

## PICTURE COMPARISONS

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This activity asks students to analyze pictures of people from other cultures in different settings. Students will work in groups to answer questions about the picture and then complete a short writing task based on their observations.

### LEVEL

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Lower Intermediate and above

### LANGUAGE FOCUS

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- Grammar: comparative adjectives
- Speaking/Writing: describing a scene; comparing and contrasting details

### GOALS

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During this activity, students will:

- Analyze and discuss a picture of people from another culture (national, regional, etc.)
- Write a paragraph containing at least three comparative adjectives describing some of the differences they observe between the picture and their local environment/culture

### MATERIALS

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- Teacher:
  - Whiteboard, chalkboard, or large pieces of paper posted on the wall
  - Markers or chalk
- Students:
  - Pencils or pens
  - Blank writing paper
  - Photos of people who live in other places doing a variety of activities, enough so that each group of 3-4 students can have one photo. The two sample photos in this activity come from [Celebrate! Holidays in the U.S.A.](#)

### PREPARATION

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- Collect a set of pictures showing people from other cultures. You can use pictures from magazines, the internet, or other sources. Write a short caption under each photograph. Try to include diverse activities and locations in your photo collection (people in the city/country, people playing games, people celebrating holidays, people doing things during different seasons, etc.) Be sure to collect enough pictures so that each group of 3-4 students will have one.

Sample Picture 1



An American family enjoying Thanksgiving dinner (*Celebrate! Holidays in the U.S.A*, p. 45)

Sample Picture 2



An American family on a summertime picnic. (*Celebrate! Holidays in the U.S.A*, p. 81)

## PROCEDURES

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1. Show students 2-3 pictures from your collection. Ask student volunteers to briefly describe what they see happening each picture.
2. Put students into groups of 3-4. Tell groups that they are going to compare what they see in the picture to what life is like where they live. Ask one student from each group to choose a picture from the collection for their group.
3. Ask groups to look carefully at their photo and to discuss the answers to the following questions, which should be written on the board. Students should make notes during the discussion. Be sure to model an example with the class before groups begin their discussions, and remind students to read the photo caption (short description) first when the discussion starts.
  - Where does the scene in the photo take place?
  - What time of year do you think it is in the photo? What time of day is it?
  - What is the weather like in the picture? (if outside)
  - Describe the people in the picture.
    - What do they look like? What are they wearing?
    - What are they doing? Why?
  - Describe other things, shapes, or symbols you see in the picture.
4. Next, ask groups to brainstorm as many differences as possible between what they see in the picture and what they usually see or experience where they live.
5. Tell groups they must write 3 sentences that use comparative adjectives to describe some of the differences they found. Review how to use comparative adjectives to make this type of sentence by giving a few examples:

### (Using Sample Picture 2)

#### **Difference seen in the picture**

*Warm weather*

*Friendly dog*

*Food does not look good*

#### **Sentence with a comparative adjective**

*The weather in the picture looks warmer than weather where we live.*

*The dog with the family looks friendlier than dogs in our neighborhood.*

*The food in our country is more delicious than the picnic food in the picture.*

6. Finally, ask groups to use their notes from their initial conversation about the picture and their comparison sentences to create a complete paragraph that describes their picture. The paragraph should contain about 7 sentences and use the following structure. Write this paragraph framework on the board, and then show students an example paragraph.

#### **Paragraph Framework**

**Sentence 1:** describe the picture in general

**Sentences 2-3:** describe details in the picture (the people, the scene)

**Sentence 4:** *There are some differences between what we see in the photograph and life in our area.*

**Sentences 5-7:** describe three differences (use the comparative adjective sentences)

**Example paragraph:**

Our picture shows an American family eating a picnic in the summer. There are two parents, three children, and a dog at the picnic. They are eating next to a big river and lots of mountains. There are some differences between what we see in the photograph and life in our area. The weather in the picture looks warmer than weather where we live. The dog with the family looks friendlier than dogs in our neighborhood. Also, we think the food in our country is more delicious than the picnic food in the picture.

7. While groups work on their paragraphs, circulate around the room and answer any questions they have.
8. When groups are finished, have them share their work in one of two ways:
  - Assign each group a partner group. Ask the groups to show each other their pictures and read their paragraphs to each other.
  - Ask groups to post their pictures and paragraphs around the room. Give everyone 5-7 minutes to get up and review the other groups' work. When time is up, ask a few students to share which picture/paragraph packages they liked best and why.
9. Ask groups to turn in their paragraphs before the end of class. Provide individualized written feedback to each group, and review any common errors with comparative adjective use you observed with the whole class during the next class meeting.