

Unit Title: MEXICO: Many Faces in Many Places

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Subject Area: History, Language Arts and Social Studies, World Languages

Topic: Diverse communities, geography, culture and cultural traditions, foods, climate, literature

Grade Levels: 2 – 5

Time Frame: 30–45-minute sessions; 2 to 4 weeks

Brief Summary and Goals:

The primary goal of this unit is to introduce students to Mexico, where it is and who lives there. Many students, as well as some adults, do not know that there is more to Mexico than the well-known luxury resorts. Through this unit of study students will learn that Mexico is geographically diverse, multi-ethnic, multilingual, and has a rich cultural history. They will learn that many different groups of people make up Mexico’s past and present complex society. The ultimate goal for these lessons is to increase students’ knowledge and understanding of Mexico. With the increased knowledge and understanding, it is hoped that students will show greater respect and appreciation for contributions their peers and community members of Mexican heritage bring to our diverse communities.

Established Goals:

OREGON PERFORMANCE STANDARDS: Social Sciences

Geography:

- Understand and use spatial concepts of location, distance, direction and region.
- Understand and use spatial concepts of geography. View and draw simple maps to locate places.
- Locate places and understand and use geographical information. Understand the purpose of maps, globes and other geographical tools.

OREGON PERFORMANCE STANDARDS: Second Languages (World Languages)

Communication:

Comprehend, express, and exchange ideas in a language other than English.

- **Listening:** Comprehend isolated words/signs and everyday expressions.
- **Speaking:** Make an effort to communicate; participate in world language activities; use memorized words and everyday expressions and identify familiar objects.

Culture:

- Understand the relationships of people in the neighborhood.
- Explore the traditions of various cultural groups.
- Demonstrate and recognize cultural products, perspectives, and practices appropriate to the culture studied.
- Recognize and demonstrate appropriate verbal and nonverbal practices in common situations occurring within a second language.
- Identify basic cultural products, perspectives, and practices of a second language culture.

OREGON PERFORMANCE STANDARDS: Language Arts

Literature:

- Listen to and read literary text from a variety of cultures and time periods.
- Read, listen to and respond to traditional and contemporary literature from a variety of cultures and genres.
- Identify similarities and differences between two stories from the same genre.
- Compare similar stories from two geo-cultural groups.

Overall Unit Objectives:

- Students will be able to locate Mexico on a world map and learn more about the diverse groups of people who live there, the languages spoken, and its geography, climate, etc.
- Students will learn about some influential Mexicans of the past and present.
- Students will be able to identify the cultural products that come from Mexico.
- Students will learn some useful Spanish words and phrases and appropriately use them daily.
- Students will learn about Mexican family structures, traditions, important celebrations, and daily activities.
- The students will be introduced to authentic Mexican foods through sampling some of them.
- Students will be aware of people of Mexican ancestry within the community.
- Students will be able to describe the similarities between American and Mexican cultures.
- Students will gain and increase their understanding and appreciation for Mexico, as well as the cultures and contributions of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans.
- Students will write in their journals some facts they learn each day about Mexico and use the information to create factoids to share with others, to increase their cultural awareness and appreciations.

Enduring Understandings:

- Students will understand that Mexico is a large country with many states, diverse regions, people, cultures, and languages, and that Mexico shares some similarities with the United States.
- Students will know where Mexico is located in relation to the United States, who the people are and where they live in Mexico, as well as the languages spoken there.
- Students will be able to locate Mexico on the world map and name some of the states in the southern regions.
- Students will know and be able to identify some of the staple foods of Mexico.
- Students will be able to name some of the diverse groups of people who live in Mexico and the languages they speak there in addition to Spanish.
- Students will be able to compare their daily life with that of a Mexican child.
- Students will be able to use some Spanish words and phrases (e.g., greetings, colors, and numbers) in everyday conversations.
- Students will increase their appreciation and understanding for people of Mexican heritage, their cultural traditions and contributions.

Essential Questions:

- Where in the world is Mexico located?
- Who lives in Mexico? Who lived in Mexico a long time ago?
- What languages do they speak in Mexico?
- What is school like for Mexican children in the city and in the villages?
- What foods do they eat in Mexico?
- What are some important Mexican celebrations? How do they celebrate them? Why?
- Who are influential Mexicans of the past and present?

