

Lesson 1.2: Building a Collective Society

Compelling Question:

How can exploring counter-narratives from our diverse perspectives help us cultivate solidarity for a more just society?

Content Objectives

I will

- Compare individualist and collectivist values and the extent to which they challenge the dominant narratives around us.
- Apply indigenous ways of knowing to our understanding of individualist concepts like the American Dream and the Self-Made Man.

Purpose

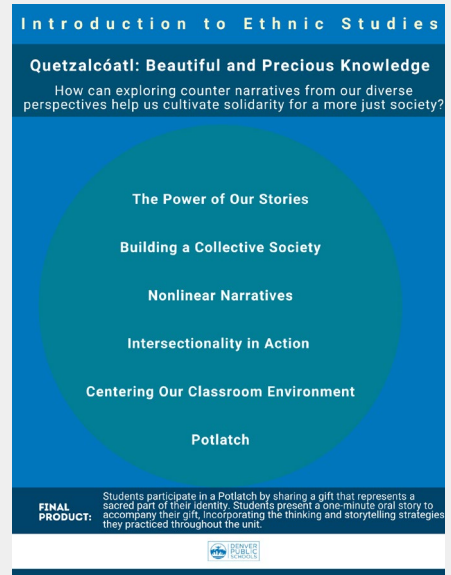
In this lesson, you will analyze and critique individualism in the United States. You will reflect on the concepts of the American Dream and the self-made man and write a logline that captures the essence of the American Dream through an individualist perspective. Then, you will learn about collectivist values from Indigenous Plant Teachings and rewrite your loglines to integrate collective values. Finally, you will apply your learning to a section of Layli Long Soldier's poem.

Lesson Steps

1. **Reflect on dominant ideologies in the United States:** Define characteristics of individualist and collectivist societies and reflect on which ideology is normalized in the United States.
2. **Write a one-sentence logline for the American Dream:** Use the [American Dream](#) handout to create concept maps for the American Dream and the self-made man and reflect on how these two American concepts promote individualism. Finally, write a logline that captures the essence of the American Dream.
3. **Learn from Indigenous Plant Teachings:** Apply indigenous ways of knowing to complicate the values of individualism and the American Dream using the [Plant Teachings Text Exploration](#) handout. Then, using the Plant Teachings reading as inspiration, reimagine the American Dream through a collectivist lens and rewrite your logline to integrate the values of collectivism.
4. **Listen to a poem and annotate:** Listen and read along to poem ["38" by Layli Long Soldier](#) [2:42-4:24] and complete the [Poem Analysis Part Two](#) handout.

Explore More

- Article: [Screenwriting Tips: How to Write a Logline from Masterclass](#)
- Article: ["Storytelling & culture: East meets West, part 1" by Louis Alfieri](#)
- Video: ["The Problem with Hyper-Individualism" from Second Thought](#)



Teacher Guide

Lesson 1.2: Building a Collective Society

Quetzalcoatl: Beautiful and Precious Knowledge



Lesson Overview

Pacing

Lesson Timing: 60 minutes

Summary

In this lesson, students analyze and critique dominant individualist ideologies in the United States. They reflect on the 20th-century American concepts of the American Dream and the Self-Made Man and write a logline that captures the essence of the American Dream through an individualist perspective. Then, students learn about collectivist values from Indigenous Plant Teachings and rewrite their loglines to integrate collective values. Finally, students apply their learning to a section of Layli Long Soldier's poem.

Colorado Standards: [Social Studies](#) & Interdisciplinary

SS.HS.1.1 Understand the nature of historical knowledge as a process of inquiry that examines and analyzes how history is viewed, constructed, and interpreted.

SS.HS.2.3 Investigate patterns of the interconnected nature of the world, its people, and places.

Language Objectives: [9th Grade DPS English Language Competencies](#)

Speaking and Listening

- Prepare for discussion by evaluating and collecting information on the material under study.
- Engage in collaborative discussions with peers.
- Effectively present information, findings, and evidence.

