



# The Knight's Table



Unique. This single word has many different meanings to others. While some people may view the word in a positive connotation, others may view the word in a negative connotation. There are others who may view this in neither a positive or negative connotation. Being unique should be something that everyone should be proud of in general. Everyone is unique in their own ways even if it may be something like the color of your own eyes or facial features. Being unique should be something we should all celebrate in our own ways. Everyone is unique like a snowflake in their own ways.

We are all different just like how every snowflake is different. We can sometimes feel left out and different in a negative way. When we feel left out, forgotten and unseen we can be left with the idea that we are different and that something is wrong with us. 'Who we are' can easily become 'who we are in context to others'. And our differences can sometimes make us think that we are separate from others. To view ourselves as 'odd' or that something is wrong with us because we are different from others feeds a shame-oriented perspective, where a person begins to try to identify with that ideal self more than their actual experience of themselves. We should actually be proud of our differences and our features.

Though this article may seem insane in your perspective, we should realize that everyone is special in their own way and no one is perfect. Some ways that could help you change the way you see the word "unique". One is to switch your perspective on this word, just because others may use the word as a way to say that someone else looks or acts in a different way. These people can be celebrities or our own peers. When you switch the way you see the word you soon realize that it's an amazing thing to be different from the standards that others set for society.

Another way that you can help change the way you see this word is by changing our language. In using terminology such as "embracing our differences". By saying this we are reinforcing that we are coming to accept something about ourselves. We can also learn how to view our differences as individual strengths. The third way to change the way we view the word "unique" is by instead of viewing our differences as deficiencies, they can be viewed as personal strengths. We all have features and qualities that contribute to building a diverse and strong community. Moreover, utilizing our personal strengths allows us to focus on what we are good at, what we enjoy, and what we like about ourselves rather than what we feel like we should like or be like. The last way to help you change the way you view the word "unique" is by considering our mental health. In viewing how we formulate our concept of 'unique', it is important that we factor in how that can impact our mental health.

Unique, the one word that can have a multitude of meanings depending on how you see the word. After you read this article you should think about what you think the word 'unique' means and its positive connotation and impact in our school and city.

-Jessica Ndrejoni

*"If you are always trying to be normal you will never know how amazing you can be." ~ Maya Angelou*



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Heritage and cultural background are important when it comes down to defining and showing who each individual is. I come from a Chinese heritage and cultural background, and I love that about myself. One reason why I love being Chinese is because of the traditional holidays we celebrate. For example, one well known Chinese holiday is the Mid-Autumn Festival, or the Mooncake Festival, which was celebrated recently on September 21st. On this day, the time of the moon is the brightest, which is why we eat mooncakes and lunar legends have been attached. Additionally, we celebrate the end of the autumn harvest and thank the Chinese gods and goddesses for what they have provided us with. Another example of a well known Chinese holiday is Chinese New Year. This holiday honors households, Chinese gods and goddesses as well as ancestors. Chinese New Year has a cycle of 12 different animals (rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig), or zodiacs, according to the path of the sun, which marks the characteristics of that year. These holidays, and many others, are fun to celebrate in my opinion, which is one reason why I truly love my Chinese heritage and cultural background.

Another reason why I love being Chinese is the food we make and eat. Chinese food is very diverse and comes in eight culinary cuisines: Anhui (Hui), Cantonese (Yu), Fujian (Min), Hunan (Xiang), Jiangsu (Su), Shandong (Lu), Szechuan (Chuan), and Zhejiang (Zhe). Briefly, Anhui cuisine specializes in herbs and vegetables from land and sea, Cantonese cuisine specializes in meat and “wok hei” (meaning breath of the wok), Fujian cuisine specializes in light and flavorful coastal ingredients, Hunan cuisine specializes in purely spicy foods, Jiangsu cuisine specializes in soft and tender meat, Shandong cuisine specializes in light seafood and soup, Szechuan cuisine specializes in numbing spicy foods, and Zhejiang cuisine specializes in fresh and light but rich foods. Each of these cuisines remain ringing in my mouth each time I eat them, wanting more. The traditional sauces, spices, herbs, and methods of cooking are the secrets behind the delicious food Chinese culture has to offer. Personally, my favorite cuisine is Cantonese cuisine because of the “wok hei” that other cuisines do not use. Whatever our heritage and cultural background, we should all be grateful for them and how they make us diverse.

