

Unit Title:	Little Things Make a Big Difference—Infusing Mexican and Colombian Culture into the Classroom through Literacy & the Arts
-------------	--

Summary:	Through this unit, the teacher will combine literacy and the arts with ESL students. An objective is to link the cultures of Mexico and Colombia into core knowledge and skills the students must master. Students will write a memoir, listen to several read aloud books and stories, and create various visual art projects. In addition, the students will visit El Museo del Barrio in New York City to experience art and culture first hand.
----------	---

Author and School:	Alicia Marcinkowski P.S. 131 Q –The Abigail Adams School Jamaica, New York
--------------------	--

Subject Area:	English Language Arts, the Arts, and English as a Second Language
---------------	---

Topics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Literacy through Memoir Writing, a school-wide Read Aloud and Thematic Unit-Mexico.▪ Class trip to El Museo del Barrio, NYC
---------	--

Grade:	5 th grade/ Grades K–5 (Book of the Month)
--------	---

Time Frame:	17 45-minute classes (Memoir Writing) 2 45-minute classes (Book of the Month) 22 45-minute classes (Mexico Thematic Unit) Approximately 3 hours (Museum Visit)
-------------	---

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is it important to use our own experiences when writing?• What can we do to make a difference in other people's lives?• Why is it important to learn about other cultures?• What can we learn about a culture through its art forms? |
|---|

UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will understand...

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to use their personal experiences to write a memoir.• Specific people, places, and cultures in Colombia and Mexico through mentor texts, photos, and videos.• How to create Mexican art through piñatas, puppets, and pictures.• Culture is a way of life of a group of people who share similar beliefs and customs.• Latin American art by viewing it firsthand at El Museo del Barrio, NYC. |
|--|

Literacy Skills

- Students will cycle through the writing process: reading mentor texts, generating ideas, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing a memoir.
- Students will develop the following literacy skills: predicting, visualization, main idea and details, sequencing, inferring, and summarizing.
- By interacting with read-alouds of various texts, students will improve listening and speaking skills.
- Students will respond to literature by writing a response to a text.
- Students will be exposed to new vocabulary.

ESTABLISHED GOALS

Taken from Common Core State Standards Initiative English Language Arts Standards

- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Review key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
- Seek to understand and communicate with individuals from different perspectives and cultural backgrounds.

PERFORMANCE TASKS and EVIDENCE OF LEARNINGS

- Through teacher-created mentor and model texts about life changing experiences from Mexico and Colombia, students will cycle through the writing process to create their own memoirs.
- One-on-one conferences and strategy groups will ensure student understanding of memoir writing.
- Students will watch a video, listen to a story, and engage in classroom discussion.
- Students will write responses to literature.
- Students will be able create a piñata, skeleton puppets, and color famous works of art.

Students will demonstrate their learning through:

- A published memoir writing piece
- Class presentations
- Class discussions
- Completing art projects
- Reading and discussing books
- Written response to a text

Memoir Unit Plan

This unit was created using the “Columbia University: Teachers College Writing” format and ideas from Launch an Intermediate Writing Workshop: Getting Started with Units of Study for Teaching Writing, Grades 3–5 by Lucy Calkins.

Each of these lessons was conducted during a 45-minute class period. At the end of the unit, each child submitted a memoir that was graded using a rubric.

Each day the lesson followed a specific format:

- **Connection**—referring back to a previous skill(s) taught
- **Mini-lesson**—teacher models skill
- **Active engagement**—students practice the skill by turning and talking to one another
- **Independent work**—students work on their own writing piece while the teacher circulates and conferences or pulls a strategy group
 - **Conferences**—teacher works with several individual children. First, the teacher observes the work the child is doing, and then teaches a specific skill that child should work on.
 - **Strategy groups**—teacher works with a small group of students that are struggling with the same skill/idea and re-teaches it another way.
- **Share**—several students read aloud what they have done that day.

Lesson 1 Teaching Point: Students will be introduced to the rubric for writing memoirs and identify how to grade sample memoirs.

Lesson 2 Teaching Point: Writers generate ideas by making a heart of special people in their lives and recalling a special memory linked to those people.

Lesson 3 Teaching Point: Writers generate ideas by making a list of special places, objects, and/or animals.

