

*GlobalTribe* Educational Curriculum

Philippines Lesson: Oral Traditions

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[www.pbs.org/globaltribe](http://www.pbs.org/globaltribe)

*GlobalTribe* is a PBS series that combines the spirit of travel with a meaningful exploration of the global issues that affect us all. On our journeys to remote corners of the world, we seek to understand in human terms the universal struggles of our planet: from healing racial wounds to saving the environment to improving the lives of the poorest among us. Our quest is also to find solutions and to meet the unsung heroes in every country who offer us hope and a path to a better tomorrow.

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## **Introduction / Pre-viewing**

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1. Provide students with the following details one by one and ask them to guess the country being described:
  - This country experiences cyclones, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, and destructive volcanic action.
  - 83% of the population is Roman Catholic.
  - This country gained independence from the United States on July 4, 1946.
  - 40% of people in this country live on less than a dollar a day.
  - It is comprised of about 7,100 islands.
  - The aboriginals of the islands are called the Aetas and are a pygmy people.
  - There are approximately 70 distinct indigenous languages in use throughout the country.
  - The navigator Ferdinand Magellan was killed while trying to lay claim to the islands in the name of Spain. Spain eventually controlled the islands for nearly four centuries.

Once you have divulged that the country in question is the Philippines, ask students which of these facts surprise them. What comes to mind when they think of the Philippines? What are they curious to learn about this country now?

2. Ask students if they know where their garbage goes? If you have a landfill near your town, have they been to it? If so, ask about the sights and smells of that place and whether they could imagine living near it.
3. If you have a student or faculty member who has been snorkeling or scuba diving, especially around coral reefs, ask them to describe the experience to the class.  
You might also visit:  
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0101/feature2/zoom1.html>. Talk briefly about the value of coral reef using some of the information available at:

As a class, make a list of examples of aspects of indigenous cultures that the students know to have been lost or are in danger of being lost. This might include various Native American languages or Appalachian folk songs. Then have students write in their journals about how such information as language, arts, and stories are passed down from generation. What can break the chain of communication from one generation to the next? Why are these traditions valuable?

## Oral Traditions

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**Objective: Students will appreciate similarities between American folk and oral traditions and the hudhud. They will identify disappearing traditions in their own communities and record them.**

**Time: Lesson can be adapted to between 5 and 20 in-class hours.**

**Grade Level: 9-12**

1. Review the purpose of the Hudhud and ask the students whether there is anything similar in our culture. Then have them read about Appalachian music (<http://www.sbgmusic.com/html/teacher/reference/cultures/appalach.html>) and this account by Alan Lomax of his historical recordings of American folk singers like Leadbelly, people whose voices and songs may have been lost without Lomax's pioneering work: [http://www.alan-lomax.com/about\\_saga.html](http://www.alan-lomax.com/about_saga.html). Debate the similarities and differences of the hudhud and some of our country's oldest folk music.
2. Ask students to brainstorm people and cultural phenomenon in your area that are disappearing. Family farmers, original settlers, a vaudeville theater, a recently closed soda fountain...all contain interesting and disappearing stories about your community. In some cases, people are still carrying on these traditions and be interviews; in others, people formerly associated with businesses and organizations that no longer exist may still be alive. Collect the students' ideas in a place for all to see.
3. After discussing common questions to ask and how to perform an oral history interview (don't forget calling ahead and thanking people!), have students choose a story from the list to research and, ultimately, to interview a person associated with it. Provide students with local resources, such as librarians, newspaper back issues, and historical societies, that may be able to help them in tracking down specific people since the list may only have indicated, "family farmer."
4. Check in with students on a regular basis to discuss problems they're having. Encourage students to help each other by sharing resources they've discovered. You might also model good interviewing skills by asking a local radio or newspaper reporter to perform an interview in front of the class.
5. Once the students' have collected their stories, make them public either by airing them on a local public radio station or during a parent night, or transcribe the interviews and publish them online along with photographs and other cultural artifacts the students may have found during their search.

**Assessment**

1. Return to a discussion of the value of the Hudhud in the life of the Ifugao. Are students more empathetic now? Do they better understand the cultural parallels between American lost culture and the experience of the Ifugao?
2. Ask community members, including members of the media and historians, to review the students' interviews and make comments.

**Extending**

1. Research some of the oral traditions that were cited by UNESCO along with the hudhud in its Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, [http://www.unesco.org/bpi/intangible\\_heritage/background.htm](http://www.unesco.org/bpi/intangible_heritage/background.htm).

**Resources**

***Oral history***

How to Collect Oral Histories

[http://www.usu.edu/oralhist/oh\\_howto.html](http://www.usu.edu/oralhist/oh_howto.html)

Sound Portraits

<http://soundportraits.org>

Sound Portrait's How to Record

[http://soundportraits.org/education/how\\_to\\_record/](http://soundportraits.org/education/how_to_record/)

**Standards**

Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences

(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=21&StandardID=3>)

Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=7&StandardID=8>)

Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=7&StandardID=7>)

Works well with diverse individuals and in diverse situations

(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=22&StandardID=3>)

Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States

(<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/Benchmark.asp?SubjectID=5&StandardID=31>)

