Throughout the world, you will find a multitude of cultures, languages, foods, architectural styles, behaviors, and values. The result of all these differences is a fascinating but often conflict-filled world. Working on this interest project will help you gain an understanding and appreciation of your own and other people's cultures—the first step in creating a world of understanding.

1. Plan what you would do to host a visitor from a different country. If you had the ability to transport this visitor across the continent, what would you show her that was typically "American" and that reflects the multifaceted nature of American society. Make a one-week itinerary for this visitor.

2. Choose a section of your town or your neighborhood and create a "walking tour." Identify the cultures of the people who originally settled in this area. Did any famous people live in the buildings? How has the area changed over the years? If possible, take a small group on the tour you have created.

3. Explore the cultural identity of your own family by tracing your roots. Create a family tree that includes at least your grandparents. Make sure to include any things of significance like changes in names or religions. You might want to create a chart that you can distribute to other members of your family, who will surely find your project interesting.

4. The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to military leaders and pacifists, diplomats and philosophers, and activists who protect human rights. If you were on the committee today, who might you nominate? Learn about at least one woman who has received the Nobel Peace Prize by reading or viewing an account of her actions.

5. Participate in mediation training, a peer leadership program, or a guided role-play focusing on a world peace topic. What are the connections you can make about mediation between individuals and mediation between groups or nations?

6. Plan and stage an event where each girl wears clothing representing a different country or ethnic group. Discuss what that clothing tells you about being female in that country or group. What roles and behaviors are expected of these women? How does their clothing affect everyday activities? Find out what clothing young women in a country of your choice wear to school, on the job, and on special holidays.

7. Pick a country and plan a trip to it. Use at least three different resources to find out about the country—such as the public library, a consulate, a travel agent, someone from that country, or special organizations that promote international understanding—and plan your travel itinerary.

8. Watch three different news shows that highlight world news. For each show, make a list of the topics and countries that are highlighted. What types of stories are excluded to air about other countries? Discuss with a group of peers or your family what you have observed. How powerful a force has television become in shaping our impressions of and opinions about other countries? Can you list positive and negative aspects of this technology?

9. Search the Internet for information on a country or culture that intrigues you.

10. Learn about how computers are used for translating languages, especially those that use a different alphabet or characters.

11. Find out how technology is used to identify important information about artifacts from different cultures.

12. Use a shortwave or ham radio to listen to broadcasts from abroad. Perhaps you can find someone in your neighborhood with this type of equipment.

13. Volunteer with a local group or organization that teaches English as a second language or tutor someone in your school whose native language is not English. Exchange cultural information with that person.


15. Find out about a religion that differs from your own. You might choose to learn about the predominant religion of another country or about a religion in this country. If possible, visit a house of worship of this religion in your community and talk to someone of this faith. List adaptations you would make in living and eating habits if a person of this religion visited your home.

16. Interview someone who has gone on an international experience through Girl Scouts or has been an exchange student in a foreign country. Find out what she did to prepare for the experience and what she learned about other cultures. Ask her if the experience she had while abroad will help her to choose a career.

17. Compare business customs in at least three different countries. If possible, interview someone who conducts business abroad and find out what customs they observe as a part of their job. How do these customs differ from those practiced in the United States?

18. Girl Scouting is dedicated to serving all girls. As a result, there are many people who do a variety of different jobs to ensure that diversity flourishes. Explore the careers within Girl Scouting, especially those that include responsibilities that deal with pluralism and diversity, cultural awareness, and international affairs.

19. Learn about the Peace Corps. Find out what kinds of qualifications are needed to join. If possible, speak with someone who has been a Peace Corps volunteer or arrange for a Peace Corps speaker to address your troop or group or students at your school.

20. Investigate at least two colleges that offer degrees in political science, international affairs, or other fields that might lead to a position in the diplomatic corps.

And Beyond

READ THE POEM "DIVERSITY" ON PAGE 6 of A Resource Book for Senior Girl Scouts. What message does the poem convey about diversity? Do you have similar or different feelings?

If a World of Understanding has opened up whole new worlds to you, continue your explorations with these related interest projects:

- Travel
- The Language of Clothing
- Creative Cooking
- Reading
- Games for Life
- Folk Arts
- Invitation to the Dance