

5th Grade Music/Social Studies Unit: The Diversity of Mexican and Colombian Culture as Expressed through Music and Dance

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Brooklyn, NY; participant, Fulbright-Hays Seminar Abroad, 2012,
“Colombia & Mexico: Exploring Culture and Society Beyond the
Headlines”

Summary: In this unit, students will go beyond the stereotypes of Mexican culture to understand that country’s complex cultural roots through a study of musical styles, folkloric dances, and festivals. Students will also learn about Colombian culture and ethnography, and will compare some aspects of Colombian culture and political geography to that of Mexico.

Understandings: Culture results from a blending of influences, developing over hundreds or even thousands of years. These influences are varied and often disparate. Mexican and Colombian culture is a blend of Hispanic, pre-Hispanic, and other influences. In Mexico the pre-Hispanic heritage plays a greater role than in Colombia, where the Afro-Hispanic heritage is more significant.

Essential Questions: What is culture? Where does it come from? What is cultural and ethnic diversity? What is the role of music in the daily lives of Mexicans and Colombians? What are the different influences on Mexican and Colombian culture in general, and on their music in particular?

Lesson 1: The climatic and topographical diversity of Mexico

Objectives: *After completing this lesson students will be able to:*

- Describe, compare, and contrast the major regions of Mexico in terms of climate and geography.
- Describe the basic political organization of Mexico and compare it with our own (on the most elemental level, bearing in mind this is primarily an arts unit).

Relevant Content Standards: *(taken from New York State Social Studies standards)*

Standard 3: Geography

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.

Materials:

- KWL chart (attached)
- Political map of Mexico (Google images, attached), one on display, and one copy for each student
- Photographs from our trip showing diversity of flora and topography (PowerPoint with images available for download from this website: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/>)—from photographs taken by Alejandro Montes (official photographer for trip)

Procedures:

- Fill out KWL, after giving overview of the unit. Discuss selected student responses, taking care to connect “Want to know” responses to the material we will cover in the unit.
- Label names of states covered in the unit on political map.
- View pictures of Sonora, Oaxaca, Puebla, Veracruz, Yucatan, discuss similarities, differences.

Assessment:

Completion of KWL chart and map

Resources:

Website on Mexico’s form of government:

<http://www.tareasya.com.mx/index.php/tareas-ya/secundaria/formacion-civica-y-etica/el-estado-mexicano/1711-El-Estado-mexicano-y-su-forma-de-gobierno.html>

Name:

Date:

K What I Know About Mexico	W What I Want to Know About Mexico	L What I Learned About Mexico



Lesson 2: Ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of Mexico

Objectives: *After completing this lesson students will be have an:*

- Understanding of the meaning of the term “culture” as it applies to customs, beliefs, and attitudes.
- Understanding of the ethnic and cultural variety and complexity of Mexico.

Relevant Content Standards: *(taken from New York State Social Studies standards)*

Key Idea 3: Study of the major social, political, cultural, and religious developments in world history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups. Students will: understand the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, technological, and religious practices and activities.

Materials:

- Images showing caste organization of Mexico during *virreinato* (colonial) period (PowerPoint with images available for download from this website: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/>)
- Images showing ethnic diversity of Mexico (indigenous, European, Afro-Latino) (see PowerPoint)
- Ethnic map of Mexico with blank copy for students to fill in (attached)

Procedure:

Discuss significance of the year 1492. Ask students what happened that year. Explain that Mexico also had indigenous peoples. Spanish colonization brought Europeans to Mexico. The slave trade brought Africans to the Caribbean coast. Show ethnic map of Mexico, along with images of indigenous peoples, telenovela stars, contemporary and past political figures so students can appreciate the wide ethnic diversity of Mexico.

Assessment:

Completion of ethnic map of Mexico

Resources:

- Website with information on Afro-Mexican culture:
<http://www.afrolatinos.tv/index.php?root.display/238/M%E9xico#lang1pag1>



Lesson 3: Pre-hispanic Mexican Civilization

Objectives: *After completing this lesson students will be have an:*

- Understanding of the importance of Pre-Columbian civilization in Mexican culture and history.
- Understanding of Pre-Columbian musical traditions (insofar as they are understood) and dance rituals.
- Understanding of the basic belief systems of Pre-Columbian civilizations.

