What’s So Special about Appalachia?

Supporting Questions

1. How do art forms reflect life in Appalachia?
2. How does music reflect life in Appalachia?
3. How does literature reflect life in Appalachia?
### What’s So Special about Appalachia?

#### C3 Framework
D3.4.3-5. Use evidence to develop claims in response to compelling questions

#### Staging the Question
Ask questions through the Question Formulation Technique aimed at identifying and exposing negative stereotypes in *The Beverly Hillbillies*

#### Supporting Question 1
**How do art forms reflect life in Appalachia?**

**Formative Performance Task**
Create a list of types of artwork produced in Appalachia and describe how they reflect life in Appalachia.

**Featured Sources**
- **Source A:** Quilts
- **Source B:** Dulcimer and music
- **Source C:** Baskets and basket making

#### Supporting Question 2
**How does music reflect life in Appalachia?**

**Formative Performance Task**
Do a close read of the song lyrics and write 1-2 sentence summaries on how each song reflects life in Appalachia.

**Featured Sources**
- **Source A:** Loretta Lynn “Coal Miner’s Daughter”
- **Source B:** Dwight Yoakam “Readin’, Rightin’, Rt. 23”
- **Source C:** Ricky Skaggs “Country Boy”

#### Supporting Question 3
**How does literature reflect life in Appalachia?**

**Formative Performance Task**
Develop a claim about the positive and negative ways Appalachia is depicted in literature.

**Featured Sources**
- **Source A:** *When I Was Young in the Mountains* Cynthia Rylant
- **Source B:** *The Relatives Came* Cynthia Rylant
- **Source C:** *My Great-Aunt Arizona* Gloria Houston
- **Source D:** *The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree* Gloria Houston

#### Summative Performance Task
**ARGUMENT** What’s so special about Appalachia? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from current and historical sources while acknowledging competing views.

#### Taking Informed Action
**UNDERSTAND** Research the ways and methods in which public and private groups depict the culture of Appalachia.

**ASSESS** Examine the Appalachian Regional Commission’s (ARC) “Visit Appalachia” website and assess the extent to which it reflects the culture of Appalachia.

**ACT** Organize an Appalachian culture day OR write the ARC a letter that addresses what needs to be changed to reflect a more accurate picture of Appalachian culture.
Overview

Inquiry Description

On the surface, the compelling question for this inquiry, “What’s so special about Appalachia” asks students to explore the cultural diversity in the region they live. Students look across artisan crafts and artifacts, music, and literature to investigate their culture. Every place is home to someone and it is important to look at what makes each of our homes special. The culture students are looking at here is encapsulated in studying what they see, read, and hear. Teachers and students should note that there is no way to fully capture the richness and nuance of Appalachian life. Inferences can be made from the music and literary documents, but teachers and students should be aware that absence of sources can influence the interpretations that we develop of the past. This inquiry serves as a reminder to invite students, who have lived in Appalachia or who want to better understand the region, to bring in the world around them.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take three to five 30-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries in order to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “What’s so special about Appalachia?” students work through a series of supporting questions, performance tasks, and sources in order to construct an argument supported by evidence while acknowledging competing views.

