



Teacher-to-Teacher

To better understand the rich *diversity* of the American culture, Lesson One looks at the contributions made by people from other countries who have come and made their homes here. These include traditional foods, language and celebrations that are now part of the American experience. The introductory Read Aloud – *I Am America* - is a wonderful way to begin the conversation of diversity. It also acts as a springboard for other activities as students investigate diversity within their class, as well as across the United States. In addition, your classroom literature could be used to highlight the theme. How, for example, do your students see themselves as similar to and/or different from the characters they are meeting in their anthologies and trade books.

Lesson One has many components. You should see the list of materials as a menu and how each item on the menu is designed to reinforce skills necessary for school success.

- The *Sticky Situation* and *Student Voice Bulletin Board* give students opportunity to strengthen problem solving skills and build student voice with discussion and deliberation.
- The *Class Quilt Project* allows each student to show his/her strengths and uniqueness.
- By presenting data in a bar graph format gathered from the class's Student Profile sheets, the students explore the diversity within their class. In addition, this activity can be expanded to include classrooms and data from across the country, giving a richer appreciation of America's diversity.
- The activity, *What's for Lunch*, allows students to compare their school lunch menu with another school's menu. They look for similarities and differences and predict why there are differences. One menu is included in your teacher's guide. You might want to search districts in other geographical locations and print their menus for this activity.
- Finally, the *Literacy Link* bookmark provides activities and discussion questions that extend the lesson.