Performance Tasks and Other Evidence:

- Students will participate in class discussions and activities.
- Students will read informational texts about Mexico.
- Students will write in their Mexico Learning Journals about the thoughts and feelings they have relating to the things they learn each day.
- Students will write factoids about Mexico. The factoids and journal entries will be the tools for assessing students' understanding and learning.

Follow-up Activities:

- Students are encouraged to share what they learn each day with families and friends.
- Students write facts (factoids) about Mexico to put up in the hallway for other students to learn and increase their knowledge and understanding of Mexico.

Note: This unit is accompanied by PowerPoint presentations with images that help illustrate the lessons. The files can be downloaded from this Web site:

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright10/>

Learning Activities:

Lesson 1: Where in the world is Mexico?

Objectives:

- By the end of the lesson students will know where Mexico is and be able to locate Mexico on the world map, using the words: North America, continent, north, and south.
- Students will learn at least three useful phrases: *hola* (hello), *adiós* (good bye), *hasta luego* (see you later), *sí/no* (yes/no), *por favor* (please), *mucho gusto* (pleased to meet you), *Los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (the United Mexican States), and other words and phrases encountered in our readings; use them appropriately. Students who already speak Spanish will partner up as language buddies with those who do not speak Spanish.

Materials Needed:

- World map and globe (individual maps of the world and Mexico can be obtained from the following Web sites: <http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps> and <http://www.mexico-maps.com>)
- Copies of blank world map for each student (showing the different continents)
- Computer and slide show of travel photos (“Mexico Many Faces” PowerPoint, available for download from this Web site)
- Chart paper and markers
- Some artifacts from Mexico (or photos of artifacts from Google Images)
- Mexico Learning Journal for each student
NOTE: The cover of the Learning Journal has space for the students’ names and the map of the world. Students will lightly color in the country of Mexico. The inside pages have spaces for sketching and illustrating and lines for writing the information learned from the lessons.
- Book: Landau, Elaine. *Mexico (A True Book)*

Learning Activities:

- In the community circle, introduce students to the unit of study through a brief slide show of photos taken during the travel study through Mexico.
- Access students’ prior knowledge: Using KWL chart, students will share (brainstorm) what they think they already know about Mexico. Make a list of the things they would like to learn more about. KWL graphic organizer can be obtained from <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer>
- On the world map and the globe, show students where Mexico is located. On their individual maps, students locate and lightly color in the country of Mexico.
- Read and discuss information from *Mexico (A True Book)*.

Closure:

- Students write in their Mexico Learning Journals at least two things they learned today. Students share them with at least two friends in the class.

Extension:

- Encourage students to share what they learn with their families.

Lesson 2: Who lives in Mexico and what languages do they speak?

Objectives:

- By the end of the lesson students will know that Mexico is home to many diverse groups of people who speak many different languages.
- Students will be able to name at least two indigenous groups of people who live in Mexico and two languages other than Spanish that people in Mexico speak.
- Learn and use the phrases: *buenos días* (good morning), *buenas tardes* (good afternoon), *buenas noches* (good night), *gracias* (thank you), *de nada* (you're welcome), *perdone* (excuse me), as well as other vocabulary encountered during our readings.

Materials Needed:

- Map of Mexico, with the outline of different states
- Slide show or photos of the different groups of people from different states/regions ("Faces" PowerPoint, available for download from this Web site)
- Mexico Learning Journals
- 8 ½" x 14" white paper for each student and crayons
- Book: Kalman, Bobbie. *Mexico: the People*
- Poster of people and clothing from different regions of Mexico
- Photos and textile sample from Zinacantan and Zapotec weavers Chiapas and Oaxaca

Learning Activities:

- Briefly review with students how to locate Mexico on the world map.
- Ask: Who do you think lives in Mexico? Show pictures of people (diverse faces) from different regions of Mexico (Maya of Yucatan, Lacandons of Chiapas, Tzotzils of Zinacantan, Tzeltals of Amatenango del Valle, Zapotecs of Teotitlan del Valle of Oaxaca).
- Read about and discuss diverse groups of people, their traditional clothing. Show on the map of Mexico the states where some of the groups live.
- In their individual map, lightly color the southern states of Quintana Roo, Yucatan, Campeche, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Puebla, and Mexico City.
- View some textile samples. Using the 8 ½" x 14" white paper and crayons students create their own textile design.