Staging the Compelling Question

To stage the Compelling Question, teachers can introduce negative stereotypes and how misrepresentation and oversimplification damages the vibrancy of regional cultures. Students view a small clip from The Beverly Hillbillies and consider how men, women, dress, and values are depicted. Using the Question Formulation Technique, students generate questions around a question focus (Q-Focus) aimed at either the video itself. Teachers should encourage students to explore stereotyping (e.g. Why are Appalachian people represented this way? Why do others find this funny? What does it really mean to live in Appalachia? What economic and geographic influences have affected Appalachia?). Although it may seem that The Beverly Hillbillies perpetuates stereotypes, the show offers a great way to break down stereotypes, discuss where these might originate, and why they are perpetuated so that students can have a better appreciation for the richness of Appalachian culture.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—“How do art forms reflect life in Appalachia?”—asks students to begin building their understanding of Appalachian culture. After reviewing a range of crafts, artifacts, and musical instruments, the formative performance task asks students to create a list of types of artwork produced in Appalachia and describes how each work reflects life in Appalachia. These sources include quilts, how to make baskets, and the dulcimer’s impact on Appalachian music.
Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question—“How does music reflect life in Appalachia?”—asks students to examine Appalachian music and lyrics and how these combine to reflect a unique sense of the area. Featured Source A is Loretta Lynn's “Coal Miner's Daughter” providing an intimate look at life in “Coal Country.” Featured Source B is Dwight Yoakam’s “Readin', Rightin', Rt. 23,” which looks at education and economic challenges to the Appalachian region. Finally, Featured Source C is Ricky Skaggs’ “Country Boy,” a song that provides a sense of pride of being from the South. The formative task asks students to do a close read of the song lyrics and to write 1-2 sentence summaries on how each song reflects life in Appalachia.

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“How does literature reflect life in Appalachia?”—asks students to investigate the various stories, themes, and traditions of Appalachia through literature. The first source examines life from the point of view of growing up in the mountains of Appalachia. The second and third sources highlight the importance of family to culture. The final featured source offers insights into the importance of Christmas to Appalachian people. The formative task asks students to develop a claim about the positive and negative ways Appalachia is depicted in literature.

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the various aspects of Appalachian culture—from physical artifacts, to music, to literature. In this task, students construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question, "What's so special about Appalachia?” It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a class discussion or a combination of drawing and writing exercises.

Students' arguments likely will vary, but could include any of the following:

- Appalachia art, music, and literature make Appalachia special because they reflect cherished traditions.
- Appalachia is special because it emphasizes values like hard work and community.
- Appalachia is special for its own uniqueness, but no more special that other communities that are also rich in culture.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by researching the ways and methods in which public and private group depict the culture of Appalachia. Students then can assess how well the Appalachian Regional Commission’s “Visit Appalachia” website reflects the culture of Appalachia. Finally, student can act by organizing either a day in their school dedicated to varying aspects of Appalachian culture or they can compose a letter to the Appalachian Regional Commission that discusses what needs to be changed to promote Appalachian culture and the region as a whole.
Staging the Compelling Questions

Featured Source: Video Clip, The Beverly Hillbillies

Available on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ae5JG4Pku0
Supporting Question 1

**Featured Source**

**Source A:** Quilts in the Appalachian Artifacts Collections, Berea College Library

http://libraryguides.berea.edu/LJACquilts#s-lg-box-6689116
### Supporting Question 1

#### Featured Source


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8nnPrGSUBs
Basketmaking—or basket weaving—was a popular craft during the Craft Revival. Unlike some other craft skills thought to be "lost arts," basketmaking was actively practiced at the start of the Revival. The usefulness of baskets contributed to their popularity. Basket forms included: market baskets, storage baskets, laundry baskets, waste baskets, fruit and flower baskets, egg baskets, trays, and purses.

In the Appalachians, both before and during the Craft Revival, baskets were made from a variety of materials. By far the most common material for non-Cherokee baskets was white oak. These baskets were made from a young oak sapling that was split laterally again and again to form long, supple splits or splints. Woven over a framework of ribs, split oak baskets were sturdy.

Basketmaking was a tradition among western North Carolina's Cherokee peoples. The Cherokee also used white oak—"it grew abundantly in Appalachian forests—as well as maple and rivercane. Rivercane was used almost exclusively by the Cherokee who devised a complex method of basketmaking called the "double weave," which produces a double-layered basket.

In his 1937 book Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands, Allen Eaton made the following observations about basketmaking during the Craft Revival:

"Among the materials from which baskets are made are broom sedge, corn husks, corn stalks, wheat and rye straw, oziers (willows), both branch and twigs, rushes, cane, honeysuckle vine, inner bark of pine, hickory bark, peeled willow bark, pine needles, and oftenest of all splints of oak, hickory, and ash. All these grow throughout the Highlands except the long-leaf pine needles, which usually come from the lower lands of North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. In a few instances baskets are made of raffia and reed, articles of commerce imported from other countries. White oak or basket oak, as it is commonly known in the mountains, and hickory are the materials generally used in baskets made of splints."

