



## *Unit 01* | Lesson 04

# Diversity and Unity: Navigating Belonging and Exclusion in Diverse Communities

Students examine how communities create boundaries between insiders and outsiders, and how ethnicity shapes experiences of inclusion and exclusion. Building on previous lessons about identity complexity and character strengths, students examine how people navigate belonging and alienation in diverse communities. Students analyze how ethnicity shapes experiences of inclusion and exclusion by studying Roya Hakakian's immigrant experiences and considering three metaphors for American cultural integration: the melting pot, mosaic, and salad bowl. Students reflect on their own experiences with in-groups and out-groups while deepening their understanding of how diversity and unity can coexist. By grounding the discussion in historical context and emphasizing concrete examples, students develop vocabulary and frameworks for productive civil discourse about difference, identity, and integration.

### KEY TERMS AND/OR CONCEPTS

Belonging, Alienation, In-Groups, Out-Groups, Ethnicity, Integration, Melting Pot, Mosaic, Salad Bowl, Cultural Adaptation

Download supplementary lesson materials [here](#)

## Unit Essential Questions

- How do our ethnicities shape our experiences of belonging and alienation in America?
- Which metaphor—melting pot, mosaic, or salad bowl—best describes how different groups integrate into American society?

## Lesson 04 Objectives

- Students can define belonging, alienation, in-groups and out-groups
- Students can explain how being part of an in-group can lead to exclusion or alienation of others
- Students can understand how ethnicity shapes feelings of belonging by analyzing one immigrant's experiences
- Students can compare and evaluate the melting pot, mosaic, and salad bowl metaphors for American cultural integration
- Students can explain that belonging and alienation in America are complex
- Students reflect on their own experiences of belonging or alienation in different in-groups

## Lesson 04 Materials

- [Roya Hakakian's "A Beginner's Guide to America" link to full book](#)
- Background Essay Ethnicity: Inclusion, Belonging, Exclusion, Alienation
- Selected excerpts from Roya Hakakian's "A Beginner's Guide to America"
- Key Concepts Handout
- Metaphors for American Integration Handout
- Discussion questions worksheet
- Homework: Belonging, Alienation, and Integration
- Identity journals from previous lessons

## Pre-Lesson Preparation for Lesson 04

- Read Background Essay: "Ethnicity: Inclusion, Belonging, Exclusion, Alienation" and complete the 4 reflection questions at the end

- **Read Hakakian Excerpts:** Read all four excerpts from Roya Hakakian's "A Beginner's Guide to America" and answer the comprehension questions for each excerpt
- **Initial Reflection:** Consider: How do Hakakian's experiences of moving between cultures relate to your own experiences of belonging or alienation in different groups?
- **Review Identity Journal:** Look back at your identity map from Lesson 1 and your reflections from Lessons 2-3. Be prepared to connect these to today's discussion of belonging and integration

## Post-Lesson Homework for Lesson 05

1. **Read Article:** Periwig Controversy for Lesson 5 to prepare for pluralism discussion
2. **Complete Reflection Questions:** Answer the 5 reflection questions from today's discussion (see worksheet)
  - What are some ways you find belonging through in-groups in your life?
  - What are some ways you experience alienation by being excluded from out-groups?
  - Do any in-groups you belong to create out-groups? How might this be addressed?
  - Which metaphor best describes your family's experience of cultural integration? Why?
  - How might different metaphors apply to different contexts or time periods?
3. **Identity Journal Entry:** Select one aspect of your identity from your identity map. Reflect on how this aspect has influenced your experiences of belonging or alienation. Which integration metaphor best describes how this aspect of your identity fits into American society?
4. **Character Strengths Connection:** Consider: What character strengths (from Lesson 3) might help people navigate the challenges of belonging and alienation? Give a specific example

## Extension Activity

Complete Homework Worksheet on Belonging, Alienation and Integration

Research how your family or community approached cultural integration. Interview a family member or community elder about their experiences

