

Fulbright-Hays Curriculum Project: Mexico, 2012
John Quincy Adams Elementary School, Dallas, Texas
By Jennifer Turner

Unit Title: Mexico and Me: A Journey through Art and Literature

Grade Level: Upper Elementary, Middle School

Subject Areas: Reading/Language Arts, Art

Topics: Cultural identity, indigenous art, immigration, family

Summary: Students will be introduced to Mexico through a combination of literacy and art activities. The lessons will focus on traditional Mexican art styles, immigration and indigenous culture.

Reading/Language Arts: Students will read *What the Moon Saw* by Laura Resau, a novel that gives the fictional account of Luna Clara, the Mexican-American child of an immigrant. The story tells of her summer spent visiting her grandparents in a rural village near Oaxaca, Mexico. Students will read informational texts to set foundational knowledge of Mexican history and use comprehension strategies to understand elements of fiction.

Art: Students will learn about various traditional Mexican art styles, including tapestries, black pottery and *alebrijes*, or painted wood carvings. Students will watch original video clips of the artists explaining their crafts and choose styles to emulate in their own work.

Objectives: By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Create original artworks;
- Compare different artworks from a region, identifying similarities and differences;
- Analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in cultural, historical and contemporary contexts;
- Explain the roles and functions of characters in various plots, including their relationships and conflicts; and
- Analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about expository text.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

<p>Established Goals</p> <p><i>Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Grade 5</i></p>	<p>Reading</p> <p>5.3 Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary context. The student is expected to: (C) explain the effect of a historical event or movement on the theme of a work of literature.</p> <p>5.6 Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. The student is expected to: (B) explain the roles and functions of characters in various plots, including their relationships and conflicts.</p> <p>5.11 Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about expository text and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to: (A) summarize the main ideas and supporting details in a text in ways that maintain meaning and logical order; and (E) synthesize and make logical connections between ideas within a text and across two or three texts representing similar or different genres.</p> <p>5.18 Students write expository and procedural or work-related texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. Students are expected to: (A) create multi-paragraph essays to convey information about the topic.</p> <p>Art</p> <p>5.2 The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (C) create original artworks and explore photographic imagery, using a variety of art materials and media appropriately.</p>
<p>Understanding</p>	<p>Mexico has a rich cultural heritage that crosses generations and geographical borders.</p> <p>Art can be used to express oneself and one’s culture and can also be a way to preserve traditions from the past.</p>
<p>Essential Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were to start a new life, would you want to forget your old one? • Do modern conveniences always make life better? • What parts of your culture do you most want to preserve? • What can art teach us about history?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does an artist's personality or mood affect his or her art? How can art be a window to the past?
Students will know...	<p>Students will learn to use main ideas in an expository text to write a summary of the text.</p> <p>Students will learn to explain how a historical movement affects the theme of a fictional text.</p> <p>Students will learn to draw conclusions about the theme of a fictional text and provide evidence from the text to support their thinking.</p> <p>Students will learn to explain the roles, relationships and conflicts between two characters in a fictional text.</p> <p>Students will learn to create original artwork based on established techniques.</p>
Students will be able to...	<p>Given a passage from a fictional text, students will be able to identify one historical event that affects the text and two pieces of evidence from the text that support their claim.</p> <p>Given a passage from a fictional text, students will be able to identify the theme of the text and provide three pieces of evidence from the text that supports that theme.</p> <p>Given a fictional text, students will be able create a T-chart that demonstrates the relationship and conflicts between two main characters.</p> <p>Given the tools needed, students will create original art based on techniques established by Mexican artists.</p>

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Task	<p>Create a reflection book about <i>What the Moon Saw</i> by Laura Resau.</p> <p>Complete graphic organizers daily to aid in comprehension.</p> <p>Write a multi-paragraph essay to convey ideas about the characters in the book.</p> <p>Create a piece of artwork based on method and styles of Mexican artisans (pottery, wood carvings, weaving).</p>
Other Evidence	<p>Class discussions, daily demonstrations of learning, unit test.</p>

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Timeframe: Four weeks

Summary: Students will read and analyze *What the Moon Saw* by Laura Resau. Students will explore various aspects of Mexican history and present issues, including immigration, and connect this learning to themes within the novel. Art activities will extend learning.

