



Members of Danza de La Pluma, one of Greeley's Mexican-Indian dance groups, dance in the parade on the morning of the annual Guadalupe Festival. Photo by Pati Bingham (NE Colorado CCA Folklorist Collection at City of Greeley Museums).

Look for these icons for resources accessible on this website



Audio



Video



Lesson Plan

Latino Cultures

Description: Students learn about history, geography, culture, music, dance and visual arts while enjoying the music, songs, and material arts of several Latino artists.

Grades: 1 - 12

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Materials Included: Recordings (available on this site or on audio cassette and vhs from the Colorado Council on the Arts)
"Just Plain Art" (video)
"Do Not Pass Me By" (audio)
"A Calling Card for Friendship" (audio)
 Questions for geography, history, language arts, art, math, science, music, dance

Materials Needed: Master/Apprentice: Colorado Folk Arts and Artists, 1986-1990.
 (See Resources Section to order)

Standards: This activity can be used to address these Colorado Model Content Standards:

- Dance:** 4, 5
- Geography:** 2, 4, 5
- History:** 1, 3, 5, 6
- Math:** 5
- Music:** 4, 5
- Reading and Writing:** 4, 6
- Visual Arts:** 1, 3, 4

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"Just Plain Art"—Video; produced by the Colorado Council on the Arts, 1994, Daniel Salazar, videographer.

José Baca and the Matachines dancers of Pueblo (Indo Hispanic dance-drama) Segment 4.

Oliverio Lara, Mexican harp: Huastecan jarocho music. Segment 7.



"Do Not Pass Me By"—Audio; produced by David Brose and the Colorado Council on the Arts and Humanities, narrated by Harry Tuft.

Baca & García, fiddle & guitar duo, "Jesusita en Chihuahua;" New Year's custom, "dando los días" to people named Manuel on January 1st and to Juanes on the Day of San Juan; entrega de los novios (verses to newlyweds); waltz: valse apasionado [DNP1B-1]

La Familia Manzanares of San Pablo (near San Luis), Colorado.

Commentary on the folklife of the San Luis Valley and the effects of isolation on religious and social life: the Penitentes, dances. Musical differences between southern Colorado Spanish colonial culture and Mexican culture. [DNP IIA-1]

Jacquelyn Sánchez of Alamosa, Colorado. "La llorona." Blending of Mexican and Spanish colonial music. Mariachi: "Ah, cómo no!" She accompanies herself on guitar for "Ojitos verdes." [DNP IIA-2]

Angel Vigil, storyteller. Growing up in Barelás neighborhood of Albuquerque; la llorona (the weeping woman). [DNP IIA-3]



"A Calling Card for Friendship"—Audio; produced by David A. Brose and Harry M. Tuft, with support from the Colorado Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

La Familia Manzanares medley: Valse, la Polka brava, una cuna (waltz, polka, and a traditional tune called "cuna," or cradle) [CCF IIA-2]

Arturo Gallegos, Flor de las flores (prettiest flower of the flowers), vocal & accordion [CCF IIA-8]

Felipe Valdez, vocal: "El Caballo" (The Horse). [CCF IB-1]

La Familia Manzanares, "La Vasurita" (The Little Castaway) [CCF IB-5]

Los Pregones Jarocho. "¡Qué Recque!" [CCFIB-9]

Los Pregones Jarocho. "Moliendo Café," (Grinding Coffee) [CCFIB-10]

Los Hermanos Zamarripa. "El Sinaloense" (The Man from Sinaloa) [CCFIIA-10]

Los Hermanos Zamarripa. "El Corrido del Valle de San Luis" (The Ballad of the San Luis Valley). [CCFIIA-11]

El Mariachi Nuevo Aztlán. "El Cofrecito" (The Little Box), by J. Zaizar. [CCFIIB-9]

Latino Cultural Resources Available from the Colorado Council on the Arts

Master/Apprentice: Colorado Folk Arts And Artists, 1986-1990 Exhibit Catalog. Essays and photographs of Latino weaving and colcha embroidery, pp. 20-35. (See Resources Section for ordering information.)

Latino Cultural Resources

Several of the audio-visual resources available on this website, as well as printed material available from CCA, can help you present “Latino Cultures” in your classroom. Students can learn about history, geography, culture, music, dance, and visual arts while they enjoy the music, songs, and material arts of several Latino artists. Information presented on the previous page will help you locate specific resources to help in answering many of the questions included in this lesson plan. Older students can also conduct outside research on some of the topics mentioned.

