

The Hair We Wear

Long or short, curly or straight, hair is part of our cultural traditions. In some cultures, people grow their hair long, cover their hair, or shave it off completely. Learning how others maintain and style their hair can help us appreciate our diversity.

But hair is sometimes a focus of discrimination. In the past, boarding schools forced American Indian kids to cut their hair, going against important spiritual traditions. Some schools and businesses today even

prohibit hairstyles that are traditional or popular in African American communities.

Our hairstyles are more than just a fashion statement. For many cultures, they have specific meaning. Also, different kinds of hair require different care. Rules that don't take that into consideration are unfair. When we honor and celebrate the hair we wear, we can break down walls of prejudice and see the unique beauty in our human family.

At a multicultural fair, these kids are sharing their cultural hair traditions. Read the clues, then match each kid with their country.

1 FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS, WE SOMETIMES WEAR HAIR ORNAMENTS CALLED KANZASHI. I LIKE CHERRY BLOSSOMS, WHICH BLOOM IN MY COUNTRY.

2 IN MY COUNTRY NEAR PERU, TSÁCHILA BOYS AND MEN USE ACHIOTE SEEDS FOR BRIGHT RED HAIR SHAPED LIKE A SEED POD—A SYMBOL OF LIFE.

3 IN PARTS OF MY AFRICAN NATION, WE WEAR ANCIENT PATTERNED HAIRSTYLES. WE BOND AND SHARE STORIES WHILE BRAIDING EACH OTHER'S HAIR.

4 FOR NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN PEOPLE, LONG HAIR CONNECTS US TO NATURE AND SYMBOLIZES KNOWLEDGE. TRADITIONALLY, WE ONLY CUT HAIR WHEN WE'RE MOURNING.

5 ON SPECIAL DAYS, MIAO GIRLS AND WOMEN WEAR HEADDRESSES WITH OUR ANCESTORS' HAIR WRAPPED AROUND AN ANIMAL HORN. I'M FROM THE WORLD'S MOST POPULATED NATION.

6 WITH JEWISH LAW, ORTHODOX BOYS AND MEN OFTEN GROW LONG HAIR BETWEEN OUR EAR AND TEMPLE. MY HOMETOWN IS SACRED TO JEWS, CHRISTIANS, MUSLIMS, AND BAHÁ'Í'S.

7 MANY MUSLIM GIRLS AND WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD SHOW MODESTY BY COVERING OUR HAIR WITH A SCARF. I LIVE NEAR INDIA.