Objectives:

- Analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in cultural, historical and contemporary contexts;
- Explain the roles and functions of characters in various plots, including their relationships and conflicts; and
- Analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about expository text.

Note: Students will need to have already begun reading *What the Moon Saw*, either as a class read-aloud, independent reading, or reading at home. The following plans will require students to analyze the book but does not include the time required for reading the novel for the first time. The plans are designed to be applied to any chapter or section of the book so as to allow flexibility for time and variations in ability.

Organization of activities: (I) Introduce/Engage; (II) Direct Instruction; (III) Guided Practice; (IV) Independent Practice; (V) Closure; (VI) Assessment.

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4
Written Curriculum: Learning Standards from <i>Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills</i>	5.11 Students are expected to: (A) summarize the main ideas and supporting details in a text in ways that maintain meaning and logical order.	5.11 Students are expected to: (E) synthesize and make logical connections between ideas within a text and across two or three texts representing similar or different genres.	5.6 The student is expected to: (A) describe incidents that advance the story or novel, explaining how each incident gives rise to or foreshadows future events.	5.6 The student is expected to: (B) explain the roles and functions of characters in various plots, including their relationships and conflicts.
Lesson Objective Discuss at the beginning of lesson	Students will learn to use the main idea and details in an expository text to write a summary of the text.	Students will learn to compare and contrast ideas across two texts representing different genres.	Students will learn to describe important events that advance a fiction story.	Students will learn to explain the relationship between two characters in a fictional text.
Demonstration of Learning Use to assess learning at the end of each lesson	Given a sample paragraph, students will be able to write the main idea of the paragraph and two supporting details.	Given two fiction texts, students will be able to create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast ideas across the texts.	Given a sample paragraph, students will complete a sequence chart with main events from the story.	Given a fictional text, students will be able create a character analysis chart that demonstrates the relationship between characters.
Activities (I) Introduce/ Engage (II) Direct Instruction (III) Guided Practice (IV)	I. Engage students by showing the slide show of photos from Mexico. Students complete a K-W-L chart. Create a class idea map about Mexico. Also display	I. Show students the slide show of photos from Huejotál (see link in Resources). Students make predictions about the lives of the children in the photos. Add ideas and questions to the class idea	I. Show students the slide show of photos of Oaxaca, Mexico (see link in Resources). Connect Oaxaca to the setting of the novel. Identify Oaxaca on the map and discuss the geography with students. Allow	I. Give each student a slip of paper that lists the name of a character from <i>What the Moon Saw</i> . Play charades as a whole group, with students acting out the character on their paper and the class guessing.

<p>Independent Practice (V) Closure (VI) Assessment</p>	<p>a list of ongoing questions that students have about the country. As you go through the unit, add more ideas and questions.</p> <p>Explain to students that they will be learning about several different aspects of Mexico: ancient history, present-day issues, and art. Have students create a reflection book to work in throughout the unit.</p> <p>II. Read the Mexico information sheet (attached) with students. Model how to use text clues, such as headings and bold print, to identify main ideas in the text.</p> <p>III. Students work in pairs to read “Language in Movement” article (attached) and discuss the main idea and four supporting details.</p> <p>IV. Each student completes</p>	<p>map and question list.</p> <p>II. Read “Reasons to Stay” (attached) with students. Students find the main idea and supporting details from the text. Model for students how to compare and contrast ideas between text using the Mexico information sheet and “Reasons to Stay.”</p> <p>III. Students work together and use a Venn diagram (attached) to compare and contrast ideas in “Reasons to Stay” and “Language in Movement.”</p> <p>IV. Each student completes a triple Venn diagram using each of the three articles.</p> <p>V. Return to class idea map and questions list. Ask students to contribute ideas or questions they have after reading the two articles.</p> <p>VI. DOL – Choose one</p>	<p>students to cut out the map and glue it into their reflection books.</p> <p>II. Choose a section of the novel to read aloud with students. Model for students how to choose main ideas from the selection and put them in sequential order.</p> <p>III. Students work in groups or in pairs to read or reread another section of the book. Students make sequencing graphic organizers (attached) to show the main events in order.</p> <p>IV. Each student chooses his or her favorite part of the book. Students make a poster to illustrate and put the events of their chosen sections in order.</p> <p>V. Students share posters with class. Add ideas and wonderings to the class idea map and questions list.</p>	<p>II. Discuss with students the different relationships seen between the characters within the story. Model for students how to use evidence from the text to describe the relationships.</p> <p>III. In small groups, students complete the character analysis graphic chart (attached) by identifying and describing the roles, functions and relationships between characters in the book.</p> <p>IV. Using the character analysis chart, students will create an outline for writing about two of the characters. Save the outline until the next day when students will add conflicts between the two characters.</p> <p>V. Return to class idea map and questions list. Ask students to contribute ideas or questions they have after</p>
---	---	--	---	--