Closure:

- In their Learning Journals students will list the groups of people who live in Mexico and the languages they speak. Students will also write something they learned about the people and languages of Mexico.

Lesson 3 Who lived in Mexico before the Spaniards came?

Objectives:

- By the end of the lesson students will know and be able to name some major groups of people who lived in Mexico before the Spaniards came (Olmecs, Maya, Zapotecs, Aztecs).
- Students will learn that there are still over 60 diverse cultural groups and languages spoken in Mexico today.
- Students will learn and use the words: *el mapa* (map), *el museo* (museum), *las ruinas* (ruins), *la piramide* (pyramid), *Dónde?* (Where?), as well as other vocabulary encountered during our readings.

Materials Needed:

- Map of Mexico, with the outline of different states
- Photos (“Pyramids” PowerPoint, available for download from this Web site) and illustrations (from coloring books, attached) of various archaeological sites, with different structures
- Poster of Mexican arts
- Books, magazines, and travel brochures about various sites
- Book: Fisher, Leonard Everett. *Pyramid of the Sun, Pyramid of the Moon*.
- Mexico Learning Journals

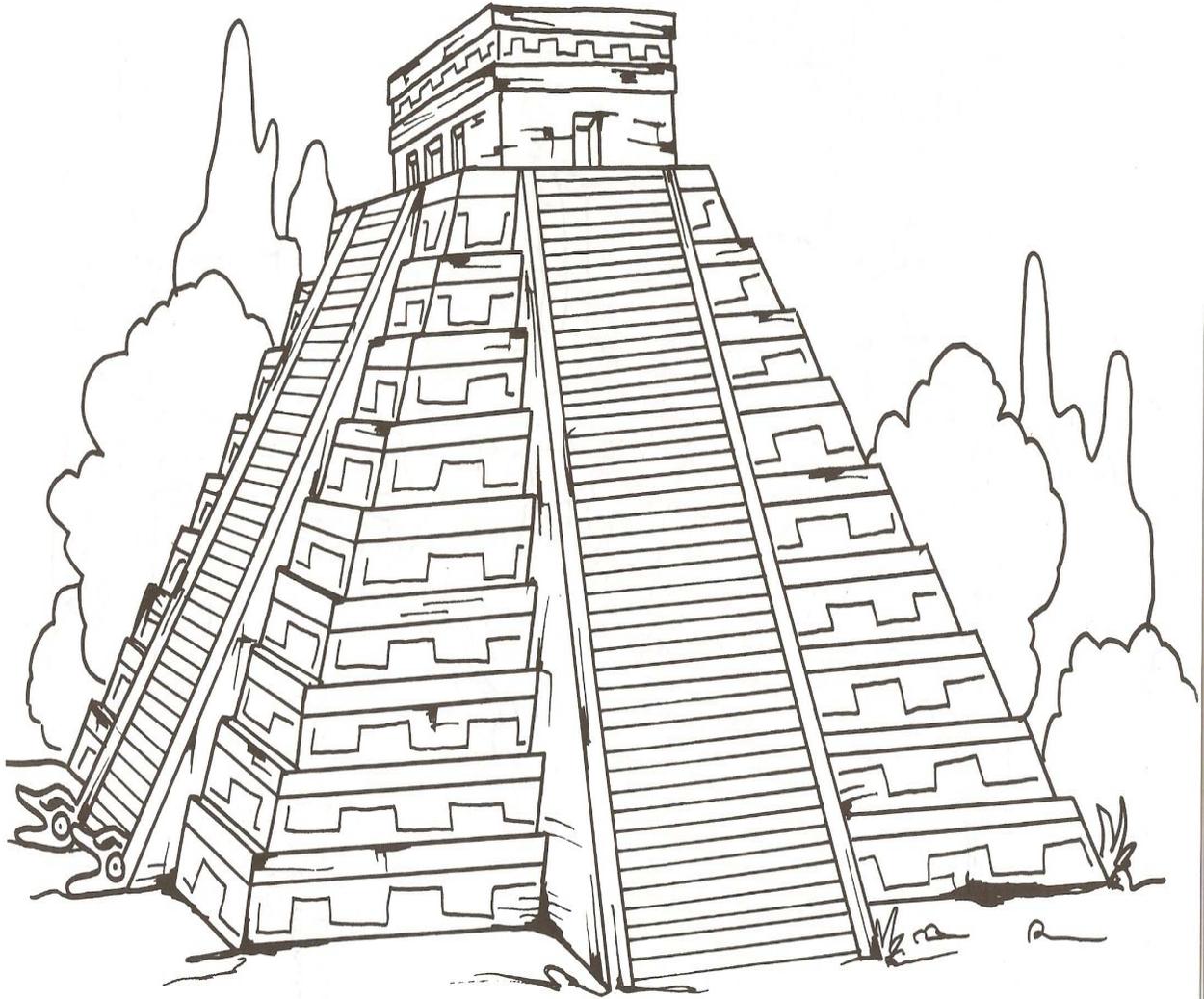
Learning Activities:

