

Unit Title: Perceiving Mexico

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Subject Area: Language Arts

Topic: Journaling about art, poetry, and quotes to make connections, leading to an increased understanding of Mexican culture

Grade Levels: 7–8

Time Frame: The unit will be divided into three, one-week sections (15 50-minute class periods)

Summary of the Unit / Unit Goals

Relevant Standards

Minnesota Language Arts Standard – 7.7.1.1.

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Minnesota Reading Standard – 7.4.4.4.

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

Minnesota Language Arts Standard – 7.7.4.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

What understandings are designed?

Students will understand themes of Mexican culture and history through art and literature.

What essential questions will be considered?

How can different mediums of expression present common themes?

How can we connect our own lives to art and literature from Mexico?

What are some themes presented through works by Mexican artists and writers?

Content Objectives (students will know)

- Students will make connections from their own lives to art, poetry, and quotations reflecting Mexican history and culture.

- Students will identify common themes between art, poetry, and quotations from Mexico.

Language Objectives (students will be able to)

- Students will be able to write responses to poetry, poems, and quotations using graphic organizers and sentence starters.

- Students will be able to describe common themes, providing support with specific examples of their observations of art, poetry, and quotations.

Learning Activities Summary:

Throughout the year, students are exposed to a weekly routine of journal prompts. The journal prompts include: a quick write, a response to a picture, a response to a poem, a response to a quote, and a day to write about a common theme. Each week the quick write, picture, poem, and quote share a theme. The students write about the theme and how they connect to it on the last day of the week (Friday). For this project three themes are based on the history and culture of Mexico. The weeks feature poetry, a quote, and art that share a theme related to Mexico. As students write about the different facets of the theme, they will make personal connections and learn about the history and culture of Mexico.

Learning Activity – Details:**1. Preparation for Learning:**

Students will use a variety of written response techniques. To prepare for this implementation, responses began at the beginning of the year and continue to be a weekly process throughout the year. Within each week, students use writing to explore art and writing surrounding one topic. In different weeks throughout the year, the topics analyze works from Mexican artists and writers. During those weeks students are also exposed to the historical and cultural context connected to the selections.

2. Writing Process:

Pictures—Students first learn response techniques to engage them in deeper analysis. One day of each week students analyze art by applying the PERCEIVE technique, a process I learned through the TRIO Art Institute for educators. This process encourages students to look at art slowly and carefully by observing details, identifying the mood of the piece, making connections to the piece, and asking questions about the piece.

Poetry— In a similar manner, a second day of the week students learn to respond to a poem. They are given a list of questions, and they choose one question to respond to as they look at the poem. Questions will focus on mood, connections, and observations of the poetry.

Quotations—On the third day of the week, students respond to quotations by using a list of sentence-starters, a strategy recommended through the Structured Observation Instruction Protocol (SIOP) model.

Quick Write—On the fourth day of the week, students learn to respond to a “quick write” topic. For a quick write, students are given a chance to make a creative connection to the theme of the week. It usually starts with a first line of a story and students can create their own story to that starter. They write continuously for five to ten minutes.

Theme—The last day of the week is used for students to identify the common theme of the information and make connections to the week as a whole. After sharing their ideas, students are given historical and cultural contexts of how the pieces fit together.

Reflection—After looking at the art with this new context, students are asked to respond to the questions: What surprises you about this new knowledge? How does this knowledge connect to what you noticed about the art? How does this new knowledge change your perspective on this art?

Implementation:

As students grow accustomed to this weekly process they experience various themes. Following the same process, students analyze these components on themes related to Mexico. The themes are based on authors, poets, and artists from Mexico who are addressing similar issues. As the students are being exposed to these components, they learn cultural and historical background. As a result, students learn about Mexico, and gain an understanding of how context can alter or add to our perceptions.

*Additional Resource: While I was in Mexico, I kept a daily blog, using the PERCEIVE process. I answered the questions each day: What do you notice? What is the mood? What connections can you make? What questions do you have? This blog was used in my class as an example of writing throughout the journal responses. It also allowed students to see more examples of what I saw while I was in Mexico. The blog is listed in the Resource section of this unit.

Culminating Activity (End of Year):

As a culminating activity, students will look for these same components that reflect their own culture, history, and identity. Students will write a brief history to tell how the components fit together and show their identity. This project will allow them to make connections to the knowledge they have gained about Mexico and identity and explore their own backgrounds.

Performance Tasks:

1. Journal responses to each of the weekly journal topics with a rubric identifying students' ability to respond to each of the journal prompts.
2. Class discussions in small and large groups.

Other Evidence:

1. Student self-reflections on process.
2. Individual discussions with students.

Journal Prompts available as a PDF download from this website:

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/etext/llilas/outreach/mexico11/>

Journal Response Prompts

Mondays: Poem Response Sentence Starters

Directions: Read the poem. Choose one sentence starter to respond to the poem. Include examples to support your response.

One thing I notice is....
One thing I recognize is....
One thing I like is....I like it because...
The mood of the poem is...I believe this because....
I connect to the poem because...
This poem is about...I think this because...
One question I have about this poem is...I question this because...