	<p>an outline (worksheet attached) to organize the main ideas and details.</p> <p>V. Return to class idea map and questions list. Ask students to contribute ideas or questions they have after reading the two articles.</p> <p>VI. DOL – Choose one paragraph from the articles to read in class. Students identify the main idea of the paragraph and give two supporting details.</p>	<p>paragraph from each of the articles the students read over the past two days. Students choose two of the paragraphs to compare and contrast using a Venn diagram.</p>	<p>VI. DOL – Choose a short section of text from the book. Students put the events in sequential order.</p>	<p>reading the two articles.</p> <p>VI. DOL – Students complete a character-analysis chart for two different characters.</p>
--	---	--	---	--

	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8
Written Curriculum: Learning Standards from <i>Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills</i>	5.6 The student is expected to: (B) explain the roles and functions of characters in various plots, including their relationships and conflicts.	5.18 The student is expected to: (A) create multi-paragraph essays to convey information about the topic.	5.3 The student is expected to: (C) Explain the effect of a historical event or movement on the theme of a work of literature.	5.3 The student is expected to: (C) Explain the effect of a historical event or movement on the theme of a work of literature.
Lesson Objective What are students supposed to learn?	Students will learn to explain the conflicts between two characters in a fictional text.	Students will learn to write a multi-paragraph essay to convey ideas about the characters in a book.	Students will learn to draw conclusions about the theme of a fictional text and provide evidence from the text to support their thinking.	Students will learn to explain how a historical movement affects the theme of a fictional text.
Demonstration of Learning	Given a fictional text, students will be able to create a T-chart that demonstrates the conflicts between two main characters.		Given a passage from a fictional text, students will be able to identify the theme of the text and provide two pieces of evidence from the text that supports that theme.	Given the issue of immigration, students will be able to explain in writing how it affects the events in the book.
Activities (Guided/ Independent)	I. In pairs, students use a section of the book to create dialogue between two characters that shows conflict. Students take turns performing the dialogue for the class. II. Using the same scenes,	As a continuation of the previous lessons, students write essays to convey ideas about two characters. Students will use the outlines they created in previous lessons as a guide for writing.	I. Ask students to share their favorite movies. Discuss the themes or moral lessons in the movies. II. Explain that all works of literature have a theme or central idea that the author wants to share with the	I. Ask students to share what they know about immigration. Students may have relatives who are immigrants or may have heard about the issue in the news. II. Reread the story