Narrative Writing

- Develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Incorporate narrative techniques to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

Assessment

Formative

- One-sentence logline

Lesson Resources

For Students	For Teachers	Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Dream• Plant Teachings Text Exploration• Poem Analysis Part Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson 1.2 Slide Deck• American Dream Teacher Key• Plant Teachings Text Exploration Teacher Key	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audio equipment

- [Poem Analysis Part Two Teacher Key](#)

Teacher Preparation

- **Step 1: Review the teacher tip.** Read through the teacher tip extension opportunity and decide if you would like to include it in your lesson. If you do decide to include it in your lesson, add a slide and discussion questions to the teacher slide deck.
- **Step 4: Prepare audio equipment.** Play audio and have students read along to the poem that is both printed on a student-facing document and on a poster to be visible in the classroom.

Lesson Steps in Detail

Step 1: Reflect on dominant ideologies in the United States.

(10 min)

Purpose: Students will continue to develop an understanding of dominant narratives and ideologies in the United States by defining individualism and collectivism. They will reflect on which ideology is more normalized in the United States, which will prepare them to critically analyze the concepts of the American Man and the self-made man in the next step.

***You might say:** Yesterday, we learned about the importance of multiple perspectives in both complicating the dominant narrative and building a greater understanding of the truth. Today, we will analyze a dominant ideology that exists in the United States and reflect on its strengths and limitations.*

[Slide 2] Define individualism.

- Share the definition of **individualism**.
 - Think-Pair-Share: *What do you see as important or valuable about individualism as an ideology? What limitations or problems do you see with individualism?*
 - *Possible Response: Individualism encourages people to reach their full potential and to believe in themselves and their power to shape their future. However, individualism might also be problematic because it could encourage selfishness and loneliness.*

[Slide 3] Define collectivism.

- Share the definition of **collectivism**.
 - Think-Pair-Share: *What do you see as important or valuable about collectivism as an ideology? What limitations or problems do you see with collectivism?*
 - *Possible Response: It encourages people to do what's best for the greater good, and to understand and value their connections with one another. However, a problem with collectivism is that it might lead to people sacrificing their needs for the needs of others.*

[Slide 4] Facilitate a discussion on which ideology is more dominant in the United States.

- Ask: *Is the United States more of an individualist society or a collectivist society? How do you know?*

- Possible Response: Answers will vary, but students should come to the conclusion that the United States is more of an individualist society.

Teacher Tip: Connecting to Current Events

Support student understanding of these ideologies through real-world application. If time permits, consider facilitating a longer discussion about how individualist values show up in the United States in politics, culture, and collective thought.

- **Show a short video:** Play the video "[The Problem with Hyper Individualism](#)" from Second Thought until [2:07], then invite students to reflect on where they noticed individualist values showing up in American political rhetoric, pop culture, and media.
- **Facilitate a discussion:** Ask students to reflect on where they see individualist values showing up in modern-day America. Examples might include the public response to the pandemic and health mandates, the debate over gun control, or even the portrayal of superheroes in Marvel films.

Since some of these topics are political, consider setting norms for debate and discussion. Read this excerpt from [Facilitating Political Discussions by Nancy Thomas and Mark Brimhall Vargas](#) for some tips on how to set ground rules before engaging in political discussion.

Step 2: Write a one-sentence logline for the American Dream.

(20 min)

Purpose: Students will extend their understanding of individualism by applying it to two post-colonial American concepts: The American Dream and the Self-Made Man.

***You might say:** In the United States, there is a high cultural value placed on independence, personal choice, self-actualization, and achievement. Let's reflect a bit on how that shows up in American thought by analyzing two highly American concepts that you might be familiar with: the American Dream and the self-made man.*

[Slide 5] Introduce the concepts of the American Dream and the Self-Made Man.

- Distribute [The American Dream](#) handout and review the directions. Give students time to work with partners to complete part one.
- Invite students to share what they know about the American Dream and the Self-Made Man.
- **Ask:** *How do these two American concepts reflect individualistic values?*
 - Possible Response: Answers will vary, but may include discussion around how both assume that individuals are in charge of their destiny and that with hard work, they can achieve success.

[Slide 6] Introduce the one-sentence logline activity.

- Review the directions for part two and share the logline example. Give students time to work in partners or individually to write their American Dream loglines.
- Invite a few students to share their loglines.

Step 3: Learn from Indigenous Plant Teachings.

