

## **Studying Indigenous People in Mexico: A Comparative Approach to the Zapotecs and a Select Native American Indian Tribe**

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Subject Areas: Integrated approach to Social Studies; Traditional Literature; Art and Writing.

Grade Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade but could be adapted

California Academic Content Standards addressed:

### **Social Science**

3.1 Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables and graphs, photographs and charts to organize information about people, places and environments in spatial context.

1. Identify geographical features in their local region (e.g., deserts, mountains, valleys, hills, coastal areas, oceans, lakes).

3.2 Students describe the American Indian nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past.

1. Describe national identities, religious beliefs, customs, and various folklore traditions.

2. Discuss the ways in which physical geography, including climate, influenced how the local Indian nations adapted to their natural environment (e.g., how they obtained food, clothing, tools).

Topic: Interactive cultural study across two continents

Time Frame: 12–15 days

Unit Assessment: Rubrics have been compiled to assess mastery.

### **Summary of unit:**

During this unit, students will have access to teacher-made Promethean Flipcharts, PowerPoint, video, a variety of folktales and other reading materials, computers for personal research and to allow an option for students to create their own digital story, and a range of hands-on activities.

Students will be introduced to the Zapotec indigenous people from Mexico. This group will be compared to Native Americans studied currently in California's third grade curriculum. An optional enrichment activity will be to complete a research report on the Mixtecs, who followed the Zapotecs, from Mexico. This unit will start with a geographical map-based lesson on the location of Mexico, including the environment where this indigenous group still lives

today. Students will be taught how to read a map legend to ascertain this information. This will provide a baseline when we start to discuss the adaptation of each group to their particular habitat. Students will find key landforms on maps such as mountain ranges, oceans, and plains. (Geography)

The history of Mexico will be presented in the form of a brief timeline of historical events so students can have an understanding of the events that changed the lives of these indigenous groups.

Another optional enrichment activity will be in the form of a biographical research study on one of the Spanish explorers that affected the lives of these indigenous tribes (e.g., Cortes, Coronado, Cordoba, Cabrillo, or Anza for Mexico; Cabrillo, DePortola, or Viscaino for San Diego). (History/Language Arts)

A culture box will be provided for each country to provide the students with a tactile approach to learning. This box will include artifacts in a variety of forms: pottery, weaving, food samples, photographs, instruments, folktales, gods, musical artifacts, and language samples. This box can be used as an introduction to this study or as a culminating activity.

Students will read a variety of folktales about the Zapotecs. Students will then use this model to write their own myth or legend based on the god or deity they made out of clay during their study of this indigenous tribe. They can also opt to create a digital story on their computers. Students will also include the geography, history, and cultural background information they have acquired during their study of this indigenous group to ensure it is authentic. Students will publish their folktales and collectively make an anthology of Mexican folktales.

Alternatively, they can write their own Reader's Theater to perform for other grade levels or parents. (Language Arts)

Students will use clay to make and decorate pottery vessels of their choice. These will be made by hand as they did in the days of the Zapotecs and Native American Kumeyaay. Students will also try weaving wool after first dyeing it with natural colors made from cochineal, Marigold flowers, alum, indigo, etc., just like the Zapotecs. Students will design masks and props if they choose to do a Reader's Theater to portray their self-written folktale. (Art)

The culmination of this unit will have students completing a Thinking Map entitled, Double Bubble, that will allow them to compare and contrast the Zapotecs with our local tribe, the Kumeyaay. Research notes will be recorded using Microsoft OneNote folders.

Rubrics will be used to assess the OneNote folder and the written folktale.

A Comparative Approach to the Zapotecs and a Select Native American Indian Tribe  
By Joan Boyle