-Audiranna Mei



*“Culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit.”  
-Jawaharlal Nehru, first Prime Minister of India*



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When it comes to defining myself the first thing that comes to mind is my heritage. I am considered Egyptian (Coptic) which many people including myself find very unique and interesting. It can be really awesome at times especially during history class when we are learning about Ancient Egypt. I raise my hand in those classes and say, "I'm from there!" and it never gets a boring reaction from the teacher. Heritage is an expression of the way of living which comes from a community and is passed from generation to generation. All heritages are different and incredible in their own way. Egyptian have many traditions but, I'm going explain a couple of them and why they are dear to me.

Two popular traditions in my country are Coptic Orthodox Christmas and Easter! These events are very important in our culture. We celebrate Christmas on January 7<sup>th</sup> instead of the traditional "American" date of December 25<sup>th</sup>. However, Easter's date of celebration fluctuates from year to year. During Easter, we fast. Fasting is when a person can't eat at all or when someone can't eat dairy, meat, or anything made from an animal. I find these traditions very amazing/distinctive and I'm grateful for my culture and customs.



Another thing I love about my heritage is the amazing food us Egyptians have and make! I'm sure some of you are familiar with it especially living in New York. There are so many places where you can find Mediterranean food and it really satisfies me especially when my mother can't get the time to make it homemade. Some of the foods that you might find when you go to an Egyptian restaurant are kosharie, shawarma, gyro, falafel of course, and so many others. Kosharie is basically this mix of macaroni, rice, salsa, lentils, and onions. It may seem weird when you hear all the ingredients laid out like that, but trust me when you combine all these foods together it does not disappoint!! Shawarma is basically grilled chicken and meat. It sounds basic now but in the restaurants it definitely isn't! We also have gyro which is made of grilled meat (shawarma) and vegetables. This is put in a sandwich and is delicious to eat. And finally we have our famous falafel!! Put this in a sandwich/burrito and you'll never want to eat anything else again. Therefore, the Egyptian culture is full of so many awesome foods and traditions which are each important in their very special way. I love my heritage and each and every one of you should embrace yours!

**-Jessica Mesiha**





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“What sets you apart can sometimes feel like a burden and it’s not. And a lot of the time, it’s what makes you great.” said Emma Stone. Stone has a point here, being unique and great is not a drag. Everyone is different and unique. It’s what brings life and diversity into our world. Without being who you are, the world would be (in my opinion) boring. The point I’m trying to get across is that you should be thankful for being unique. This is an upside. Creativity sprouts from this value and without it, well, the world would be the same.

When you embrace your differences you will resurface other important values! These are quite significant. You should be your own person. Be yourself! It sets you apart from others. Not one person is the exact same as the other. And, that’s a good thing. Notice how your personality affects others. Your family and friends are grateful for your personality, your traits. They are thankful for you as a person. Most of us wouldn’t like being friends with five of the same people. This is why you should be thankful for being unique.