Relevant Content Standards:

Same as for Lesson 2

Materials:

- Videos of surviving pre-Hispanic rituals (see Resources below)
- Images of pre-Hispanic archeological sites and artifacts (PowerPoint with images available for download from this website:
<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/>)

Procedure:

State the time period of the Aztecs (1200–1521) so that students can mentally place the Aztecs chronologically before Columbus. Describe worship of the sun and other nature gods (connection with Greek mythology, polytheism; contrast with monotheistic religions of today). Show Sun Stone and explain significance. Explain the purpose of music was to please the gods, not for entertainment. Play samples of Aztec music, show videos of Aztec rituals.

Assessment:

“Exit Activity”: In writing, students respond to the following: “What are the purposes of music in today’s society? How do these differ from how music was used by the Aztecs?”

Resources:

- Sounds of Aztec instruments and information on the Aztec belief system: <http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/index.php?one=azt&two=mus&id=395&typ=reg>
- Grade-appropriate lessons and supplementary materials: <http://aztecs.mrdonn.org/>
- Video of indigenous music: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpDcxiEVNSQ>
- Historia de Mexico, Epoca Prehistorica, Epoca Prehispanica. Cecilia Cortina Campero. Panorama Editorial, 2004. ISBN: 968381251

Lesson 4: Hispanic and other European musical contributions to Mexico

Objectives: *After completing this lesson students will be have an:*

- Understanding of the Hispanic contributions to the musical instruments of Mexico.
- Understanding of Hispanic contributions to dress and religion (Catholicism).
- Understanding of other European contributions to Mexican music, such as the accordion.

Relevant Content Standards:

Same as for Lesson 2; also: National Standards for Music Education: Understanding music in relation to history and culture: “Identify by genre or style aural examples of music from various historical periods and cultures; identify and describe roles of musicians in various music settings and cultures.”

Materials:

- Images of the violin, Spanish guitar, *guitarrón*, etc. (PowerPoint with images available for download from this website:
<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/>)
- Images of colonial dress and architecture (see PowerPoint)
- Images of *charrería* (see PowerPoint)
- Videos of Banda Norteña and Mariachi music (see Resources below)

Procedure:

Show images of instruments of Spanish origin or derived from instruments of Spanish origin. Show images of colonial dress and architecture. Discuss. Show images of *charrería* costumes, explaining that *charrería* is a Mexican tradition with its roots in late colonial times/early independence.

Assessment:

Show 10 or so random images of instruments, clothing items, students provide matching one-word responses: “indigenous,” “Spanish,” or “*charrería*.”

Resources:

- History of Mexican music: http://www.ehow.com/list_6803590_mexican-musical-instruments.html
- History and types of Mexican instruments:
http://www.ehow.com/about_6590294_history-mariachi-instruments.html
- *Charrería*: http://www.asociacionnacionaldecharros.com/blog/?page_id=16
- History of *Orquestas Nacionales*: “Relatos e Historias de Mexico”. número 36, agosto 2011: “Orquestas Típicas Mexicanas –Pioneras del nacionalismo musical”
- Banda Norteña: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2I9eO3O2-s&feature=related>
- Mariachi: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NWSWg7c0Ec>

Lesson 5: Spanish language

Objectives: *After completing this lesson, students will be able to:*

- State a want in Spanish.
- Inquire about a want in Spanish.

Relevant Content Standards:

New York State Standards for Languages Other Than English. Standard 1: “Students will be able to use a language other than English for communication.”

Materials:

Instructional video on conjugating verb *querer* (to want, to love) in present tense:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIwFPNfUoik>

Procedure:

Point out the difference between verbs in Spanish and English (conjugation is more important in Spanish). Introduce conjugations of *querer*. Show video, and allow students to practice. Then, offering students 3 noun choices: *una manzana, un dulce, una banana,*” students practice asking and answering questions using *querer*. Example: *¿Quieres una manzana? Si, quiero una manzana.*

Assessment:

Students are able to answer in the affirmative if teacher asks them whether they want something.

Lesson 6: Song study: La Bamba

Objectives: *After completing this lesson students will:*

- Understand that time and culture can impact upon musical style.
- Be able to point out important differences between the original *versión veracruzana* of “La Bamba” and the rock and roll version by Richie Valens/Los Lobos.
- Be able to distinguish important elements of *música veracruzana*.
- Be able to discuss the concept of immigration and assimilation.
- Be familiar with *son jarocho* and *zapateado*.

