

Project template: Culture in a box

Language	French, German, Italian, Spanish, Mandarin
Year group	Probably best suited to last year of primary school up to age 13-14.
Short description	Schools will exchange by parcel post the 'culture boxes' containing ten items. By choosing the items to put in, they will learn about 'how others see us'. By explaining their choices they will try to tell their partner school 'how we see ourselves'.
Aims and objectives	▪ Challenge pupils' perception about your country ▪ Contribute to pupils' development as informed global citizens ▪ Develop pupils' skills in creativity, team working and time management ▪ Increase recognition of relevance of modern languages in other subject areas of the curriculum, e.g. geography, history, home economics, music, art, science, etc.
Visible project outcome or product	See Stage 4 below
First steps/Starter activity	Choose team(s) in each school that will find 10 items that represent their country. They will collect these and send parcels to their partner schools. (For expensive items, use cut-out pictures; or for large monuments use a photo or a model.) The parcels could contain items of relevance to national celebrations, (e.g. Christmas or Easter), or to other cultural dimensions, (e.g. the ingredients to a typical dish of the region, together with recipe instructions for this and other dishes in the target language.) Stage 2 Students decide how to stir up interest and intrigue in their partner schools. They could create a quiz to see if the items can be guessed before they arrive; or they could create a PowerPoint presentation about stereotypes; or perhaps some helpful 'Do's and Don'ts' – what to say and how to act when you see or use or eat the item! You can also include useful references such as maps or websites. Stage 3 Photograph the box arriving and being opened. Were the guesses correct? Do the pupils know how to treat the objects? What did they expect and what was a surprise? (Use live discussion, an online forum or send postcards and cartoons.) Stage 4 (extension activities) ▪ Write an essay: the most surprising item ▪ Create a presentation about the partner country ▪ Role play video clips set in the partner country ▪ Create a bilingual magazine or newspaper ▪ Create a travel guide.
Optimum time/length	Allow at least four weeks before the intended sending of the parcel, e.g. for a Christmas parcel exchange, start in early November and send the parcel by the start of December. Work on Stage 4 after the Christmas break.
Resources	Ideas list: symbol, food item, famous building, coin or stamp, clothing, famous painting, piece of music, transport, anthem, saying, handcraft, figurine, etc.

Links to other subject areas/collaboration with other staff in your school or an outside organisation	Links to other subject areas: See aims and objectives above. For German-speaking FLAs, each year, the UK-German Connection selects a number of FLA Ambassadors from across the UK, which gives a small grant towards the cost of buying items for parcel exchange projects, (as well as other joint innovative projects involving a partner school in Germany.) You can use the eTwinning platform to support the links with your partner school.
Evidence	Project diary, photos* from different stages, pupil work. * Remember that before taking photos of anyone aged under 18 that will be publicly displayed you must obtain data consent forms from the British Council and get each one signed by the relevant child's parent or guardian.
Evaluation	At the start of the project ask pupils what they know about your country and its associated customs. At the end ask them again the same question, as well as what they most enjoyed, and what they feel they have improved as a result of their participation. You could also ask teachers at the start assess the progress that pupils have made.
Past successes	- German FLA did two Christmas parcel exchanges, one with a group of Primary 7 (Year 8) and another with a group of S3 (Year 11) pupils. The Primary pupils simply exchanged typical Christmas 'goodies'. The secondary school pupils also made little booklets and cards in groups to explain where the traditions come from or wrote a photo story about what to do and see in Edinburgh during Christmas time. Finally the FLA created a little film for the Germans in which every pupil (and even the head teacher!) shortly introduced him or herself and sent some greetings – all in German. - Another German FLA did only one Christmas parcel exchange with a class of S3 pupils, but used it to start a regular pen pal club. NB: Both FLAs were supported by the UK-German Connection and completed additional projects in school.
Top tips from FLAs	- Allow plenty of time, and if possible establish the link with the partner school beforehand, and try to match pupils - Send parcels in good time. Remember that pupils may be out of class for rehearsals etc. after the beginning of December - Check the cheapest way of sending the parcel, and delivery times - Think about the weight of the parcel, and how to get it to the post office - Start taking photos from the beginning.