## Note to Teacher

- This lesson assumes students have completed the preparatory reading of BOTH the background essay AND the Hakakian excerpts. Begin with a quick comprehension check through the warm-up discussion.
- If many students haven't done the reading, implement backup plan: briefly review key concepts from the handout, then have students do a quick read of one Hakakian excerpt in pairs before proceeding.
- The lesson emphasizes the historical grounding of in-groups (survival, security, cooperation, trust) - not just abstract 'belonging.' Make this concrete with examples students can relate to.
- The lesson introduces complex concepts of belonging and alienation that students may find personally meaningful and potentially sensitive.
- The Hakakian excerpts deal with immigrant experiences that may resonate differently with students from various backgrounds.
- Be prepared to facilitate discussions about in-groups and out-groups without allowing students to feel excluded or judged.
- The integration metaphors (melting pot, mosaic, salad bowl) can generate strong opinions - maintain focus on understanding different perspectives rather than determining which is "correct."
- Some students may feel uncomfortable discussing their own experiences of belonging or alienation; provide options for private reflection.
- The lesson builds directly on identity concepts from previous lessons, so be ready to make those connections explicit.
- Consider your students' cultural backgrounds when discussing different conceptions of belonging and integration.
- Provide concrete examples—prioritize specific, relatable scenarios over abstract concepts

## STEP 01 | 4 MINUTES

### Introduction

#### *What does teacher do?*

Set the stage by connecting to students' lived experiences and unit essential questions.

"Over the past three lessons, we've explored identity complexity, multiracial experiences, and character strengths. Today we're adding another layer: how do we navigate belonging to different groups while maintaining our identities?"

Think about your own life—you belong to many groups: family, friend circles, teams, clubs, religious communities, online communities. In each, there are unspoken rules. When you're inside these groups, you belong. When you're outside, you might feel lost.

Today we'll explore belonging and alienation, and examine three ways people think about how diverse groups integrate into American society. This connects to 'E Pluribus Unum'—Out of Many, One."

Introduce lesson concepts with relatable example (school cafeteria seating patterns). Connect to E Pluribus Unum theme.

#### *What do students do?*

Listen and begin thinking about their own experiences with different groups.

#### *Teacher Prompts & Suggested Responses*

**Purpose:** Connect to students' lives

- Hook with concrete examples (sports teams, friend groups, people you have lunch with)
- Bridge from previous lessons
- Preview: belonging/alienation and integration metaphors
- Connect to E Pluribus Unum

#### **KEY POINTS:**

- Start with experience: "You belong to multiple groups"
- Make concrete: "friend circles, teams, online communities"

**tone:** Conversational, inclusive, forward-looking

- When explaining in-groups, briefly mention their historical importance: "Throughout history, in-groups

provided survival benefits through cooperation, security, and building trust. They weren't just about belonging but about creating systems where people could safely interact."

#### STEP 02 | 4 MINUTES

### Opening & Homework Check

#### *What does teacher do?*

Introduce with concrete, relatable example connecting to E Pluribus Unum.

"Think about how students sit at lunch. What creates these groups? Sports teams? Friend groups? Shared interests?"

#### **Ground in-groups historically:**

"Throughout human history, in-groups weren't just about feelings. They were essential for survival. In early societies, you couldn't hunt alone, defend alone, or survive alone. Groups provided security, cooperation, and trust. Even today, in-groups serve important functions."

Check homework comprehension through discussion:

- "What surprised you in the background essay?"
- "Share one example of belonging and one of alienation from Hakakian"
- "How did Hakakian describe being a 'twilight citizen'?"

#### *What do students do?*

Share insights from homework readings.  
Provide concrete examples from the texts they read.

#### *Teacher Prompts & Suggested Responses*

**START** with concrete examples:

- "Where do YOU see in-groups and out-groups?"
- Sports teams, friend groups, clubs, neighborhoods
- Online gaming communities, social media circles

**EMPHASIZE** historical grounding:

- **Survival:** hunting, gathering, defense
- **Security:** knowing you'd be looked after
- **Trust:** shared rules and expectations
- **Cooperation:** dividing labor, sharing resources
- **Trade/innovation:** benefit from connecting across groups

#### **Key points from readings:**

- **Belonging** = feeling at home and competent
- **Alienation** = feeling disconnected
- **In-groups** = where you understand the "rules"
- **Out-groups** = where you lack understanding
- "Twilight citizens" = between two cultures

**Bridge:** "These dynamics shape how we think about American integration"

Backup if students didn't read: Adjust timing, brief review

#### STEP 03 | 7 MINUTES

### Key Concepts & Review Metaphors

#### *What does teacher do?*

Distribute handouts. BRIEFLY review with concrete examples (students read essay):

**BELONGING:** "Think of when you walked into a room and felt comfortable—family dinner, team locker room, friend's house. What made you feel that way?"

