

Dress to Express

Adapted from [Clothes Encounters](#), by Mark Wagler, *JFE Vol. 1*

Our clothes are important cultural elements. We use them for many reasons. They are practical, fun symbols of our identity. Let's find some surprises while exploring how we Dress to Express.

Keywords Learning activities, clothing, material culture, family folklore, children's folklore, visual art

Supplies Pencil, paper, optional crayons or markers, optional camera and recorder, Dress to Express Worksheet

Directions

1. Brainstorm what you know about clothing. Write down all the kinds of clothes you can think of—shirts, bathing suits, costumes, etc.
2. What is your favorite outfit or piece of clothing? Draw a picture or take a photo of it. Now write a short description of why it is your favorite.
3. Use the Dress to Express Worksheet to count and describe clothing you have at home. You may have more types of clothes than you expect! You may ask family members and friends to work on it with you.
4. Choose a way to display your types of clothing and what you have discovered about your cultural identity. For example, make a bar graph showing how many of several types of clothing you have. Draw a closet or chest of drawers full of different clothes. Take photos or videos of types of clothes for a slideshow or video presentation. Share your work with family and friends at home or virtually.

Bonus Activities

- Online, yard sales, department stores—people get clothes many ways. Interview family members and friends about how they like to shop for clothes.
- Create a Dress to Express museum by choosing types of clothing to display. Write a short description of each for museum labels. What is the name of your museum?
- Check out Dress to Express Heritage Fellows' Portraits <https://www.locallearningnetwork.org/education-resources/national-heritage-fellows/dress-to-express-national-heritage-fellows-portraits> and the [Local Learning Portrait Worksheet](#).
- Research the history of some type of clothing.
- Learn how a teacher and his elementary students did a deep dive into researching clothes and making a video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSZ4aZUDkkg> of their findings in [Clothes Encounters: Ten Days in Our Perpetual Study of Everyday Life](#).