	<p>model for students how to complete a Venn Diagram to organize ideas behind the conflict.</p> <p>III. In groups, students locate another clear example of a conflict between two characters. Students analyze the conflict using a T-chart (attached).</p> <p>IV. Each student will add conflicts to the outline started on Monday and begin writing a composition to analyze the two characters.</p> <p>V. Students exchange their outlines/essays with a partner and discuss each other's work. Share thoughts as a whole group and add questions or ideas to the class chart.</p> <p>VI. Students complete a T-chart to identify points of conflict between two characters.</p>	<p>Allow time for peer editing and input.</p>	<p>reader. Students offer ideas for the themes of <i>What the Moon Saw</i>. Choose one idea offered by students and use a diamond graphic organizer (attached) to model how to use evidence from the text to support that theme.</p> <p>III. In groups, students complete a diamond graphic organizer by choosing a theme and finding four pieces of evidence from the text that supports that theme.</p> <p>IV. Students add this graphic organizer to their reflection books and write a short paragraph to summarize the information in the graphic organizer.</p> <p>V. Return to class idea map and questions list. Ask students to contribute ideas or questions they have.</p> <p>VI. Students complete a</p>	<p>"Reasons to Stay" and watch the slideshow of pictures again. Explain to students that they are going to use the Internet to research more about immigration from Mexico to the United States.</p> <p>II. Give students the immigration information sheet (attached) and model how to find answers to the questions.</p> <p>III. Students work in pairs to complete the internet research.</p> <p>IV. Using the answers to their questions, each student will complete a T-chart (attached) to explain how the historical event of immigration affects the events in the story.</p> <p>IV. Students add this graphic organizer to their reflection books and write a short paragraph to summarize the</p>
--	--	---	--	---

			diamond graphic organizer with the theme of family.	<p>information in the graphic organizer.</p> <p>V. Return to class idea map and questions list. Ask students to contribute ideas or questions they have.</p> <p>VI. Students write a five-sentence paragraph that explains how the historical event of immigration affects events in the book.</p>
--	--	--	---	--

Extension Activities

In addition to the reading/language arts lesson, engage your students in Mexican art. You may choose to do one or all of these projects. Decide if you want to do them within the 7-day lesson plan or at the beginning or end of the unit.

For these activities you will need the following materials:

Yarn for weaving	Salt dough or modeling clay (salt dough recipe attached)
Wooden plaques or figures	Acrylic paint
Paint brushes	

Show students the videos of the Mexican artists demonstrating their crafts (see link in Resources; explanation of each video attached). Discuss the essential questions. Allow students to emulate the artists using the materials provided. Discuss the limitations students will face in trying to recreate the art of the artists in the videos. For example, students will not have sheep's wool for weaving or actual black clay for making pottery. Discuss how students can use the materials they do have to use similar techniques as the artists.

Name: _____

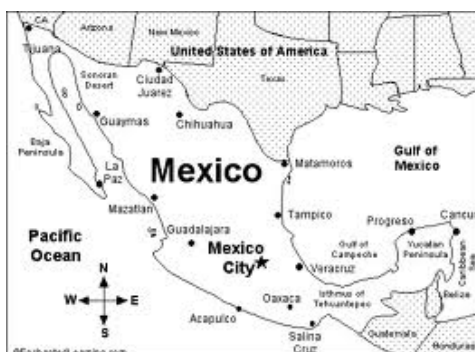
Mexico

What I KNOW about Mexico	What I WANT to know about Mexico	What I have LEARNED about Mexico

All About Mexico

Geography

Mexico is bordered by the United States to the north and Belize and Guatemala to the southeast. Baja California in the west is an 800-mile peninsula that forms the Gulf of California. In the east are the Gulf of Mexico and the Bay of Campeche, which is formed by Mexico's other peninsula, the Yucatán. The center of Mexico is a high plateau with mountain chains on the east and west.



History

At least three great civilizations—the Mayas, the Olmecs, and the Toltecs—preceded the wealthy Aztec empire, conquered in 1519–1521 by the Spanish under Hernando Cortés. Spain ruled Mexico for the next 300 years until Sept. 16, 1810. Mexico fought for and won its independence in 1821.

From 1821 to 1877, there were two emperors, several dictators, and many presidents. Mexico lost Texas in 1836, and after defeat in the war with the U.S., it lost the area that is now California, Nevada, and Utah, most of Arizona and New Mexico, and parts of Wyoming and Colorado under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Current issues

In May 2008, Attorney General Eduardo Medina Mora announced that over 4,000 people had been recently killed in drug-related violence.

