

If you only have 15 minutes ...

Identify key themes, discuss connections to your life and reflect on how individual choices relate to global food systems.

Observe (3 minutes)

Skim the article using the following strategy:

- Look at headlines, captions and photos.
- Read the article with a focus on preservation and rekindling interest in cultural heritage and traditions.
- Underline one quote or detail that stands out to you.

While skimming, think about the following:

- What challenges threaten Borchalo rug-weaving today?¹

- What solutions—both traditional and modern—does the article mention?²

Discuss (10 minutes)

- Look at the mini-chart below. Fill in the Modern Technology column with a contrasting descriptor for each characteristic of Traditional Rug Weaving.³ (*Goal: Recognize tension between preservation and efficiency.*)

Traditional Rug-Weaving	Modern Technology
Handwoven	
Using natural materials	
Antique, one-of-a kind designs	
Local and regional markets	
Takes at least a month to create	

1. Reflect (2 minutes)

Which approach—preserving traditional weaving or modernizing production—offers more for the future? Why? Share one reason to support your choice.

Common Core Standard(s) Met:

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas

1 Answers will vary but may include: 1) Aging artisan population: Most active weavers are over 50 years old, and older women can no longer keep up with the physical demands of weaving; 2) Lack of youth interest: Younger generations view weaving as tedious, low-paying work and avoid taking responsibility for continuing the craft. 3) Economic pressure: After the Soviet Union collapsed, the wool industry broke down, and cheap machine-made rugs flooded the market, leaving traditional weavers without financial incentive; 4) Material scarcity: In the 1990s, weavers struggled to source quality wool and natural dyes, leading some to use artificial fibers and chemical dyes; 5) Uncertain cultural transmission: The tradition, historically passed down from mother to daughter, risks dying out without structured education or community initiatives.

2 Answers will vary but may include: 1) Traditional approaches: Weavers like zulfiya Mammadova lead workshops to teach weaving and natural dyeing techniques. Also, communities in Kosalar preserve heritage by continuing small-scale production in homes. 2) Modern initiatives: The Tea House in Marnueli offers cultural classes to youth and plans to open weaving centers in villages to make the craft more sustainable and marketable. Also, Ryan Smith founded rewoven, a nonprofit that sourced quality wool and natural dyes, revived production and created an international market for Borchalo rugs. Additionally, rewoven sells rugs globally, using profits to fund community projects, while maintaining artistic integrity rather than scaling into mass production.

3 Handmade: Machine-made; Using natural materials: using synthetic fibers; Antique: One-of-a-kind designs: Mass produced, uniform designs; Local and regional markets: Global markets with broader, international distribution; Takes at least a month to create: Completed in hours or days.