- Briefly review the words students have learned and the names of some groups living in Mexico today.
- Ask: Who lived in Mexico long ago?
- Introduce students to Mexico’s ancient cultures and groups of people by showing them pictures and illustrations of the different archaeological sites and various art works. Share some important information about the sites and the cultures.
- Read and discuss *Pyramid of the Sun, Pyramid of the Moon*.
- Students choose two illustrations to color.

Closure:

- Students write in their Learning Journals something they learned about the people and languages of ancient Mexico.

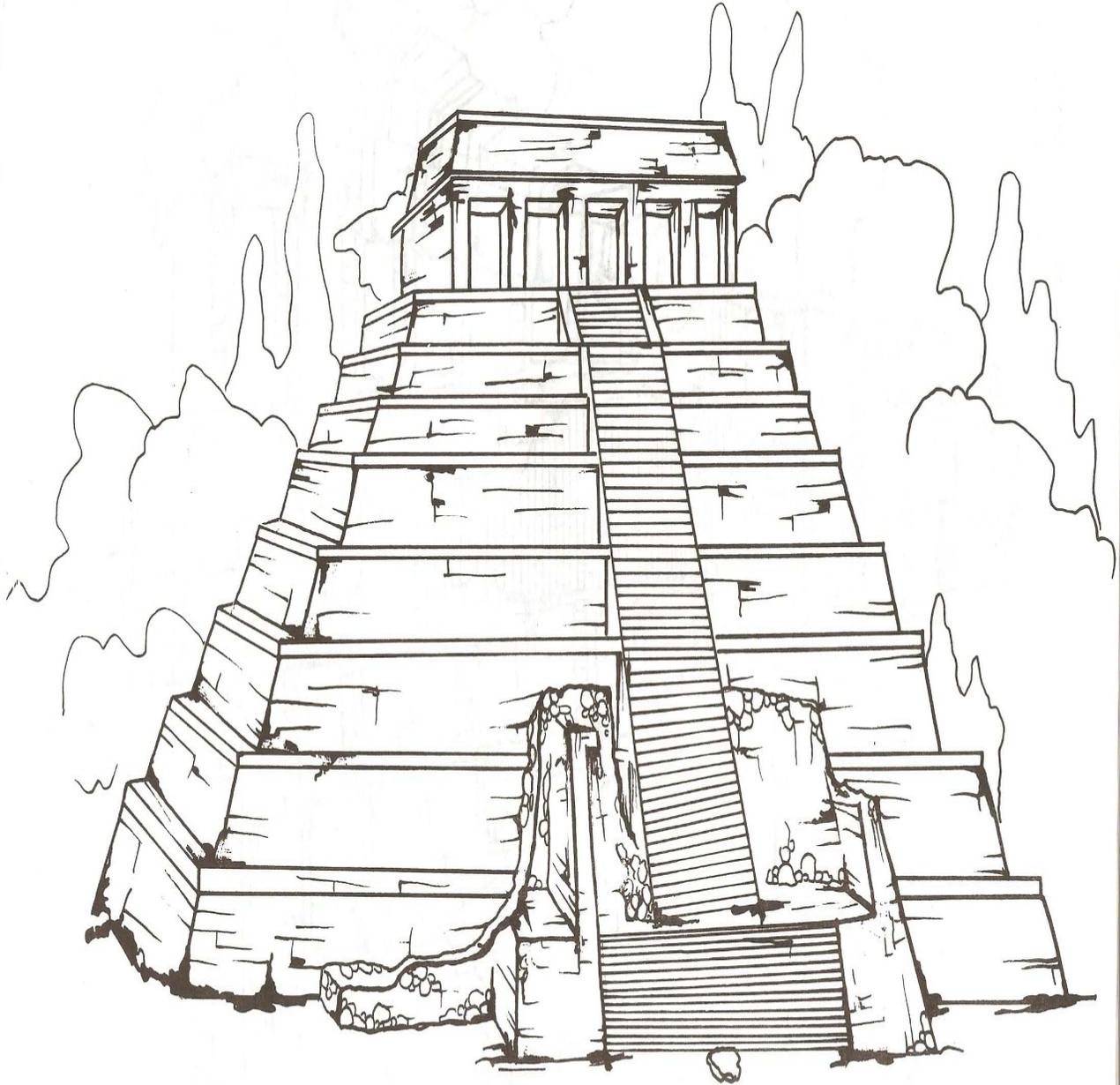
El Castillo de Chichén Itzá
The Castle of Chichen Itza