In Aug. 2008, hundreds of thousands of protesters across the country marched for the more than 2,700 people who were killed and 300 kidnapped in drug-related violence since January 2008. In Dec. 2008, the number of killings in January was 5,376—a rise of 117% from the previous year.

According to the government, 2010 was the most violent year with 15,237 people being killed. In October 2010, the government announced its plan to do away with the country's 2,200 local police departments and place all officers under one unified command.

Source: www.factmonster.com.

Language in movement

June 28, 2012

By Jennifer Turner

www.somebrightmorning.org

OAXACA, Mexico – The students with whom Omar Nunez works near Oaxaca, Mexico, are similar to millions of other kids around the world—poor, marginalized and brimming with incredible untapped creativity.

Nunez is the director of the Ollin Tlahtoalli Language and Cultural Center in Oaxaca. The organization was founded in 2007 and exists to serve indigenous communities near this southern city.

"All schools use the word culture constantly because it sounds good in a language program," Nunez said. "But I wanted students to experience Oaxacan culture in a bit of a different way rather than just going to the market. That is, of course, culture, but I wanted to do something different."

Nunez's different approach intertwines language, art, photography, videography and oral history. He travels to rural schools to work with at-risk elementary and secondary students in projects ranging from community murals to student-directed videos.

Language

Recently Nunez arrived to a rural school and announced that he and the students would be exploring three different languages: English, Spanish, and the local indigenous language of Chinanteco, long forgotten by most families. The students were immediately excited about learning English. After all, most have aspirations to work in the United States. But it wasn't until days later that a student named Rigo whispered to Nunez, "I speak Chinanteco."

The students are shy about it, Nunez said, ashamed in some

cases of their indigenous heritage. Nunez later captured video of the student teaching his classmates simple words from the native language: mama, papa, milk, and tortilla. The children struggled to pronounce the words from the tonal language, but Rigo was a patient teacher, timid but beaming as he repeated the words for his friends.

"It just empowers him so much," Nunez said. "That's what we try to do when we go into the schools. We turn the students into the actual teachers."

Art

Vilma, a student who lags behind academically, has benefitted, Nunez said, from another of his programs that provides art education to rural, at-risk students.

"She is actually dyslexic and struggles so much with school," he said. Art became her way of expressing. Art became a way of connecting with her mother. Art became a way of connecting with her teachers. She became empowered."

Vilma began to paint stories, using text, paint, even bracelets that she made by hand.

"Most of these kids had never even had paint in these communities," Nunez said. "They are just amazed to see how they can combine colors to make a new one."

Nunez brings the student artwork from the villages to Oaxaca to exhibit in an art show for parents and members of the community. Funds raised from an auction at the art show go back into the education programs for indigenous communities.

Name _____

Title: _____

I. Main Idea _____

A. Detail _____

B. Detail _____

II. Main Idea _____

A. Detail _____

B. Detail _____

II. Main Idea _____

A. Detail _____

B. Detail _____

Summary

Reasons to Stay

July 12, 2012

By Jennifer Turner

www.somebrightmorning.org

Huejotal, Mexico – When asked where he wants to live when he grows up, 12-year-old Alejandro of a rural village in Mexico answers immediately: Mexico.

Many communities similar to Alejandro's have become ghost towns because of continuous immigration to the United States. Most kids like Alejandro dream of crossing the border to find better paying jobs.

Our group of 16 American teachers visited Alejandro's town of Huejotal last week as part of our two-week tour of Mexico.

Although much of the Huejotal population has already packed up and left, those that remain of the older generation hope their grandchildren, like Alejandro, will stay. For that to happen, however, they know there must be a good reason. Huejotal has joined with *La Fundacion Produce Puebla* to generate economic growth in the community. And they've put the younger generation in charge.

"With the kids the idea is to teach them to be independent and that they don't want to immigrate, that they study here and that they make business here," said Mauricio Mora, a representative from *Fundacion Produce*.

