



Writing Stories of Multilingualism and Migration





Mural in Southwest Detroit

photo by
Theon Delgado Sr.



What is a
Stereotype?



A Stereotype is an overly simple image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.



What do you see in this image?



How can we all help to work against stereotypes?



Herberto and Leo

Photo by Theon Delgado Sr., Southwest Detroit

“Home for me is Hispanic” ~ Herberto

What does home
mean to you?

What words would you use to express the concept of home in other languages that you speak?



Party

Northern
Dortmund

~

“Translations of
all Languages”

Photo by Theon
Delgado Sr.



Party first came to Germany as a refugee from Iraq. He now works in a translation bureau.

He speaks Kurdish, Arabic, English, German, and Greek.

He chose this job, because he wants to help new migrants to Germany find their footing there.

Do you ever find yourself
translating or moving
between languages
and cultures?



Clara

Southwest
Detroit

Photo by Theon
Delgado Sr.

Does your family celebrate any specific traditions or eat/prepare any special foods?



Children Playing in the Street

Dortmund,
Germany

Photo by
Peyman Azhari

How can we make homes for
ourselves in a new place?

Choose **one** of the questions we discussed together and write a short response:

- What does home mean to you?
- Do you ever find yourself translating or moving between languages? If so, can you describe your experience.
- Does your family celebrate any specific traditions or eat/ prepare any special foods? If so, what are they?
- How can we make homes for ourselves in a new place?

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Notes to Teachers

- These slides are intended to be used with 4th or 5th grade ESL students, or students with personal or familial experiences with migration or multilingualism.
- Use these images and slides to lead a classroom conversation that can prepare students to write short personal reflections of their own.
- The Mural in Southwest Detroit (Slides 2-6) raises important questions about stereotypes and how harmful they can be. You could discuss the flag as an easily recognizable symbol for nationality, while also explaining that our identities—national or otherwise—are much more complex than any simple symbol could ever capture. (Do all Americans speak English? No. Do all Germans have a “German-sounding” name? Not necessarily. Are all Arabs Muslim? No. You can also discuss the image as a whole and the importance of the fact that this work of art is in a public place and written in multiple languages. All of these languages work together to give the image meaning and power. This provides the opportunity to discuss stereotypes and how harmful they can be. We can work against stereotypes by remaining open and not making assumptions about other people and cultures.

- Slide 7 shows two men sitting on the street in Southwest Detroit. The man on the right is Herberto, who stated in an interview with photographer Theon Delgado Sr. “Home for me is Hispanic.” These images provide excellent opportunities to discuss diasporic belonging. The men are holding bongo drums, which are often featured in Latin music, and the drums have the Puerto Rican flag printed on them. Students might also notice the satellite in the image on the right, which is a symbol of globalized connection.
- Slide 8 invited students to think about what “home” means to them. Encourage students to reflect on whether they have multiple homes, or whether they feel at home in multiple languages. You could also think about home as a mobile concept (for example, home is where my family and friends are), that is not tied to a specific place.
- Slide 9 encourages students to think about the word “home” in the different languages they may speak. Encourage students to reflect on whether the word for “home” might have different meanings in different languages.

- Slides 10-11 feature Party, a Kurdish refugee from Iraq who is now living in Dortmund. The image shows Party in the translation bureau he works for. Students might notice the multiple languages written on the window (the German reads: Translations of All Languages; the Arabic reads: Translation bureau). This slide can help students to think about questions of translation: How does the image reflect the kind of work that Party does? Students might also notice the reflections in the image. It looks almost as if the bicycle is inside the store. What is inside and what is outside? Is this kind of reflection also like a process of translation? You can also discuss translation as a point of connection between both languages and cultures.
- Building on your discussion of Party's image, ask students if they also find themselves moving or translating between languages and cultures (slide 12). Do they ever translate for their parents or friends? Have they ever had to explain a cultural practice to someone else? Etc.

- Slide 13 shows Clara from Southwest Detroit grilling corn. Corn is a central component of Mexican cuisine. Did students know that there are at least 59 varieties of heirloom Mexican corn and many more hybrids and mixes?! This diversity is often overlooked in American perceptions of Mexican culture.
- Use the image of Clara to start a conversation about any of their own favorite foods or traditions (slide 14).
- Slide 15 shows children playing on the street of Dortmund. These children have simple windmill toys and are playing on the street with a garbage bin in the background. You can use this image to get students thinking about the many different ways we can make a place a home. Often it is the connections we have to a place that lead us to feel a sense of belonging. These connections are often forged through people, such as family, friends, teachers, or other community members. You can use this image in connection with slide 16 to discuss the different kinds of community and belonging students have experienced in life.
- In conclusion, you can ask students to choose **one** of the questions from slides 8, 12, 14, and 16 to write a short response to.