(20 min)

Purpose: Students reflect on what we can learn from collectivist values by reading an excerpt from *Plant Teachings for Growing Social-Emotional Skills*. Then, they synthesize their learnings by revising their one-sentence logline to incorporate collectivist values.

[Slide 7] Share the [Collectivism - Individualism World Map](#).

You might say: *Dominant narratives and ideologies are not necessarily wrong, but they often oversimplify reality. By learning about other worldviews, we can develop a deeper understanding of the world we live in. This is a map that was created by a Dutch social psychologist, Geert Hofstede. The darker the purple, the more individualistic the society. The lighter the purple, the more collectivist. White indicates no data.*

- **Ask:** *What do you notice about the map?*
 - **Possible Response:** Answers will vary. There are more collectivist societies worldwide than there are individualist societies. The United States, Australia, and parts of Europe are all individualist. For the most part, the rest of the world is collectivist.

You might say: *Though the United States is individualist, many parts of the world are not. In addition, many Indigenous cultures place a high emphasis on collectivism and community. As we discussed yesterday, taking the time to learn from multiple perspectives allows us to cultivate a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the world. In order to complicate our dominant narratives about the United States, we are going to learn more about collectivist values through a text example of an Indigenous way of knowing. It is important to acknowledge that historically the United States has worked to erase Indigenous communities and devalue their knowledge. Creating a more just society means learning from often oppressed communities and also acknowledging the harm that has been done toward them.*

[Slide 8] Provide instructions for text analysis.

- Distribute the [Plant Teachings Text Exploration](#) handout.
- Review part one with students.
- Invite students to read the text and answer the guiding questions with a partner.
- See the teacher tip below about pairing text analysis with clear annotation tools.

[Slide 9] Lead whole group discussion.

- Invite 2-3 students to share their responses to the guiding questions on the handout.
- **Ask:** *How can we use the message behind this text to build a more collective society?*
 - **Possible Response:** Responses will vary but might include thoughts about community. A collective society is one where we recognize and celebrate all of our differences because every person plays a role in creating a society in which all people thrive.

[Slide 10] Invite students to revise their one-sentence logline.

- Review part two of the Plant Teachings Text Exploration handout with students.
- Share your revised example logline with students.
- Give students time to revise their logline either with a partner or individually.
- Invite 2-3 students to share their revised logline. Encourage them to explain their changes and how this new narrative incorporates collectivist values.

Teacher Tip: Supporting text analysis

When students are analyzing text, it helps to provide a focus for their reading. You can do this by pairing texts with several different text analysis strategies or text annotation jobs. You can use the following nonfiction annotation strategy if you are not already using a different text strategy:

- If the text is not already sectioned by paragraph, ask students to chunk the text first.
- Then, invite students to annotate the sections of text using the following guidance:
 - o What/Who is this section about?
 - o What did you learn about the “what” or “who” in this section?
- Once students are done annotating all sections invite them to:
 - o Summarize the central idea of the entire text/document (using as few words as possible.)
- After completing annotations on the text, invite students to answer any text-dependent questions. If there are no guided questions, provide a reflection question for discussion.

Whenever you introduce a new annotation strategy, make sure to do this with students first before asking them to practice it with a partner or individually. You can do this by reading the first few sections of a text out loud as a whole class and doing a think-a-loud sharing your thinking behind each annotation and asking students to write what you write.

Step 4: Listen to a poem and annotate

(10 min)

Purpose: Students will listen and read along to the second part of “38” by Layli Long Soldier to learn more about how an untold story can be constructed to counter the dominant narrative.

You might say: *Today, we will continue listening to “38” by Layli Long Soldier. Take a moment to think back on the poem and what you learned about the Dakota people yesterday. After listening, you will have a few moments to reread today’s excerpt and answer the reflection questions.*

[Slide 11] Introduce part 2 of ‘poem 38’ by Layli Long Soldier (2:42-4:24 min)

- Distribute [Poem Analysis Part 2](#) handout.
- Invite students to [listen to the excerpt](#) and annotate the poem, using the guiding questions below.
 - *According to Layli Long Soldier, what is challenging about sharing a counternarrative?*
 - *During the 1800s, Dakota leaders ceded land to the United States government. Why? How does this decision demonstrate collectivist values?*