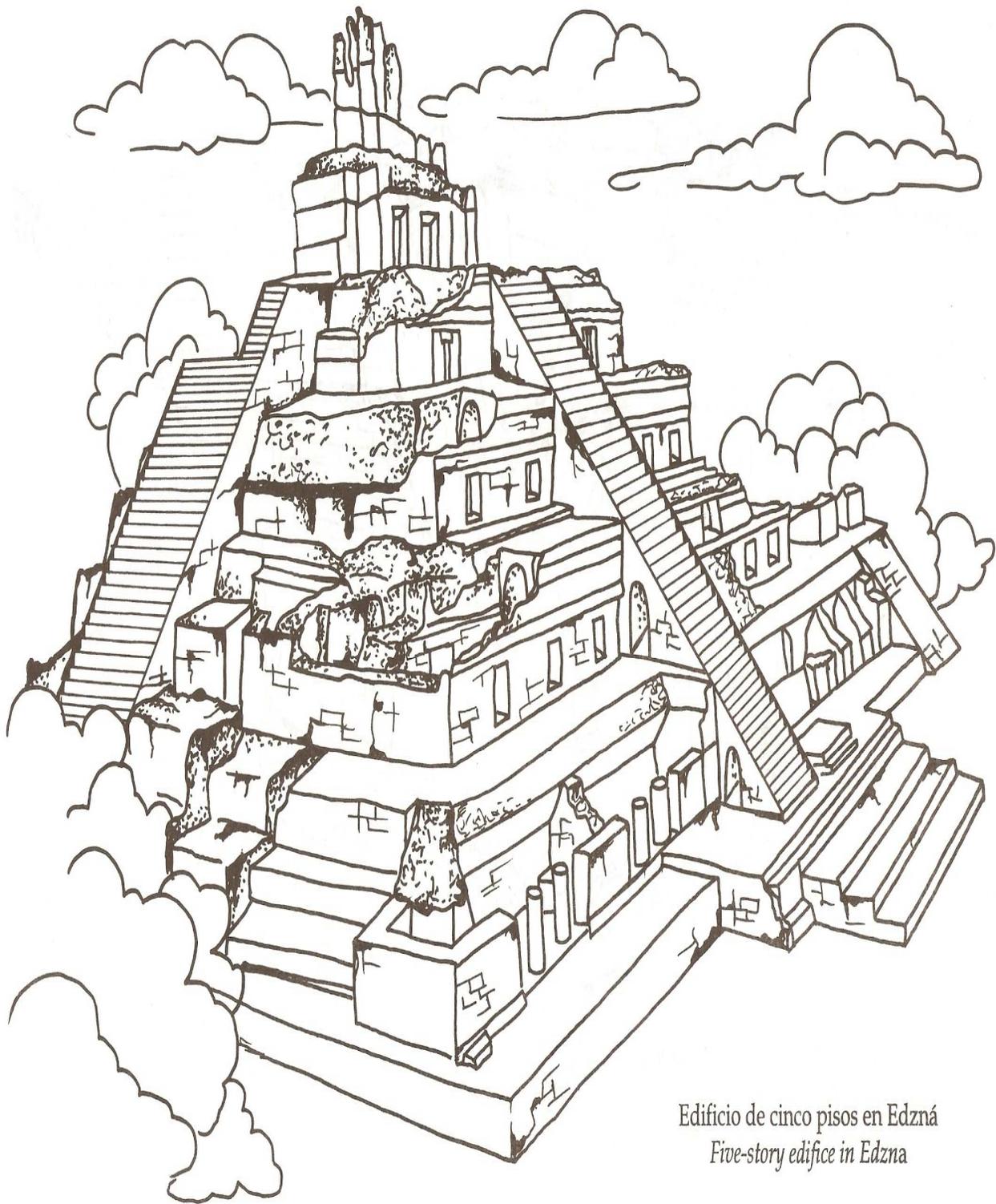


Chac Mool
Chac Mool



Templo de las Inscripciones en Palenque
The Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque





Edificio de cinco pisos en Edzná
Five-story edifice in Edzna

Disco de Chinkultic
Chinkultic Disk



Lesson 4 What foods do they eat in Mexico? Where do they buy them?

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify and name some of the most common foods Mexicans eat, then and now (e.g., corn tortillas and beans).
- Students will learn that most Mexicans buy their food fresh from the market daily.
- Students will learn and use the words and phrases: *el mercado* (market), *la tienda* (store), *las comidas* (foods), *el maíz* (corn), *las frutas* (fruits), *las verduras* (vegetables), *Cuánto cuesta esto?* (How much does this cost?), as well as other vocabulary encountered during our readings.
- Compare and contrast the foods they eat and those that Mexicans in Mexico eat.

Materials Needed:

- Photos of the different foods eaten in Mexico (“Food” PowerPoint, available for download from this Web site)
- Posters of fruits of Mexico
- Books: Grossman, Patricia. *Saturday Market*.
- *Pitahaya* (dragon fruit) for children to sample

Learning Activities:

- Begin the lesson by having students briefly share with a partner the foods they like to eat.
- Read *Saturday Market* and discuss how Mexicans shop for food, as well as kinds of foods sold at *el mercado*.
- Show students the posters of the fruits of Mexico. Discuss the similarities of the fruits we see in America.
- Talk about how important *maíz*/corn is to the Mexican people.
- Student make a list of foods they know that are made from *maíz*/corn.
- Sample the *pitahaya* or other Mexican fruit.

Closure:

