The students can also include an illustration or graphics to illuminate the emotions, feelings, and cultural understandings of one's name.</p>	<b>5-10 mins</b>
<b>Step 3</b>	<p>On the back side of the name tent provide the following directions for the students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. In the <b>upper-left</b> hand corner draw or write words that describe how you felt the first day in High School.</li> <li>B. In the <b>upper-right</b> hand corner draw or write words that describe your ideal Summer day.</li> <li>C. In the <b>lower-left</b> corner indicate your favorite subject in school.</li> <li>D. In the <b>lower-right</b> corner draw or describe one thing you would like to share about yourself.</li> </ol>	<b>15 mins</b>

	<div data-bbox="436 222 995 501" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p>How did you get your name &amp; who named you?</p> <p>What does your name mean?</p> <p>Were you ever called anything else growing up?</p> </div> <p>*(Questions can vary according to your audience.)</p>	
<b>Step 4</b>	<p>On the inside of their name tent provided the following directions for the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Answer one or all of the questions: Who gave you your birth name? What’s the story behind how you got your name? Does your name hold significance?</li> <li>B. What is the meaning of your name? If you don’t know it, look it up or call someone in your family that might know? Do you think the meaning of your name applies to you?</li> <li>C. Have you been called something else? Have you ever changed your name? Why?</li> </ul>	<b>15 mins</b>
<b>Step 5</b>	<p>Discussion and sharing out: Organize students into small groups or coordinate a big circle, whichever is more appropriate for the classroom context. Provide the opportunity for each student to share their name card by introducing themselves and share their answers/thoughts on their name card.</p>	<b>1 hour</b>
<b>Step 6</b>	<p>Whole Group Discussion: Have a brief discussion about what they heard from their peers. What surprised them? What did they learn about others? What did they learn about names and the significance of names?</p>	<b>10 mins</b>
<b>Step 7</b>	<p>Share a brief introduction to the video. For example, “This video may deepen your understanding of names and the importance of names. It also offers an example about how names can be mispronounced, which can then impact someone. What kind of feelings and emotions does someone go through when their name is pronounced. This video is called “Facundo the Great.”</p> <p>Play the video <i>Facundo the Great</i> - <a href="#">Facundo the Great</a></p>	<b>5 mins</b>

## C4: Conclusive Dialogue/Critical Circular Exchange/Narrative Medicine

**Connection:** How is this relevant to students? How is it relevant to the unit? How do you bring back to the PURPOSE of the unit?

Here are some options in order to hold a discussion (whole group, small group, pair share):

1. Teacher shares that the name Facundo comes from the Latin "Facundus." The meaning of the name is "He who is of gifted tongue, sharp intellect, and unmatched virility, from which great genius and bounty flows." The teacher then asks the students if this definition of Facundo matches the larger message of the story. What is the larger message / moral of the story?
2. Students are provided with the opportunity to share about a time when their names were changed by them or someone else because they couldn't pronounce or wanted their name "Americanized" in order to fit in. What are the benefits of fitting in? What do you give up when trying to fit in?
3. Students are provided with the opportunity to discuss why teachers should attempt to pronounce student's names correctly and ways students could push back when educators change or alter a student's name like in the video.

**Assessment:** How will the students be assessed?

Students will write or speak in response to various prompts about what they learned about their names and the importance of their names. The following prompts could be modified as necessary: Should we honor our names? Should we change our names? Why do some people give in to pressure to change their names in order to please others? Why are names important to our identity? What power do our names hold? What power lies in giving someone a name?

**Evaluation:** How will the effectiveness of this lesson plan be evaluated?

The effectiveness of this lesson can be determined in the following areas:

1. Are students participating and engaged in the discussions?
2. Are students interested in the topic and if so, how do you know?
3. Are students completing the Name Plate activity?
4. Are students developing their thinking about "names" in the conversations and discussions?
5. How did the class do as a whole on the assessment

activity (their understanding of how birth names are important to our identity, culture and family legacies).

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## RESOURCES AND NOTES

- **Videos**
  - [Facundo the Great](#)
  - [Naming Ceremony in Tribal Communities](#)
- **Articles**
  - [Multifaceted Native Naming Traditions](#)
- [Land Acknowledgement Resources](#)

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