Lesson 4 Teaching Point: Writers generate ideas for memoirs by remembering a major event in their lives (Social Issues), such as moving, a birth, or death in the family.

Lesson 5 Teaching Point: Writers select the topic of their memoir by story telling with a partner and then creating a timeline for their memoir including special people, places, things, and events in their lives.

Lesson 6 Teaching Point: Writers begin drafting their stories by following their timeline and separating each paragraph into a different section.

Lesson 7 Teaching Point: Writers continue their drafts by slowing down the motion of the memoir and telling the memory as if they were reliving it in the present.

Lesson 8 Teaching Point: Writers revise their writing by rereading it and asking, “Does it move others emotionally? Does it have a turning point?”

Lesson 9 Teaching Point: Writers revise their draft by telling both the internal and external perspective. What they were thinking, seeing, and doing.

Lesson 10 Teaching Point: Writers revise their work by adding bold print, ellipses, and/or punctuation to emphasize their ideas.

Lesson 11 Teaching Point: Writers revise by making sure they’ve included a powerful beginning to their memoir.

Lesson 12 Teaching Point: Writers revise by making sure they’ve included a powerful ending to their memoir.

Lesson 13 Teaching Point: Writers revise by following the rules of when to write a new paragraph in a story.

Lesson 14 Teaching Point: Students will edit my circling words that may be spelled incorrectly & use a dictionary to check the word.

Lesson 15 Teaching Point: Students will edit by paying attention to tense.

Lesson 16 Teaching Point: Students will publish their memoirs by writing neatly with a publishing pen.

Lesson 17 Teaching Point: Students will celebrate their memoirs by reading them aloud to the class.

Book of the Month Read Aloud Lesson Plans

The book of the month assembly takes place every month in the auditorium in two sessions: K–2 and 3–5. Students are read the book aloud and then discuss the theme. Later, each teacher in the school gets a copy of the book and a question to go along with it. Every teacher must reread the book to their class and children write a response to the question. The teacher chooses one response each month and this writing response is displayed on a bulletin board outside the principal’s office.

For the month of December I chose the book Biblioburro by Jeanette Winter.

Lesson 1: Students will listen to the teacher read the book, Biblioburro. Students will watch two videos about Luis Soriano.

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/LIVING/02/25/cnnheroes.soriano/index.html>
<http://www.ayokaproductions.org/content/biblioburro-donkey-library>

Lesson 2: Students will write a response to the book Biblioburro by answering the following question: What little things can you do to make a difference in the lives of others?

Mexico Unit Plan

New York City Public Schools incorporate an extended-day program into their daily schedule. This year my entire class participates in the extended-day program from 8:00–8:45 AM, Tuesday-Thursday. This Mexico Unit Plan was carried out during this time.

Lessons 1–5 Teaching Point: Students will learn about Mexico’s location and cultures by reading Fiesta! Mexico, and discussing it as a class.

Lessons 6 Teaching Point: Students will listen to and discuss the book The Piñata Maker.

Lesson 7 Teaching Point: Students will prepare to make a piñata by cutting paper.

Lesson 8–9 Teaching Point: Students will cover balloons with newspaper and papier mâché glue.

Lessons 10–13 Teaching Point: Students will decorate piñatas with colored ripped paper. The piñatas will be displayed in the classroom.

Lesson 14 Teaching Point: Students will listen to and discuss the book The Day of the Dead.

Lesson 15 Teaching Point: Students will create Day of the Dead skeleton puppets by tracing a body, arms, and legs on card stock.

Lesson 16 Teaching Point: Students will decorate their skeletons puppets.

Lesson 17 Teaching Point: Students will use paper fasteners to assemble skeleton puppets.

Lesson 18 Teaching Point: Students will listen to Luche Libre: The Man in the Silver Mask and discuss the tradition.

Lesson 19 Teaching Point: Students will design their own Luche Libre mask on a card stock template.

Lesson 20 Teaching Point: Students will decorate the Luche Libre mask.

Lesson 21 Teaching Point: Students will learn about famous Mexican artists by reading a translated version of the biography of Frida Kahlo from the book Dibujos de Grandes Pintores.

Lesson 22 Teaching Point: Students will color their own version of “Autorretrato con Bonito” by Frida Kahlo from the book Dibujos de Grandes Pintores.

Lesson 23 Teaching Point: Students will read a translated version of the biography of Diego Rivera from the book Dibujos de Grandes Pintores.