Tuesdays: Quote Responses

Directions: Read the quotation. Read the questions or sentences starters related to the quote and write a response to the quote. Include specific examples to support your response.

Wednesdays: PERCEIVE

Directions: Fill in the four squares of the graphic organizer to respond to the picture. Be sure to use specific evidence from the picture to support your answer.

1. Observations: I notice.... I recognize....	2. Mood: The feeling of the art is....
3. Connections: This reminds me of... I connect to this because...	4. Questions: I wonder... I would like more information about... I question...

Thursday: Quick Write

Directions: During a quick write, respond to the question for five minutes. Write as much detail as you can. Try not to stop writing for the entire time.

Friday: Theme and Reflection

Directions: Fill in the sentence starters to show how the different journal ideas are connected to a theme this week.

The _____ (choose one) and the _____ (choose one) are connected.

They both are about _____ (theme/message).

The _____ shows _____ (theme/message) by _____
(support for theme).

Also, the _____ shows _____ (theme/message) by
_____ (support for theme).

Reflection Directions: Think about this week's journal entries and the theme. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What surprises you about this new knowledge?
2. How does this knowledge connect to what you noticed about the art?
3. How does this new knowledge change your perspective on this art?

Contextual Information

Week One Journals: In this week’s journals there is an emphasis on how where we live connects with who we are.

Journal	Extended Context
Poem: “I Want to Be” by Sandra Cisneros	*Connected to quote information
Quote: by Sandra Cisneros from <u>The House on Mango Street</u>	Sandra Cisneros is a Mexican American author who grew up in Mexico and Chicago. Her book, <u>The House on Mango Street</u> , tells stories about a young, Latina girl growing up in a rundown neighborhood, trying to figure out how she fits in the world.
Picture: Taken from the streets of the village of Xico, near Xalapa, during the festivities for the local patron, Santa Maria Magdalena	Different towns throughout Mexico celebrate different patrons. The streets are often decorated. People process from one church to another in celebration of their town’s saint. In Xico, different neighborhoods created unique floats to carry in the procession.

Week Two Journals: This week’s journals emphasize different artists from the past and present in Mexico.

Journal	Extended Context
Poem: <i>The Exclamation</i> by Octavio Paz	Octavio Paz is a famous Mexican poet. He won the nobel prize for literature in 1990. He wrote poems and essays about culture, history, religion, philosophy, and politics. This poem is part of a collection of poems for children titled, <u>Zoologia Poetica</u> .
Picture: by Luis Manuel Sarrano	This picture is also taken from <u>Zoologia Poetica</u> . Luis Manuel Sarrano is a contemporary artist from Mexico, relating the different animals found in Mexico to children through his images.
Quote: by Frida Kahlo	Frida Kahlo is a famous Mexican painter - Lived from 1907–1954 - Wife of muralist Diego Rivera - Was injured in a major bus accident when she was young; caused her much pain - Expresses her pain and political views in her paintings

Week Three Journals: This week’s journals emphasize the diverse terrain of Mexico and the way the land is connected to people’s lives.

Journal	Extended Context
<p>Poem: "They Lit a Campfire in the Mountains" by Francisco Gabilond Soler</p>	<p>Both the poem and picture are taken from <u>The Tree is Older Than You Are</u>. The poets and illustrators from the book are from Mexico. The book covers the wide variety of terrain in Mexico and the different ideas that can be shared across cultures.</p>
<p>Picture: An Afternoon in Juchitan by Fernando Olivera</p>	<p>Also in the book, <u>The Tree is Older Than You Are</u>.</p>
<p>Quote: by Pedro Calderon de la Barca</p>	<p>Writer of the Spanish golden age who captures the same enthusiasm for the colors of nature and land as the images from <u>The Tree is Older Than You Are</u>.</p>

Assessment Evidence

Journal Response Rubric

Journal Section	Topic	Main Idea	Support
Poem Response	Response is connected to the poem	One main idea is chosen from the sentence starters	Specific evidence from the poem is used to support the main idea
Quotation Response	Response is connected to the quotation	One main idea is chosen from the prompt related to the quote	Specific evidence from the quotation is used to support the main idea
Perceive Picture Response	Response is connected to the picture	One main idea is chosen for each square in the PERCEIVE chart	Specific evidence from the picture is used to support the answers in each square
Quick Write	Response is connected to the quick write	The main idea of the quick write prompt is used as a topic for the writing	Writer writes for entire quick write time
Theme	Response is connected to the poem, quotation, picture, or quick write	One theme is chosen as a main idea	Specific evidence from the different journals is used to support the theme of the week
Reflection Questions	Response is connected to the weekly journals	The reflection is based on the main ideas of the journals from the week	Specific evidence from the journals and from students' personal experiences is used to make connections

Class Discussions

Students will be asked to share their journal responses in pairs, in small groups, and with the entire class. The format for sharing changes throughout the week. Some sharing is voluntary, while other times students get to choose one thing that they wish to share. In addition, students are given a self-reflection on their class participation.

I share my journal ideas with partners or in small groups...

never	sometimes	often
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I share my journal ideas with the entire class...

never	sometimes	often
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Bibliography/Resources

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