

# Hello Neighbor!

Traditional arts are passed down from one generation to the next within families and communities and are regarded by the community as part of their heritage. These activities can include music, dance, storytelling, crafts, skills, and celebrations. Communities can be defined in many ways, such as groups that share the same, language, geographic area, ethnic heritage, occupation, or way of life. A folk or traditional artist is a person who learned her/his art informally, by word of mouth through examples in the community.

## 🔑 Pre-Building Prior Knowledge

Folk artists are not teachers and therefore cannot ensure pupil comprehension. **The educator must help students interpret the experience.**

The classroom teacher could initiate a discussion with students to help them understand that folk/traditional arts are learned informally, in face-to-face interactions. People do not usually acquire their skills from a book but learn them from other people who are members of a particular folk group.

**Be open-minded.** The point of having a traditional artist visit the classroom is so that students can experience another way of life, another type of thinking, or another method of learning. Some ethnic groups, for example, might not interpret history in the same way as it is usually presented. Although textbooks state that Native Americans emigrated along the Bering Strait, a Native American folk artist might tell another story about how the tribe originated.

**A word about stereotypes.** It is important to emphasize that stereotypes can result from generalizations based on folk traditions, so it is important to stress that not everyone in a folk group practices the same traditions. Not all kids throw paper airplanes and not all Mexicans or Mexican-Americans make piñatas.



## 🔑 Students as Folklorists

**Observing carefully and listening deeply.**

Through *Hello Neighbor!* students are encouraged to engage as folklorists, observing the artists' artforms and engaging as interviewers – asking questions of the artist in order to “discover” what motivates and inspires their work.

These are suggested questions for your students to ask visiting folk artist. Please feel free to modify the wording of the questions as necessary for your students' grade level.

Suggestion: Print the questions, attach each one to a small card, determine which students will ask the question in the designated sequence.

## 🔑 Discovery

**5 questions, 10 minutes. Assign a student timekeeper.**

1. Tell us about what you do or make?
2. How old were you when you first learned your skill?
3. Who taught you this skill?
4. Why did you want to learn it?
5. Do other people in your family or community practice this art form?

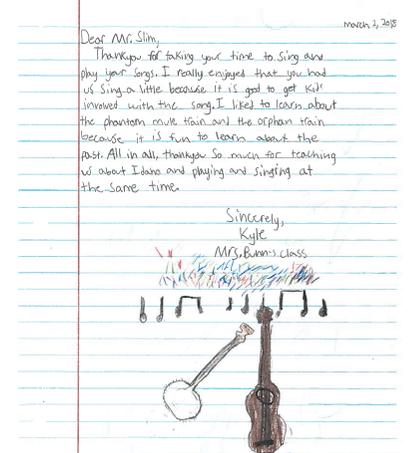
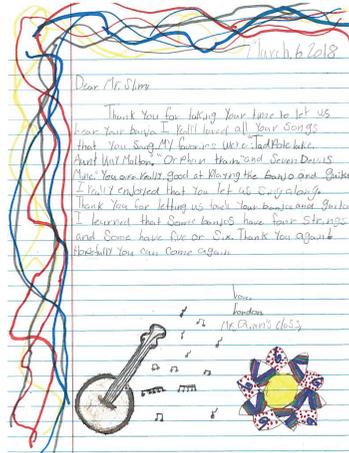
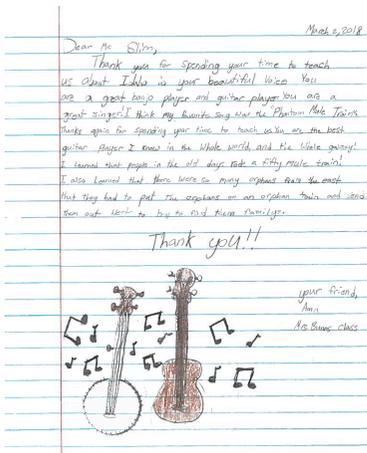




**Demonstration/Observation**  
Artist shows/shares their artform. 20 minutes.

**Expanding Knowledge**  
Deeper thinking. 20 minutes.

6. Is your art a part of everyday life or is it reserved for special occasions?
7. What materials do you need? Where do you get them?
8. Do you need special tools, (costumes), (instruments)?
9. How long does it take to do a typical project?...or learn a new song?
10. How is your work similar to the work of others? Are there things that you all have in common?
11. Do you have your own style, a unique sound, or a special technique?
12. What do you love about what you do?
13. Have you taught others how to do this traditional art? Why or why not?
14. Are there other things you would like to add before we finish this conversation?



**Post-Embedding Understanding**  
Show what you know!

A great way to embed understanding after the Hello Neighbor! experience is to have the students write a letter to the artist. Younger students could draw a picture and add a caption.

**Prompt:** Write these questions on the board to guide the student reflection.

1. Share (five) things that you learned, each in its own sentence.
2. Describe to the artist how you will use this information in the future.
3. Choose something different that you loved about the visit and why it was special to you.

The artist will love to receive the letters showing what the students learned, and so will we. Please scan and send a few examples of the student letters to Ruth Piispanen, Arts Education Director, at [ruth.piispanen@arts.idaho.gov](mailto:ruth.piispanen@arts.idaho.gov).