<b>Geography</b>	<u>Lesson 1</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	Students describe physical and human geography and use maps, tables and graphs, photographs and charts, to organize information about people, places, and environments in spatial context.
Purpose:	To introduce the two new countries where our indigenous tribes live and the environment in which they had to adapt.
Lesson summary:	<p>Students will discover the locations of the United States and Mexico in relation to the rest of the world.</p> <p>Students will learn about Mexico's physical features, specifically Oaxaca which is the home of Zapotecs and Mixtecs. They will locate this area 17 degrees north of the equator.</p> <p>They will be given a map template of Mexico complete with cities and a legend to find various geographical features (deserts, bodies of water, mountains, plains, etc.)</p> <p>Students will complete daily reflections/or complete a Bubble Thinking Map on their computers using Microsoft OneNote on what they learned about the physical geography of Mexico (Oaxaca specifically).</p>
Vocabulary:	geography, legend, key, cardinal and intermediate directions, equator, scale, elevation, landforms, capital cities, regions, Oaxaca, Mexico, North America, latitude and longitude.
Materials:	<p>Atlas, map template, colored pencils, bubble thinking map, computers</p> <p>PowerPoint/Promethean Flipchart (PowerPoint is available for download from this website: <a href="http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/">http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/</a>)</p> <p>Interactive map on Promethean board</p>

<b>History &amp; Geography</b>	<u>Lesson 2</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	<p>Demonstrate an understanding of the natural landscape of the local region, in preparation for studying local history</p> <p>Describe the culture of the local Native American Indians of the region and the impact that geography had on their economy, government, and culture.</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the people who came to the local region and how these people and major historical events contributed to the present day community.</p> <p>Understand the diversity of human cultures.</p> <p>Discuss cultures and human patterns of places and regions of the world.</p>
Purpose:	To introduce the indigenous tribe of the Zapotecs and the era in which they lived.
Lesson summary:	<p>Students will use an interactive timeline on the Promethean board to acquire a brief history of Mexico from the first known indigenous tribe (the Olmecs, who were followed by the Zapotecs and the Mixtecs) through to the invasion by Spain.</p> <p>Students will plot key historical events on their own timeline using <a href="http://www.timeline.com">www.timeline.com</a>.</p> <p>Students will complete daily reflections about what they learned about the history of Mexico on their computers using Microsoft OneNote.</p>
Vocabulary:	Olmec, Zapotec, Mixtec, Spanish invasion, BC, AD
Materials:	<p>The focus literature for this unit is the book entitled <u>Oaxaca</u> from National Museum of Anthropology (ISBN 968030025-0.) See bibliography.</p> <p>Computers</p> <p>Interactive timeline on Promethean board</p>

<b>History &amp; Geography</b>	<u>Lesson 3</u> – 60 minutes
<b>Standards (for lessons 3–10):</b>	<p>Does segregation by geographical location allow people to develop independently, creating their own unique language patterns, food, style of dress appropriate to their environment, celebrations, folklore and traditions?</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the natural landscape of the local region, in preparation for studying local history</p> <p>Describe the culture of the local Native American Indians of the region and the impact that geography had on their economy, government, and culture.</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the people who came to the local region and how these people and major historical events contributed to the present day community.</p>
<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>The next group of daily lessons, 3–10, will focus on different aspects of the establishment of daily life for the Zapotec Indians.</p> <p>They will illustrate how this indigenous group utilized the central plains of Oaxaca and adapted to these surroundings.</p>
<b>Lesson summary:</b>	<p>Students will learn about the rise of Monte Alban phases I –V from the hunter/gatherer period of 10000–1900BC through the early Pre-Classic period, 1900–1500 BC; Proto-classic, 700–200 BC (building of Monte Alban); to the three stages of the classic period 200BC to 800AD.</p> <p>Students will see photographs on PowerPoint of a variety of buildings that were erected in Monte Alban. Students will start to discuss ideas to plan out Monte Alban in readiness to build this Capital City out of an assortment of construction materials.</p> <p>Students will watch a video on a Mexican version of “lachi,” the ball game played by the Zapotecs, which they called “ulama.” They will then play this game which will be modified to use hula hoops and arms in PE.</p> <p>Further information about the game:</p> <p><a href="http://www.zapotel.com/oaxaca/monte-alban/ballgame.htm">http://www.zapotel.com/oaxaca/monte-alban/ballgame.htm</a></p> <p><a href="http://archaeology.about.com/od/mameterms/a/Mesoamerican_Ball_Game.htm">http://archaeology.about.com/od/mameterms/a/Mesoamerican_Ball_Game.htm</a></p> <p>YouTube video:</p> <p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCzhtTjzWvU&amp;feature=youtube_gdata_player">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCzhtTjzWvU&amp;feature=youtube_gdata_player</a></p>