- Students illustrate and write the names (in English and Spanish) of Mexican fruits and foods that they like to eat in their Learning Journals.

Extension:

- Make arrangements for a walking field trip to the Mexican specialty store by the school to check out some of the foods.

Lesson 5 What is school and family life like for children in Mexico?

Objectives:

- Students will learn about the daily life of two Mexican families, one in the city and one in a village.
- How are the Mexican students similar to themselves and how are they different?
- Students will learn and use the words: *la escuela* (school), *el/la maestro/a* (teacher), *el/la estudiante* (student), *la familia* (family), *el padre* (father), *la madre* (mother), *el hermano* (brother), *la hermana* (sister), *el abuelito* (grandpa), *la abuelita* (grandma), as well as other vocabulary encountered during our readings.

Materials Needed:

- Video: *Families of the World: Mexico*, Master Communications, 1997.
- TV and DVD player

Procedures:

- Review previous lesson.
- Students share with partners who are the people in their families and discuss their own daily schedule and responsibilities/chores.
- Watch and discuss the things they learned from watching the video.

Closure:

- Briefly write in their Learning Journals how their day is similar to and/or different from that of a Mexican child.

Lesson 6

Who are some influential/famous Mexicans?

Objectives:

- Students will be able to name at least two influential Mexicans and their contributions.
- Students will learn and use the words: *el artista* (artist), *el pintor/la pintora* (painter), *el abogado* (lawyer), *la monja* (nun), *el héroe* (hero), *la pintura* (paint), *el papel* (paper), as well as other vocabulary encountered during our readings.