Lesson 24 Teaching Point: Students will color their own version of “El Dia De Los Muertos” by Diego Rivera from the book Dibujos de Grandes Pintores.

Lesson 25 Teaching Point: Students will listen to the Mexican folktale The Lizard and the Sun and identify the theme of the story.

Museum Visit: Class trip to El Museo del Barrio, NYC

Students will participate in a guided tour at the museum to encourage observations, spark curiosities, and foster conversations around selected works of art and objects. Students will build upon their prior knowledge of Mexico and Colombia, make connections with what they see, and develop a deeper understanding of the works of art discussed.

To further explore the themes of Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), students will explore the inherited and new traditions associated with this holiday where visitors create works of art that reflect on this tradition and their experiences with El Museo’s Dia de los Muertos installations.

Bibliography

BOOKS

Barner, Bob (2010). The Day of the Dead. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Calkins, Lucy (2010). Launch an Intermediate Writing Workshop: Getting Started with Units of Study for Teaching Writing, Grades 3–5. Portsmouth, NH: FirstHand.

Davalos, Felipe (1997). The Lizard and the Sun. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

(1999). Fiesta! Mexico. Danbury, CT: Grolier Educational.

Garza, Xavier (2005). Lucas Libre: The Man in the Silver Mask. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press.

Rolf, Taina (2011). Dibujos de Grandes Pintores. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Imaginador.

Winter, Jeanette (2010). Biblioburro. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.

WEBSITES

<http://www.ayokaproductions.org/content/biblioburro-donkey-library>

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/LIVING/02/25/cnnheroes.soriano/index.html>

<http://www.elmuseo.org/>

5th Grade Memoir Rubric

	4 <input type="checkbox"/> Above Grade Level	3 <input type="checkbox"/> On Grade Level	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Approaching Grade Level	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Below Grade Level
Topic Choice	The topic is about a memory that had a significant, life changing impact on their life.	The topic is about a memory that had an impact on their life.	The topic is about a memory that had little impact on their life.	The topic is about a memory that had no impact on their life.
Focus	A narrative that includes a reflection that shows insight of the author's thoughts and feelings. <input type="checkbox"/> Clear theme (lesson learned).	A narrative that includes a reflection that shows some insight into the author's thoughts and feelings.	A narrative that attempts to include a reflection or insight into the author's thoughts and feelings.	A story that does not include a reflection or insight about the author.
Structure	Inviting introduction and powerful ending. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing is written in proper paragraph form. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing is clear, organized, and has effective sequencing and pacing. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing contains use of advanced vocabulary words.	Inviting introduction and satisfying ending. Writing is mostly written in proper paragraph form. Writing is mostly clear and organized. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing contains grade appropriate vocabulary.	Simple introduction and ending. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing is somewhat written in paragraph form. Writing is somewhat clear and organized. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing attempts to use grade appropriate vocabulary.	Introduction and ending do not affect the story. Writing is not written in paragraph form. Writing is not clear and organized. <input type="checkbox"/> Writing contains use of simple vocabulary words.
Elaboration	The “life changing moment” contains many important details that engage the reader. <input type="checkbox"/> The writer uses show-not-tell throughout the entire story. <input type="checkbox"/> The writing contains use of meaningful dialogue. <input type="checkbox"/> The writing contains evidence of voice.	The “life changing moment” contains some important details. <input type="checkbox"/> The writer uses show-not-tell throughout most of the story. <input type="checkbox"/> The writing contains some important dialogue. <input type="checkbox"/> The writing contains some evidence of voice.	The “life changing moment” contains few important details. <input type="checkbox"/> The writer attempts to use show-not-tell. <input type="checkbox"/> The writing contains little or no use of important dialogue. <input type="checkbox"/> The writing contains little or no use of evidence of voice.	Lacks important details about the memory. <input type="checkbox"/> The writer does not use show-not-tell. <input type="checkbox"/> The writing lacks important dialogue or uses unimportant dialogue. <input type="checkbox"/> The writing lacks evidence of voice.
Mechanics	The writing contains correct spelling and grammar.	The writing contains mostly correct spelling and grammar.	The writing contains several spelling and grammar error.	The writing contains many spelling and grammar errors.

Grade: Level _____

Strengths: _____

Suggestions: _____