Vocabulary:	Tombs, ball court, temples, Grand Plaza, residences, hydraulic system, observatory
Materials:	PowerPoint /Computers – for reflection and Thinking Map Chart paper for design and building materials
<b>History</b>	<u>Lesson 4</u> – 60 Minutes
Standard:	As listed in Lesson 3
Purpose:	This lesson will introduce to the students the importance of commerce in the Zapotec community once they were no longer hunter-gatherers.
Lesson summary:	<p>Students will learn that one of the functions of the Grand Plaza was for the local Zapotecs and visiting merchants to trade their wares. They traded items such as food, cacao seeds, honey, wax, plants, or luxury items. They also brought shells from the coast and cotton, which were used as currency. Mica was traded for obsidian, which allowed the Zapotecs to make knives, weapons such as arrows and spears, and a range of jewelry. Dyes, feathers, and precious stones were used to decorate a variety of artifacts. Weaving was also utilized for clothing.</p> <p>Students will continue to plan and start building Monte Alban. They will complete their bubble map to show the goods that were traded so they can add these to their Monte Alban building at a later date.</p> <p>Students will watch a video of Zapotec weaving then try the whole process from dyeing wool from cochineal, marigolds, indigo, etc. through to the weaving process.</p>
Vocabulary:	Currency, trade, indigo, cochineal, cacao, artifacts
Materials:	PowerPoint Computers Wool, dyes and foot loom

<b>History</b>	<u>Lesson 5</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	As listed in Lesson 3
Purpose:	Students will learn about the writings of the Zapotecs to see their methods of communication during this time.
Lesson summary:	Writing samples have been found in Monte Alban dating back to 500BC. Scribes carved hieroglyphics and numerals in the form of dots and dashes to record events such as births, deaths, marriage, wars, rise to power, or initiation rites. These writings were found all over the city including as reliefs on buildings, monuments, walls, and even pottery or jewelry. Students will tell their own story using these practices as if they were a Zapotec child and they will be displayed around our Monte Alban.
Vocabulary:	Scribes ( <i>huezeequichi</i> ), hieroglyphics, reliefs
Materials:	PowerPoint  Paper, card stock, and markers  Computers
<b>History</b>	<u>Lesson 6</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	As listed in Lesson 3
Purpose:	This lesson will teach students about the belief system and importance of astronomy including the ritual and the solar calendar.
Lesson summary:	Students will learn that Zapotecs had two calendars: the ritual calendar ( <i>pije</i> ) of 260 days and the solar one ( <i>yza</i> ) that lasted 365 days. Learned men of astronomy also studied cosmic forces to understand good or bad omens for the future. In Monte Alban they even built a 5-sided observatory and a special chamber that lined up to the sun at a special time of the year and supported their study of the sky and beyond. Certain events marked time to praise or petition the gods.  Students will make their own version of a Zapotec calendar focusing on the important events in their lives then continue constructing Monte Alban.
Vocabulary:	Cosmic, constellations, observatory, petition

Materials:	Computer PowerPoint Art supplies
<b>History</b>	<u>Lesson 7</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	As listed in Lesson 3
Purpose:	This lesson will focus on the structure of the Zapotec society and the ranking in order of the highest to the lowest.
Lesson summary:	<p>Students will learn that this society was divided into rulers, nobles, priests, warriors, commoners, and slaves. Commoners were characterized as farmers, soldiers, and artisans. Artisans could include stonemasons, weavers, ceramists, and jewelers of shell, bone, or precious stone. Many of these materials were acquired through trade with locals or merchants from afar who would visit the Grand Plaza in Monte Alban.</p> <p>Students will also understand the jobs held by these members of Zapotec society.</p> <p>Students will then make some Zapotec pottery after watching a video of how this pottery is made today.</p>
Vocabulary:	Artisans
Materials:	PowerPoint Computers – show video of pottery making in Oaxaca Clay and materials to make an urn
<b>History</b>	<u>Lesson 8</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	As listed in Lesson 3
Purpose:	This lesson will focus on the funeral ceremonies held by the Zapotecs.



