

## Knowledge and Indigenous Societies: Cultural Ownership

### Lesson 2: Fact-Finding Task

**Focus:** *How do real-world examples of Indigenous fashion co-option and genuine collaboration highlight tensions between ethics, cultural ownership, and knowledge?*

<b>Objectives</b>	<p><b>Investigate real-world case studies that illustrate how the co-option of Indigenous fashion impacts the visibility, credibility, and accessibility of knowledge.</b></p> <p><b>Substantiate or challenge the claims from Lesson 1 using evidence from media articles, video interviews, and brand case examples.</b></p> <p><b>Develop critical thinking and source evaluation skills by connecting practical examples to abstract knowledge questions.</b></p>
<b>Homework Preparation Task</b>	<p><b>Case Study Task</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Divide students into small groups and assign each group a case study related to the topic.</li><li>• Students will add their evidence to the Kialo discussion from Lesson 1.</li></ul> <p>Each group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflect on how these cases connect to the concepts discussed in Lesson 1.</li><li>• Explore their assigned case using the provided resources and their own research.</li><li>• Prepare a short presentation (5–10 mins) responding to the following question: "How does the brand's use of Indigenous fashion affect the visibility, credibility, or accessibility of knowledge in this case?"</li><li>• Students should include details of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ What happened in the case.</li><li>◦ How cultural appropriation or collaboration influenced what Indigenous knowledge was visible or valued.</li><li>◦ Which TOK concept (power, culture, perspective, or ethics) is most relevant.</li><li>◦ Whether the case supports or challenges a claim from Lesson 1.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Case Study Options</b></p> <p><b>1. Isabel Marant and Mixe Blouse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus: Alleged cultural appropriation of traditional Mixe embroidery from Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, Oaxaca, Mexico.</li><li>• Task: Examine the debate surrounding the originality of designs, intellectual property rights, and community impact.</li><li>• Resource:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ The Guardian: <a href="#">Isabel Marant accused of plagiarising Mexican Indigenous designs</a></li></ul></li></ul>