Alejandro is president of the egg committee. He and other boys in his class—Adolfo, 11; Bernardo, 12; Adeodato, 12; and Armando, 12—make up the committee, which is in charge of vaccinating hens in the community and selling surplus eggs, among other duties. Some of their classmates oversee sausage production. Others are in charge of the gardens.

Fundacion Produce provides financing and other support to poor, rural communities in the state of Puebla. Huejotal was chosen as a beneficiary of the organization's support partially through a connection with Monica Perera, who has spent eight years in the village working on various research projects.

Monica works as a bridge between funders and the community. In her role, she builds trust with the donors so that they have faith that their money will be used well by the community. Likewise, through her, the community is able to trust that the organization will follow through with its support.

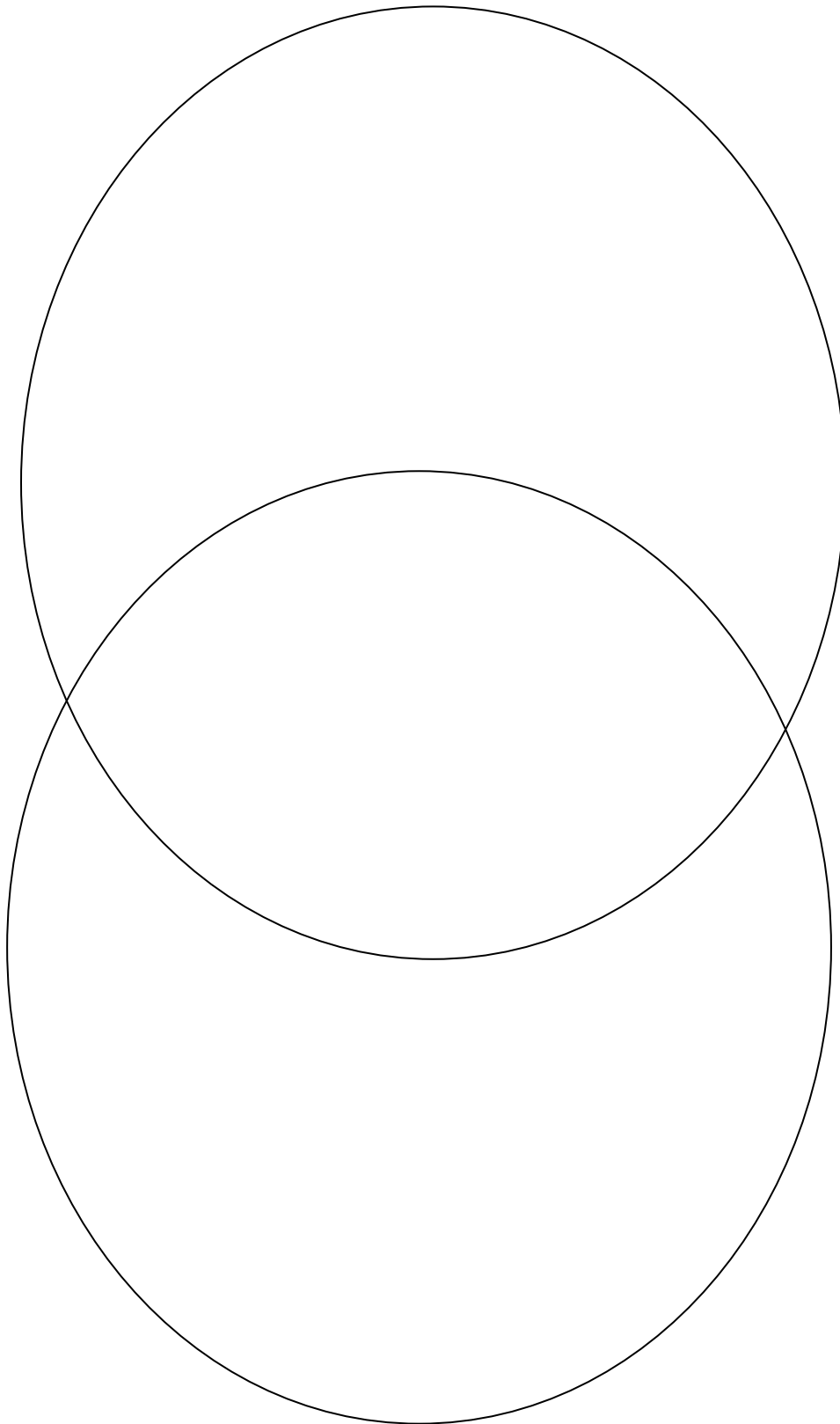
Walking through the community, it is evident that the project has been successful. Armando, quiet but confident in front of our group of tourists with so many cameras, showed off his chicken coop and explained his daily duties in caring for the hens. Others pulled packages of hot dogs and lunch meat from a cooler and explained how they made it themselves using hens that no longer lay eggs. Each family in the town is responsible for its own egg, sausage and vegetable production. The food provides 100 percent of each participating family's food supply.