Materials Needed:

- Photos and brief biographies of: Montezuma II, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, Benito Juárez, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Emiliano Zapata, Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, César Chávez and others still living
- Images, photos, and information on famous Mexicans above can be obtained through Google Images and from books listed in the reference section
- Paint and paper

Learning Activities:

- Display copies of Diego Rivera's and Frida Kahlo's work, and pictures of other famous Mexicans listed above.
- Students choose the person they want to learn more about. Partner them up to read the biographies. They should write down two things about their person.
- Following Frida Kahlo's style, students paint a picture of their favorite fruits or illustrate a Mexican flag (and learn the meaning of the colors and coat of arms).

Closure:

- In their Learning Journals, students write at least two sentences describing the contribution of their famous Mexican and what they like about him/her.

Lesson 7 What are some Mexican stories that are similar to American stories?

Objectives:

- Students will identify similarities of stories from the same genre.
- Students will compare and contrast Mexican stories to the ones with which they are familiar.
- Students will learn and use the words: *el cuento* (story), *el padre* (father), *el príncipe* (prince), *la madrastra* (stepmother), *la hermanastra* (stepsister), as well as other vocabulary encountered during our readings.

Materials Needed:

- Books: De Paola, Tomie. *Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story*. Kimmel, Eric. *Cactus Soup*.
- Graphic organizer: Venn Diagram
- Chart paper and markers

Learning Activities:

- Read one of the stories to class.
- Create a Venn diagram comparing the story to the one students already know, together as a class and individually.

Closure:

- In their Learning Journals, students write and illustrate their favorite part of the story and why.

Lesson 8 What are some Mexican special celebrations? How do Mexicans celebrate and why?

Objectives:

- Students will learn how the Day of the Dead is celebrated and why.
- Learn and use the words: *la bolsa* (bag), *la flor* (flower), *la candela* (candle), *la calavera* (skull), *la ofrenda* (offering), *El Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead).

Materials Needed:

- Book: Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Day of the Dead: A Mexican-American Celebration*.
- Brown paper lunch bags and shredded newspaper to make piñatas
- Stapler
- Some Mexican candies
- Construction paper and index cards for the factoids

Learning Activities:

- In the community circle talk about the occasions the students celebrate in their families.
- Read and discuss *Day of the Dead: A Mexican-American Celebration*. Discuss the similarities and differences to Halloween.
- Students help shred some newspaper to use to make piñatas.
- Make designs on their brown bags; stuff them with shredded newspaper to make their own piñatas.
- Review the chart (KWL), which lists the things they would like to learn more about Mexico and check off the things we learned.
- Sample some Mexican candies.

Closure:

- In their Learning Journals, students write why they like or dislike the Day of the Dead.

Extension:

- Using information from the charts we made throughout the unit and students' own journal entries, each student writes at least two factoids to display in the hallway. Students can work together with a partner.

BOOKS and REFERENCES:

NON-FICTION

Asher, Sandy. *Mexico (Discovering Cultures)*. New York, NY: Benchmark Books, 2003.

An introduction to Mexico, highlighting the country's geography, people, foods, schools, recreation, celebrations, and language.

Berendes, Mary. *Mexico: Faces and Places*. The Child's World, 1998.

Gives facts about the people and the land, with some history.

Cordero, Flor de Maria. *M is for Mexico*. London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2007.

Davis, Lucile. *César Chávez*. Mankato, MN: Bridgestone Books, 1998.

Fontes, Justine and Ron. *Mexico: A to Z*. New York, NY: Children's Press, 2003.

Gives factual information on Mexico through the letters of the alphabet.

Frith, Margaret. *Frida Kahlo: The Artist Who Painted Herself*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap, 2003.

Furlong, Kate. *(The Countries) Mexico*. Edina, MN: ABDO Publishing Company, 2000.

Easy-to-read informational texts about the country's history, land, plants and animals, people, etc.

Ganeri, Anita. *The Aztecs*. Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn Company, 2000.

The history and life of the Aztecs before the Spanish conquest.

Griswold del Castillo, Richard. *César Chávez: The Struggle for Justice*. Houston, TX: Piñata Books, 2002.

Herrera, Hayden. *Frida Kahlo: Las Pinturas*. Mexico: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

Biography of Frida Kahlo.

Harvey, Miles. *Look What Came From Mexico*. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc., 1998.

Introduce students to products that came from Mexico.

Homage to Chichen Itza. Merida, Yucatan: Editorial Dante S.A. de C.V. 2008.

Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Cinco de Mayo: Celebrating the Traditions of Mexico*. New York, NY: Holiday House, 2008.

How Rosie, a California girl of Mexican descent, and her family preserve and share their Mexican cultural heritage of the Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Day of the Dead: A Mexican-American Celebration*. New York, NY: Holiday House, 1994.

Kalman, Bobbie. *Spotlight on Mexico*. New York, NY: Crabtree, 2008.

Introduces children to facts about Mexico's peoples and cultures.

Kalman, Bobbie. *Mexico (Lands, People and Culture Series)*. New York, NY: Crabtree, 2008.

The series (*Mexico: The Land, Mexico: The Culture, Mexico: The People*) gives an in-depth look at Mexico.

Kids Discover: The Maya. New York, NY: Kids Discover, 1994.

Magazine-like format, with informational texts about the history and life of the Maya people.

King, Elizabeth. *Quinceañera: Celebrating Fifteen*. New York, NY: Dutton Children's Books, 1998.

Landau, Elaine. *Mexico (A True Book)*. Danbury, CT: Children's Press, 2008.

Introduces children to the history, culture, historical landmarks, and people of Mexico. It includes many non-fiction text features.

Let's Read Biography: Benito Juárez. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

Litwin, Laura. *Diego Rivera: Legendary Mexican Painter*. Berkeley, NJ: Enslow Publishing, 2005.

Mexico: Country Explorers. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Company, 2008.

Informational texts about the land, people, languages, and cultures of Mexico.

Noble, John. *Lonely Planet: Mexico*. 2010.

Travelers' guide to Mexico.

Olawsky, Lynn Ainsworth. *Colors of Mexico*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books, Inc., 1997.

Informational texts about Mexico through the colors (in English and Spanish) found in nature.

Olmecs: Special Edition. *Arqueologia Mexicana*. Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes. 1996.

Pictures and descriptions of the colossal stone heads in the Museum of Anthropology of Xalapa, Veracruz and Mexico City.

Saffer, Barbara. *Mexico: Countries and Cultures*. Mankato, MN: Bridgestone Books, 2002.

Facts about Mexico's land, history, people, and economy.

Venezia, Mike. *Diego Rivera*. Chicago, IL: Children's Press, 1995.

Venezia, Mike. *Frida Kahlo*. New York, NY: Children's Press, 1999.

Winter, Jonah. *Diego*. New York, NY: Knopf, 2007.

Woronoff, Kristin. *Frida Kahlo: Mexican Painter*. San Diego, CA: Blackbirch Press, 2002.

Zocchi, Judy. *In Mexico (En Mexico)*. Sea Girt, NJ: Dingles & Company, 2005.
Simple informational texts in English and Spanish.

FICTION

De Paola, Tomie. *Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2002.

Fisher, Leonard Everett. *Pyramid of the Sun, Pyramid of the Moon*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988.

Tells the history of two pyramids of Teotihuacan, the people (Toltecs and Aztecs) who built them, and how the Spaniards took over.

Grossman, Patricia. *Saturday Market*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1994.

Kimmel, Eric. *Cactus Soup*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish, 2004.
Set in the time of the Mexican Revolution.

Krebs, Laurie. *Off We Go to Mexico! An Adventure in the Sun*. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot Books, 2006.

Krull, Kathleen. *Harvesting Hope: The Story of César Chávez*. San Deigo, CA: Harcourt, Inc., 2003.

The story of César Chávez's life.

Mayan Legends. Yucatan, Mexico: Editorial Dante, 2009.

Six Mayan legends: The X'Tabay, Maquech, The Dwarf of Uxmal, The Goat-Wizard Huay Chivo, The Discovery of Henequen, and The Story of Nicté Ha.

Mora, Pat. *A Library for Juana: The World of Sor Juana Inés (de la Cruz)*. New York, NY: Random House, 2002.

WEB SITES

<http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps>

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company; provides classroom resources for maps.

<http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer>

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Company; provides classroom resources (graphic organizers).

<http://www.fridakahlofans.com>

Have a virtual tour of the Museum Casa Azul, Frida Kahlo's home.

<http://www.Enchantedlearning.com/languages/Spanish>

A link to an online Spanish and English picture dictionary.

<http://www.mexico-maps.com>

Maps and photos of different states in Mexico.