	<p><b>2. Louis Vuitton and Maasai Check</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus: Use of the iconic Maasai shuka (red and blue checked fabric) in Louis Vuitton's collection without initial recognition or compensation.</li> <li>• Task: Analyze the ethical implications of using globally recognized Indigenous patterns and the subsequent efforts towards negotiation or legal protection.</li> <li>• Resource: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ The Independent: <a href="#">Maasai people of East Africa fighting against cultural appropriation by luxury fashion labels</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>3. Urban Outfitters and Navajo Nation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus: Controversy over Urban Outfitters using "Navajo" and other tribal names for products without permission, leading to a legal battle.</li> <li>• Task: Investigate the legal challenges of trademarking Indigenous names and designs, and the concept of cultural brand dilution.</li> <li>• Resource: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ NPR: <a href="#">Navajo Nation Sues Urban Outfitters Over 'Navajo' Products</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>4. Stella Jean and Haitian Artists/Artisans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus: A Haitian-Italian designer known for highlighting Haitian craftsmanship on global runways. Celebrated for promoting cultural visibility, her work also invites reflection on what fair and authentic collaboration looks like.</li> <li>• Task: Explore how Stella Jean's approach balances empowerment and complexity in cross-cultural partnerships.</li> <li>• Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Forbes: <a href="#">How This Haitian-Italian Designer Takes Local Fashion Global</a></li> <li>◦ <a href="#">Design and Culture by ED</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Introduction (5 mins): Recap and Frame the Task</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Recap Lesson 1: Review key arguments from the previous debate on cultural ownership.</li> <li>◦ Quick group reflection: What claims did you find most convincing or most problematic in last class's debate? Were there any claims that felt hard to prove or lacked real-world examples?</li> <li>◦ Present the task's central question: "How do real-world examples of Indigenous fashion co-option and genuine collaboration highlight tensions between ethics, cultural ownership, and knowledge?"</li> <li>◦ Emphasise applying ownership, power, culture, perspective, and ethics to evaluate how language shapes digital knowledge.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Bridge to Lesson 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Explain that students will now investigate how real-world practices, policies, and brand strategies influence what Indigenous knowledge becomes visible or credible.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clarify the goal: Move from opinion to evidence. These case studies are not about cultural appropriation in theory — they are about who gets heard, trusted, or erased because of how designs are used.</li> <li>● <b>Presentations (30 mins)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students present their case studies to the class.</li> <li>○ Students should take note of any useful points from other groups' presentations to use in the Kialo discussion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Recording Findings in a Kialo Discussion (20 mins)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students return to the Kialo discussion from Lesson 1 and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Add at least one new claim or counterclaim based on their case study.</li> <li>■ Reply to at least one peer's argument, using insights from another group's case.</li> <li>■ Label their post with the relevant TOK concept (e.g., power — Louis Vuitton/Maasai).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Focus areas for Kialo updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cultural Gatekeeping: Who controls which cultural designs/stories are shared or profited from?</li> <li>○ Ethical Framing: How do collaborations and appropriations shape the meaning and value of Indigenous fashion?</li> <li>○ Knowledge Inequality: Are all cultural knowledge systems equally respected or valued in the global fashion industry?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Reflection Questions</b>	<p><b>Class Discussion and Reflection (10 mins):</b> Discuss the following reflection questions in open discussion or exit ticket format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How did your case study affect your view of cultural appropriation vs. collaboration?</li> <li>● What made certain examples feel more exploitative or more empowering?</li> <li>● Who benefited most in your case — designers, communities, or corporations?</li> </ul> <p><b>Exit Ticket or Class Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can collaborations with Indigenous communities truly be equal when power and profit are so unevenly distributed?</li> <li>● What role should visibility, credit, and consent play in determining whether cultural knowledge is used ethically?</li> <li>● Should all uses of Indigenous fashion require community approval, or are there exceptions?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lesson Slides</li> <li>● Kialo discussions from previous lesson: <a href="#">Should cultural expressions, such as traditional fashion, belong only to their originating communities, or be open for global use?</a></li> </ul>
<b>TOK Concepts</b>	<p><b>Power:</b> How do global brands, economic systems, and media platforms influence whose cultural knowledge is amplified, commercialized, or silenced?</p> <p><b>Ethics:</b> What responsibilities do brands and creators have when engaging with cultural knowledge from communities that have historically been marginalized?</p>

	<p><b>Perspective:</b> How do different cultural, social, or economic positions influence how people interpret an act as appropriation or respectful collaboration?</p>
<b>Critical Thinking Concepts</b>	<p><b>Confronting Biases and Assumptions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying Commercial Bias: Students evaluate how assumptions that “visibility and profit are always good” shape perceptions of brand collaborations.</li> <li>• Questioning Justifications: Students analyze how ethical justifications for using Indigenous designs can be influenced by brand narratives or consumer sentiment.</li> <li>• Recognising Cultural Bias: Reflect on how dominant cultural norms shape what is perceived as appreciation versus appropriation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exploring Contexts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power and Cultural Representation: Examine how corporations and global fashion industries influence which cultural knowledge is celebrated, distorted, or erased.</li> <li>• Evaluating Source Credibility: Compare brand statements, Indigenous voices, and third-party reporting to assess whose version of the collaboration is most reliable.</li> <li>• Global Perspectives: Explore how cultural appropriation is perceived differently across societies, and how postcolonial histories affect the interpretation of “collaboration.”</li> </ul> <p><b>Responsiveness and Flexibility of Thought:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refining Positions: Encourage students to adjust their stance on a case after hearing new details or opposing interpretations.</li> <li>• Weighing Conflicting Perspectives: Critically evaluate viewpoints from both the brand and the Indigenous community involved.</li> <li>• Recognising Consequences: Reflect on the real-world impact of cultural collaborations — who benefits, who loses, and what knowledge is reshaped in the process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Extrapolation and Reapplication of Principles:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying Ethical Reasoning: Use ethical frameworks (e.g., justice, equity, respect for autonomy) to assess whether a fashion collaboration is fair.</li> <li>• Connecting to Modern Issues: Link the lesson to broader debates around cultural ownership in music, film, art, or tourism.</li> <li>• Building Cultural Literacy: Analyze how power, platform, and representation affect which voices are amplified or tokenized in cross-cultural work.</li> </ul>