**-Kenz Elsherbini & Evangeline Muia**



## *Unique Like a Snowflake*

*Each and every snowflake is different.*

*All are Magnificent!*

*Not one is alike, not one is disliked.*

*We all are Snowflakes, unique and amazing!*

*It's our job to make every snowflake feel special.*

*We are all different and essential.*

*Our uniqueness sets us apart.*

*And unity will melt our hearts.*

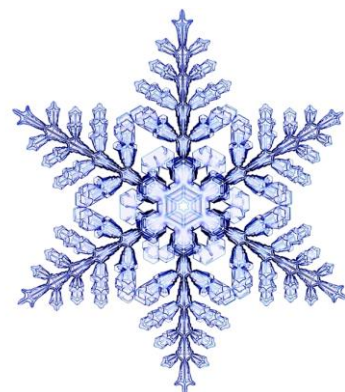
*Being unique is nothing to hide,*

*Being unique should be shown with great pride!*

*Be the snowflake of diversity*

*That encompasses love and empathy*

**-Katherine Fava**





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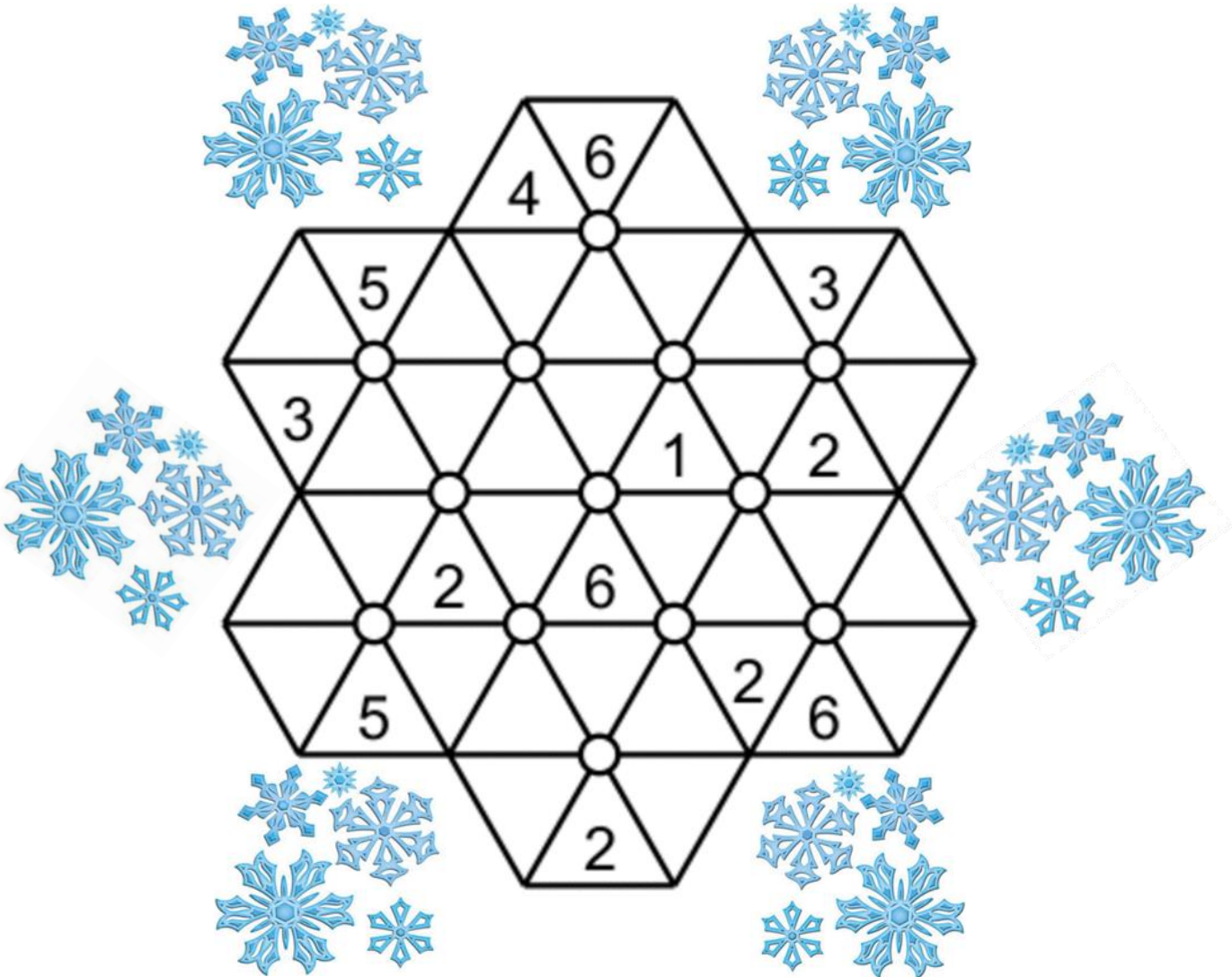
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## Snowflake Sudoku

The Snowflake Sudoku is composed of hexagons that overlap partially. The goal is to put a number from 1 to 6 in each hexagon so that no number repeats. Enjoy!



Product of the **S.E.A.L.** Team Dyker Heights

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