**ALIENATION:** "Think of when you felt lost—first day at new school, conversation in language you don't understand, not getting inside jokes."

**IN-GROUPS:** Use student examples—lunch table groups, team members, band/choir, gaming friends, religious communities

**OUT-GROUPS:** "Groups where you don't know the 'rules'—different sport's culture, hard academic subject"

Introduce three integration metaphors:

- **Melting Pot:** Blending to create something new
- **Mosaic:** Maintaining distinctiveness while contributing
- **Salad Bowl:** Remaining separate but coexisting

#### *What do students do?*

Take notes, ask clarifying questions.

Connect terms to Hakakian excerpts they read.

Share personal examples when prompted

#### *Teacher Prompts & Suggested Responses*

**BRIEF** review of essay

Again remind students of concrete examples:

- **School:** lunch groups, classes, extracurriculars
- **Online:** gaming communities, social media
- **Community:** neighborhoods, cultural groups
- **Family:** gatherings, traditions
- **For each term:** "How did you see this in Hakakian?"

Visual language for metaphors:

- **Melting pot:** "Like soup—ingredients blend"
- **Mosaic:** "Like stained glass—distinct pieces create beauty"
- **Salad bowl:** "Like salad—ingredients side by side, distinct"

**CONNECT** to historical in-groups:

"Just as historical in-groups provided survival/trust, these metaphors represent different ways groups maintain benefits while integrating"

**Transition:** "Since you've read these, let's dive into deeper analysis"

#### STEP 04 | 18 MINUTES

### Interactive Text Analysis & Discussion

*What does teacher do?*

Facilitate deeper analysis of Hakakian excerpts students already read as homework.

#### SMALL GROUP ANALYSIS

Divide into groups of 3-4

Groups use Discussion Questions Worksheet

Analyze texts they've read for:

1. Specific examples of belonging vs. alienation
2. Which integration metaphor(s) fit Hakakian's experience
3. Character strengths that help navigate cultural transitions
4. How in-groups might welcome out-groups

#### WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION

Groups share findings

Explore complexity:

- "How can same experience involve BOTH belonging and alienation?"

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- "Which metaphor best fits 'twilight citizen' concept?"
- "Does her experience suggest one or multiple metaphors?"
- "What character strengths did you notice?"
- "How might in-groups make out-groups feel welcome?" (addresses reviewer George's suggestion)

#### *What do students do?*

Work in groups to analyze Hakakian excerpts.

Share findings with class.

Build on each other's observations.

Discuss how in-groups can welcome out-groups.

#### *Teacher Prompts & Suggested Responses*

Focus on ANALYSIS not comprehension (students read already)

#### KEY DISCUSSION POINTS:

Excerpt 1 (America as liberating):

- **Alienation:** heritage "tossed aside," customs disrespected
- **Belonging:** freedom of expression, no censorship
- **Challenge:** losing one belonging while gaining another

Excerpt 2 ("Twilight citizens"):

- Neither fully insider nor outsider
- Creating something new (third language, third identity)
- "Pebble in shoe"—constant awareness of being between worlds

Integration metaphors:

- "Does Hakakian support melting pot, mosaic, or salad bowl?"
- "Can someone be 'twilight citizen' under each? How?"
- "Do all three metaphors apply in different situations?"

In-groups welcoming out-groups:

- "What helped Hakakian move from out-group to in-group?"
- "What could dominant in-groups do to welcome newcomers without forcing assimilation?"

- "Examples where in-groups successfully welcomed out-groups?"