Lesson Summary:	<p>Students will learn about the architecture of the two-chambered tombs used to bury nobility and how they replicated the façade, niches, and chambers of a temple including a mural depicting important scenes usually in a vivid red.</p> <p>Students will compare this with the burial of a commoner or artisan who were left in small tombs only big enough to hold them with their legs bent and body in a crouched position.</p> <p>Students will also learn the importance of the last moments of death and how complex the ceremony was in relation to their social class.</p> <p>Students will build and decorate tombs to add to Monte Alban: one for the nobility and one for the commoner.</p>
Vocabulary:	Artisan, façade, tomb, niches, replicate
Materials:	Materials to build one tomb for the nobility and one for the commoner.
History	<u>Lesson 9</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	As listed in Lesson 3
Purpose:	This lesson will focus on the religion of the Zapotecs and in particular some of the thirteen main gods they worship and what they are deemed to provide to this indigenous tribe.
Lesson summary:	<p>Students will learn that the prefix PITAO before the name of gods meant great or good. They will also learn about Coqui Xee who did not have that prefix as he was the creator of all that existed and the god of thunder and rain who was also responsible for the fertility of the Earth; Pitao Cozobi, the god of harvests; Nochicaua, the goddess of children; Pitao Copichja, the sun, a masculine entity, fertilizer and giver of life; Coque Bezelaio, the god of the underworld who took the dead to their resting place; and others who were all protectors of the cities and in particular Cocijo who was without a doubt the protector of Monte Alban and the most venerated.</p> <p>Students will know that offerings of copal resin, flowers, chants and even sacrifices of birds, dogs, and humans were presented to these gods.</p>
Vocabulary:	Sacrifice, deity, fertility

Materials:	PowerPoint  Clay to create their own god about whom they will write a folktale or digital story in their culminating activity.
<b>History</b>	<u>Lesson 10</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	As listed in Lesson 3
Purpose:	This lesson will show music, dance, and traditional costumes utilized during special occasions.
Lesson summary:	Students will watch a video showing the traditional dance of the feathers. Students can make their own feather headdress and try out this dance.
Vocabulary:	
Materials:	Computers and video  Art supplies: feathers, etc.
<b>Arts</b>	<u>Lessons 11–14</u> – 60 minutes each
Standards:	Create and describe various works of art that have a similar theme and were created at different time periods.
Purpose:	To familiarize students with the crafts that were practiced by the Zapotecs.
Lesson summary:	Students will watch videos of crafts practiced by the Zapotecs then try them themselves:  Lesson 11 – Weaving  Lesson 12 – Wood Carving – students will decorate small animals purchased from craft store in the style of the Zapotecs  Lesson 13 – Pottery – using plates as a pottery wheel  Lesson 14 – Learn about the unusual food that the Zapotecs ate. Discuss the most unusual food students have ever eaten.
Vocabulary:	

Materials:	Wool, a selection of natural dyes, hand looms. The wool should be dyed previously.  Purchased wooden carved animals and paint and brushes.  Clay powder, water, plates, and tool for making patterns.
<b>Language Arts</b>	<u>Lesson 15</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	
Purpose:	In this lesson we will take the information collected on our thinking maps and notes from OneNote to compare and contrast the Zapotecs with one of the Native American tribes previously studied.
Lesson summary:	Students will review all of their sources on the Zapotecs from Oaxaca. Using a double bubble thinking map, students will compare and contrast this information with a Native American tribe studied.
Vocabulary:	
Materials:	Computer OneNote information and all literature and PowerPoint information.
<b>Language Arts</b>	<u>Lesson 16</u> – 60 minutes
Standards:	As above
Purpose:	Students will write their own folktale after enjoying some read alouds by the teacher.
Lesson summary:	Students will use all of the information they have learned in this unit and write their own folktale basing it off the god they made in Lesson 9 and utilizing the style of the read alouds. Alternatively they could write a Reader's Theater in a small group for support then act it out for the class. They can also make masks or props if time allows.
Vocabulary:	Folktale
Materials:	Computers, Writing materials, thinking map, Folktales for read aloud.

<b>Culture Box</b>	<u>Lesson 1 OR 17</u> – 60 minutes
Purpose:	The culture box can be used as an introduction or a finale to this unit on the Zapotecs. Pictures of my actual artifacts are provided in slides 46–59.
Lesson summary:	Students will view each slide and predict what the object was used for or what it might be. This stimulates excitement for the unit or shows a knowledge base if at the end.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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