Relevant Content Standards:

This lesson in particular, and this unit in general address the “National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Chapter 2—The Themes of Social Studies: *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity*. Here is a link to the full text: <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands>.

Materials:

- “Son Jarocho” CD
- YouTube videos (see Resources below)
- Images of instruments from Veracruz (attached)

Procedure:

Indicate location of Veracruz on political map of Mexico. Watch the Richie Valens version of “La Bamba.” Watch the *versión folklórica* of “La Bamba.” Discuss the many similarities and differences between the two versions. Watch video of Veracruz folkloric dance. Discuss why Richie Valens might have anglicized his name and given a rock flavor to “La Bamba.” Teach song to students, being sure to communicate nonsense nature of lyrics.

Assessment:

Writing exit piece: What instruments do you hear in the Richie Valens version of “La Bamba” that you do not hear in the traditional version? Why do you think people try to preserve the Veracruz music and dance traditions even though they may not be considered “modern?” (After playing traditional Veracruz musical selection) What traditional Veracruz instruments do you hear in this piece?

Resources:

- Richie Valens singing “La Bamba”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCXlp3D5NQA>;
- Veracruz version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hP054M3kBsY>;
- *Zapateado* (dance genre): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcClgYuMeuU>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uXegenQyfk> (*zapateado veracruzano*)

Lesson 7: Study of musical style: mariachi

Objectives: *After completing this lesson students will:*

- Understand the social role of mariachi.
- Understand the different musical influences on mariachi.
- Appreciate the role of mariachi in Mexican culture in general.

Relevant Content Standards:

National Standards for Music Education: Understanding music in relation to history and culture: “Identify by genre or style aural examples of music from various historical periods and cultures; identify and describe roles of musicians in various music settings and cultures”; *New York State Standards for the Arts:* Responding To and Analyzing Works of Art: “Students will demonstrate the ability to listen to and comment on music”; Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts: “Students will develop a performing and listening repertoire of music of various genres, styles, and cultures that represent the people of the world...Students will recognize the cultural features of a variety of musical compositions and performances and understand the functions of music within the culture.”

Materials:

YouTube mariachi videos (see Resources below)

Procedure:

Show mariachi videos. Discuss composition of mariachi orchestra. Discuss disputed origin of the word “mariachi.” Discuss social role of mariachis: weddings, Mother’s Day, Festival of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Teach “Cielito Lindo;” students will be expected to sing along with the refrain and will understand its meaning.

Assessment:

This will not be a heavily assessed lesson. However, students will be expected to participate in singing of “Cielito Lindo.” Students will also be expected to participate meaningfully in the watching of the videos and the discussions following them.

Resources:

- “Media Vuelta” by Jose Alfredo Jimenez:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkVQi7_md6g
- “Viva Mexico” (theatre performance):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qrv8dYDZlQQ>
- “Mi Jalisco”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmUjYeJehsM>
- Background on Mariachi music: <http://www.misrespuestas.com/que-son-los-mariachis.html>

Lesson 8: Cultural study: Oaxaca

Objectives: *After this lesson, students will:*

- Understand the important place of the *guelaguetza* in Oaxacan life, specifically as an expression of pre-Hispanic culture.
- Gain an appreciation for the very important role pre-Hispanic culture still plays in present-day Mexico.
- Gain an appreciation for the culinary variety of Oaxaca.
- Understand the role of the *banda de viento* in the cultural life of Oaxaca, and in that of Mexico in general.

Relevant Content Standards:

This lesson addresses standards indicated in previous lessons.

Materials:

- Photo collection from Fulbright trip (PowerPoint with images available for download from this website:
<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/>)
- CD of Oaxacan *banda de viento* music

Procedure:

Show location of Oaxaca on map of Mexico. Indicate that many indigenous groups live here, and many people still speak their indigenous languages. Point out that “chocolate” is derived from *xocolatl*, an indigenous word. Show pictures of ink production from cochinita, pointing out that it dates back to pre-Hispanic times. Show pictures of Oaxaca central market, particularly the *chapulines* vendors. Discuss centrality of *chapulines* in Mexican cuisine. Show *danza de los guerreros* video, pointing out that it represents indigenous warriors. Play CD, show video of Oaxacan *banda de viento* and discuss origin.