"There is a lot of migration, and it seems that there is not a lot of opportunity, but what we have found is that if you have a project and you stay long enough for the people to trust in the project, people here want to stay here and make their lives in Mexico and not have to go away," Perera said.

"All of the work has been done by the community," she said. "The spirit of the community, the passion, the love that they have and the way they have embraced the projects, the recognition is for them."

There are 4,500 communities in the state of Puebla. *La Fundacion Produce* started 3 years ago and has reached 200 families in 11 communities. They receive funds from the Mexican government and from private corporations such as Wal-Mart. Each farm costs about \$350.

Name _____

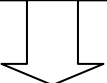
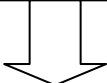
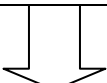
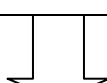


Name _____

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

What the Moon Saw by Laura Resau

Page Numbers _____

Name _____

Character	Role	Relationships	Conflicts

Name _____

T-Chart: Character Conflicts: Describe the conflict and add evidence from text.

	Character _____	Evidence from Text
Character _____		
Character _____		
Character _____		

Name: _____

Theme: Write one of the story's main themes in the center diamond. Add supporting evidence to the outer spaces.

The diagram is a graphic organizer template. It consists of a large rectangle. A horizontal line and a vertical line intersect at the center of the rectangle. The horizontal line extends to the left and right edges, and the vertical line extends to the top and bottom edges. In the center of the rectangle, where the lines intersect, is a diamond shape. The diamond is formed by the four segments of the intersecting lines that are closest to the center. This layout creates four distinct rectangular areas surrounding the central diamond, intended for students to write a theme in the center and supporting evidence in the outer spaces.

Name _____

Immigration Information Sheet

Use the data at www.migrationinformation.org or other websites to answer the following questions:

1. About how many people who were born in Mexico are in the United States?
2. In which U.S. states do people born in Mexico live?
3. Approximately how many people born in Mexico now work in the United States?
4. How has the number of people moving from Mexico to the United States changed over time?
5. From what three areas of Mexico do most immigrants come?

Name _____

T-Chart: Effects of Historical Events on Story

Historical Event	Effect on Story
	Page No. _____
	Page No. _____
	Page No. _____
	Page No. _____

Salt Dough Recipe

Ingredients:

1 cup flour
1/2 cup salt
1 cup water
1 Tablespoon oil
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
Food coloring by drops

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a pan and stir.
2. Cook over low heat, stirring until a ball forms.
3. Allow to cool.
4. Store in covered container.

Explanation of Videos

Wool tapestries

This video was recorded in Teotitlan del Valle, a region near the Central Valley of Oaxaca. Abigail Mendoza, a local artisan who works with her sister to create traditional wool rugs, demonstrates the process of making tapestries.

The production of wool rugs and yarn crafts has made the town famous for the abundance of workshops that exhibit this ancient technique. It is a process that has been passed from generation to generation and uses simple but effective methods. In the beginning of the video, Abigail tells us both in Spanish and in Zapotec that she will teach us this process.

First the artist begins to brush the raw wool. Abigail explains in the video that this is a long process. The longer the wool is brushed, the finer the rug will be. She said she spends weeks just brushing the wool. When the wool is fine enough, it must be spun on a spinning wheel to create long strings of yarn.