Supporting Question 2

**Featured Source**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source A: Song Lyrics, Loretta Lynn, “Coal Miner's Daughter,” 1970?</th>
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Well, I was born a coal miner's daughter
In a cabin, on a hill in Butcher Holler
We were poor but we had love,
That's the one thing that daddy made sure of

He shoveled coal to make a poor man's dollar
My daddy worked all night in the Van Lear coal mines
All day long in the field a hoin' corn
Mommy rocked the babies at night

And read the Bible by the coal oil light
And ever' thing would start all over come break of morn
Daddy loved and raised eight kids on a miner's pay
Mommy scrubbed our clothes on a washboard ever' day

Why I've seen her fingers bleed
To complain, there was no need
She'd smile in mommy's understanding way
In the summertime we didn't have shoes to wear

But in the wintertime we'd all get a brand new pair
From a mail order catalog
Money made from selling a hog
Daddy always managed to get the money somewhere

Yeah, I'm proud to be a coal miner's daughter
I remember well, the well where I drew water
The work we done was hard
At night we'd sleep 'cause we were tired

I never thought of ever leaving Butcher Holler
Well a lot of things have changed since a way back then
And it's so good to be back home again
Not much left but the floor, nothing lives here anymore
Except the memory of a coal miner's daughter

Written by Loretta Lynn • Copyright © Peermusic Publishing, Warner/Chappell Music, Inc
Chorus:
They learned readin', rightin', route 23
To the jobs that lay waiting in those cities' factories
They didn't know that old highway
Could lead them to a world of misery

Have you ever been down kentucky-way
Say south of prestonburg
Have you ever been up in a holler
Have you ever heard
A mountain man cough his life away
From diggin' that black coal in those dark mines, those dark mines
If you had you might just understand
The reason that they left this all behind

Chorus:
They learned readin', rightin', route 23
To the jobs that lay waiting in those cities' factories
They learned readin', rightin', roads to the north
To the luxury and comfort a coal miner can't afford
They thought readin', rightin', route 23
Would take them to the good life that they had never seen
They didn't know that old highway
Could lead them to a world of misery

Have you ever seen 'em put the kids in the car after work on friday night
Pull up in a holler about 2 a.m. and see a light still burnin' bright
Those mountain folks sat up that late
Just to hold those little grandkids in their arms, in their arms
And I'm proud to say that I've been blessed
And touched by their sweet hillbilly charm
I may look like a city slicker,
Shinin' up through his shoes.
Underneath I'm just a cotton picker,
Pickin' out a mess of blues.

Show me where I start.
Find a horse and cart.
I'm just a country boy,
Country boy at heart.

I may look like a bank teller,
Pushing facts in a file.
But I'd rather be a haul collar,
Shooing foot home in style.

Show me where I start.
Find a horse and cart.
I'm just a country boy,
Country boy at heart.

I may look like a city slicker,
Shinin' up through his shoes.
Underneath I'm just a cotton picker,
Pickin' out a mess of blues.

Show me where I start.
Find a horse and cart.
I'm just a country boy,
Country boy at heart.

Written by Leroy Sibbles • Copyright © Universal Music Publishing Group
Supporting Question 3

**Featured Source**

**Source A:** *When I Was Young in the Mountains*, Cynthia Rylant New York: Puffin Books: 1982

Reading also available from YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcTVynEWiBA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcTVynEWiBA)
Supporting Question 3

**Featured Source**

**Source B:** *The Relatives Came*, Cynthia Rylant New York: Bradbury Press, 1985

Reading also available on YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oJF_4wjf-Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oJF_4wjf-Y)
Supporting Question 3

**Featured Source**


Reading also available on YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHe9k6DI7Ak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHe9k6DI7Ak)
Supporting Question 3

**Featured Source**

**Source D: The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree** Gloria Houston. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1988