Assessment:

Written response. What is the most unusual thing you have learned about Oaxaca? Be specific about why you think it is unusual. What is one thing you learned about that is a pre-Hispanic tradition? What is one thing you learned about that is comes from European tradition. What makes these practices pre-Hispanic or European?

Resources:

- Information about the *Guelaguetza*:
<http://www.arqueomex.com/S2N3nGUELAGUETZA74.html>
- *Danza de los guerreros*:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZX5jmagzgw&feature=related>
- Opening at the open-air theater: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQQLFis6rIE>
- *Banda de viento*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6aqGDvP4Ew>

Lesson 9: Columbia: A geographical and cultural overview

Objectives: *At the conclusion of this lesson students will:*

- Understand and appreciate the climatic and topographical diversity of Colombia.
- Understand the basic political organization of Colombia; this will be compared to that of Mexico (in a way pedagogically appropriate to 5th grade).
- Understand the ethnic make-up of Colombia, and will be able to compare it to that of Mexico.

Relevant Content Standards:

See Lesson 1.

Materials:

- Maps of Colombia by department and by region (attached)
- Photos of Bogotá, Medellín, Cartagena, Cali, as well as of typical features of the major regions (PowerPoint with images available for download from this website: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/>)
- Photo collection of different ethnic types of Colombia (see PowerPoint)

Procedure:

Show Colombia's location on map of South America. In which part of South America is Colombia located? Show map of Colombia's five regions, discuss topographical and climatic differences. Ask: do you know what the Amazon is already? With which South American country do you associate the Amazon? Show map of 32 departamentos (states); compare with Mexico's 32 estados. Show pictures highlighting ethnic differences among Colombians. Which show *indigenous* people? Point out that almost all Mexicans are descended in part from indigenous peoples, whereas this is much less the case in Colombia. On the other hand, Afro-Latinos are much more present in Colombia, particularly in the Caribbean.

Assessment:

Students will fill in regional map with correct names of five regions of Colombia. Students will correctly place Bogota, Cali, Medellin, and Cartagena on this map.

South America



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Lesson 10: Colombia: A blending of cultures

Objectives: *At the conclusion of this lesson students will:*

- Understand the importance of Afro-Latino culture in Colombia.
- Be able to identify the Afro-Latino influence in a Colombian folk dance from the Caribbean region of the country.

Relevant Content Standards:

New York State Standards For the Arts: Responding To and Analyzing Works of Art: “Students will demonstrate the ability to listen to and comment on music”; Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts: “Students will develop a performing and listening repertoire of music of various genres, styles, and cultures that represent the people of the world...Students will recognize the cultural features of a variety of musical compositions and performances and understand the functions of music within the culture.”

Materials:

- Pictures of Afro-Colombian instruments (PowerPoint with images available for download from this website:
<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/fulbright12/>)
- YouTube videos (see Resources below)

Procedure:

Reinforce/introduce idea that the slave trade brought the ancestors of today’s Colombians of African descent to the Pacific as well as the Caribbean regions of the country. Point out these regions on a map. Discuss reasons for the importation of slaves into Colombia, and compare the economic motivation of Colombian slavery to that of our own country (many similarities should arise in the discussion). Mention importance of drums in traditional African culture. Show pictures of instruments played in Colombia that are of African origin. Show video of Los Alegres Ambulancias. Discuss the (strong) African influence on the performance pieces.

Assessment:

While assessment is a component of this unit, the assessments at the end of each these lessons are intended to be formative, not summative. That is, they may be used for grading purposes, but their main function is to indicate to the teacher the level of appreciation of the material on the part of the students. Accordingly, the exit activity for this unit will consist of a response to the following questions: Did the different elements of the music and dance pieces you have seen in this unit all come from Mexico and Colombia originally, or did they come from somewhere else? Which influences are *indigenous* (from the countries themselves), and which come from elsewhere? Where, specifically, did the influences come from? Your response should be at least one page long.

Resources:

- Information on the African influence on Colombian culture:
<http://www.todacolombia.com/folclor/musica/musicacolombiana.html>
- Information on Afro-Colombian music:
<http://www.afrocolombianidad.info/historia/instrumentos-de-la-musica-tradicional-afrocolombiana.html>
- Educational video on Afro-Latino cultural heritage of the Pacific region of Colombia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U545QuH5264>
- Los Alegres Ambulancias (folkloric group preserving Afro-Latino heritage in Colombia): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAPxpQtxR78>