**Character strengths:** Adaptability, social intelligence, authenticity, hope, bravery, perspective

**VALIDATE** multiple interpretations—no single "right" answer

#### STEP 05 | 8 MINUTES

### Application & Personal Reflection

#### *What does teacher do?*

Guide students to connect concepts to own experiences.

"Now that we've analyzed Hakakian's experiences, let's connect this to your own lives."

#### **THINK-PAIR-SHARE:**

**THINK:** Reflect using concrete prompts:

- Think of ONE specific in-group you belong to (name it: soccer team, debate club, church youth group)
- Think of ONE time you felt like out-group member (be specific)
- Which integration metaphor describes your family/community? (Give specific example)

**PAIR:** Share with partner:

- How experiences compare to Hakakian's
- Whether different metaphors apply in different contexts
- How in-groups you belong to could better welcome out-groups

**SHARE:** Volunteers share insights with whole class

#### *What do students do?*

Reflect individually using concrete, specific examples.

Discuss with partner, focusing on comparisons to Hakakian.

Share with class.

Make connections to identity journals from previous lessons.

#### *Teacher Prompts & Suggested Responses*

**EMPHASIZE** concrete, specific examples:

- Not "a time I belonged" but "when I made varsity team and seniors welcomed me"

Not "my family" but "my family celebrates both Christmas and Lunar New Year"

**PROMPTS** for think time:

- "Name one specific group—what are unspoken rules?"
- "Describe one specific moment you felt excluded—what happened?"
- "How does your family handle food, language, holidays—which metaphor fits?"

**PROMPTS** for whole-class share:

- "Did anyone notice different metaphors in different settings?" (home vs. school)
- "Can anyone share specific example of in-group welcoming them?"
- "What specific things did people do to make you welcome?"

**Bridges to Hakakian:** "How is your experience similar/different from Hakakian's 'twilight citizen' status?"

#### **JOURNAL CONNECTION:**

- "For homework, reflect in identity journal about how belonging/alienation connects to identity map"

#### STEP 06 | 4 MINUTES

### Closure & Homework Preview

#### *What does teacher do?*

Summarize key insights about belonging/alienation complexity and integration.

Preview homework and connect to next lesson.

#### *What do students do?*

Note homework assignments.

Share one key insight from discussion.

#### *Teacher Prompts & Suggested Responses*

**SUMMARIZE** with concrete examples:

- "Belonging and alienation often coexist—Hakakian felt both"
- "In-groups have historical functions: survival, security, cooperation"
- "Different integration metaphors work in different contexts—no single 'right' way"

- "In-groups can intentionally welcome out-groups while maintaining identity"

**CONNECT** to metaphors and pluralism:

- "These metaphors represent different approaches to E Pluribus Unum—creating unity from diversity"
- "Melting pot, mosaic, salad bowl each offer different solutions"

**PREVIEW** homework:

- "Read Periwig Controversy for Lesson 5"
- "Complete 5 reflection questions on worksheet"
- "Add identity journal entry"
- "Consider character strengths"

**CONNECT** to next lesson:

- "Next: How does pluralism—diversity of viewpoints—create challenges and opportunities?"
- "Your understanding of belonging/alienation will help you understand pluralism debates"

**Ask:** "What's one concrete example or insight you're taking away?"

**Remind:** "Your reflections prepare you for pluralism and civil discourse"

## Assessment Notes

- Observe student understanding during opening homework check - assess comprehension of key readings
- Monitor small group discussions during Step 3 - check for accurate analysis of text and use of concrete examples
- Note student ability to connect integration metaphors to both Hakakian's experiences and personal experiences during Steps 3-4
- Check homework completion next class (reflection questions and identity journal entry)
- Look for grasp of concepts beyond simple definition - ability to apply and analyze
- Assess understanding of how metaphors relate to belonging/alienation experiences
- Evaluate students' ability to recognize that multiple metaphors can apply in different contexts
- Assess whether students understand historical grounding of in-groups (survival, security, cooperation, trust) beyond abstract feelings
- Note students' use of concrete, specific examples when discussing their own experiences (high schoolers need this grounding)