At this point, the yarn is still a neutral color. Abigail demonstrates how artists add color to the wool using natural dyes obtained from plants and insects such as cochineal and indigo. Cochineal is an insect that lives on a certain type of cactus. When the Cochineal is ground into a powder, it becomes a vibrant red color. In the video, Abigail is grinding cochineal and explains that the mood of the artist affects the brilliance of the red. She says if an artist is angry or annoyed, the red will come out dull and bland. But if the artist is joyful and content, the red will be brighter. Because of this, artists will sometimes grind the cochineal in the sun because they believe the sun brings out happiness and joy in a person.

After the source of the color has been selected and prepared, the wool must be cleaned in boiling water to rid it of any dirt and to prepare it to be dyed. In the video, Abigail adds the cochineal to the pot of boiling water then squeezes the juice of several lemons into the mixture. The lemon juice, she says, will create a different shade of red. After boiling, the wool must sit in the water for three or four days so that the color sets well.

The traditional loom is handled manually and it is left up to the artist to create the design, piece by piece, on the rug. Some of the geometric shapes found in the designs are ancient symbols that have been used for many generations. The artist imagines others. Abigail explains in the video that she uses a little comb to push the yarn into the loom.

Black Pottery

Doña Rosa was a pottery artisan from San Bartolo Coyotepec, Oaxaca, Mexico. She invented a technique using barro negro, or black clay. Doña Rosa's technique causes the pottery to be shiny after firing it rather than matte and dull as was traditional black clay. Dona Rosa died in 1980, but in this video her son explains the pottery technique that she created.

The origins of black clay pottery go back centuries. It has been discovered at Mexican archeological sites, usually in the shape of jars. It has remained a traditional crafts of the Zapotecs and Mixtecs of the Central Valley area.

In this video, Dona Rosa's son explains how his mother discovered that she could change the color and shine of the pieces. Just before the clay is completely dry, she polished it with a quartz stone. After firing, the piece emerges a shiny black. Because this method weakens the clay, it is used mostly for decorative purposes.

Alebrijes

Alebrijes are brightly colored Mexican folk art sculptures, usually of animals. The first alebrijes originated with Pedro Linares in the 1930s. After dreaming of the creatures while sick, he began to create this style of art using cardboard and papier mâché. Later his technique was combined with the already popular use of wooden carvings from a local wood called copal. This version of the craft has since spread to other towns, including San Martín Tilcajete, where this video was recorded.

In this video, the artist begins by carving a creature out of copal wood. The ideas for the creatures come from the artist's imagination. This process usually takes weeks to complete, but for the purpose of the demonstration, the artist carves quickly. When the basic shape is complete, the artist uses putty to fill in any gaps and smooth imperfections. Next, he sands the figure so that it is smooth and ready for painting.

Although the video does not contain images of the artist painting the creature, it does show the many different colors of acrylic paint used. The style of painting is very whimsical with lots of bright colors and repeated dots and shapes and patterns. The artist uses small paintbrushes and even syringes filled with paint to accomplish the fine details of the work.

Resources

Resau, Laura. *What the Moon Saw*. New York: Yearling, 2006. Print.

Laura Resau. 2005. Laura Resau.

<http://www.lauraresau.com/what-the-moon-saw.html>

Migration Information Source. 2002–2012. Migration Policy Institute.

<http://www.migrationinformation.org>

Fact Monster. 2000–2012. Pearson Education.

<http://www.factmonster.com>

Slideshows and Videos

Mexico: <http://youtu.be/rgIMEgPzxyg>

Heujotal: <http://youtu.be/NI8-NXZ7g9E>

Oaxaca: <http://youtu.be/fBGMVKhmXek>

Wool Tapestries: <http://youtu.be/gQHaslo4RuI>

Black Pottery: <http://youtu.be/xRL0mtaac9Q>

Alebrijes: <http://youtu.be/0FcFc7QVL4A>

Visit www.somebrightmorning.org for more stories and pictures from Mexico, as well as from other countries in Latin America.