Definitions

The word “latino” refers to people of Iberian heritage and to all Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking people of the Americas. Because Brazil was colonized by Portugal and is a Portuguese-speaking country, and because most Spanish-American countries struggled long and hard to win their independence from the Spanish empire, most prefer the term latino to Hispanic, although in the Southwestern United States some Mexican Americans who have lived in the Southwest for generations prefer to be called Hispanos, to distinguish themselves from later immigrants from Mexico. Some of their ancestors came to New Mexico in 1598 with Oñate, before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock! Latinos include people of many races and mixtures of races: mestizos or peoples of mixed indigenous and Hispanic blood; American Indians from hundreds of different tribes in South, Central, and North America; African Latinos from Brazil and the Caribbean areas; a few Chinese, Japanese, and East Indian immigrants; Mexican Americans born in the United States, many of whom do not speak Spanish; and Sephardic Jews, who were expelled from Spain in 1492 (some of them hid their Jewish religion and settled in the New World).

In 1925, Mexican intellectual and Secretary of Education, José Vasconcelos, wrote a book entitled *La Raza Cósmica* (The Cosmic Race). He refers to the contributions of all races and cultures in the Americas; for Latin America, especially the four civilizations of Spain, ancient Mexico, Greece, and India. The peoples of Latin America often refer to themselves as “raza.” The 12th of October, which Italian Americans celebrate as Columbus Day, Latinos call *el Día de la Raza*, the birthday of a new race.

Geography--Human Populations

Note: The term "American" can refer to anyone living in North, South, or Central America. English-speaking Americans unwittingly insult Latin Americans by using the word "American" as if it referred only to citizens of the United States.

Background

"Latin America inherited a complex racial structure. Spanish American societies were composed in varying proportions of a great mass of Indians, a lesser number of mestizos, and a minority of whites. The Indian base of this pyramid was extensive in Peru, Mexico and Guatemala, less so in the Rio de la Plata and Chile. The slave trade from Africa had also added the Negro, from whom were descended Mulattos and other mixed groups. Brazil was a slave society until 1888; Blacks and people with mixed blood occupied the lower part of the social scale. Both Argentina and Brazil received massive immigration from Europe in the late 19th century." (from *The Times Atlas of World History*, 3rd ed., Maplewood, NJ: Hammond, Inc., 1989).

Slavery

The same atlas notes that 10 million slaves were shipped from Africa between 1526 and 1810. The number of Africans shipped to different regions were:

Europe	175,000
Spanish America	1,552,000
Brazil	3,647,000
British Caribbean	1,665,000
British North America and United States	399,000
French America	1,600,000
Dutch America	500,000
Danish West Indies	28,000

Geography Questions

(Geography Standards 2, 4)

1. Find Spain and Portugal on a globe, then England, France and Holland (part of the Netherlands with Belgium and Flanders). Which countries in the Americas speak Spanish? Portuguese? French? Dutch? Why? Be sure to include the Caribbean islands. Some speak a mixture of English, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. What is this language called and where is it spoken?
2. Describe the racial heritages of Latin America, including the Caribbean islands. Each student can research one country.
3. Find a map of the New World during the time of the Spanish Empire (sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries). Where was Spain's northern border? In other words, how much of what is now the United States belonged to Spain?
4. Look at a map of the state of Colorado. What Coloradoan towns have Spanish names, and what do these names mean? What rivers and mountain ranges? What does the word "Colorado" mean?
5. Where are there significant populations of Latinos in Colorado? Latinos are not a homogeneous group. What are some of the Latino cultures represented here? What examples can you find of folk speech, foodways, music, dance, crafts, and lore that are typical of, say, Caribbean, Mexican, Central or South American, and Mexican-American cultures?
6. Research migrant labor in Colorado. Where do migrant workers come from? Where do they live while in Colorado? When do they come, why, and how long do they stay? Where do migrant children go to school?

History Questions

(History Standards 1, 3, 5, 6)

1. During the height of the Spanish Empire, Philip II and Charles V of Spain could say, "The sun never set on the Spanish empire." What now-independent countries belonged to Spain? To Portugal?

2. What lands now belonging to the United States were Spanish?

3. Describe the "Black Legend." What country does it refer to, and why? Prove or disprove some of the elements of the Black Legend.

4. Mexico started fighting for its independence from Spain in 1810, but did not win until 1821. Where was the northern border of Mexico in 1821? What areas of what is now the United States belonged to Mexico?

5. Describe the concept of "Manifest Destiny." What role did this idea have in U.S./Mexican relations? What war resulted?

6. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is still of utmost importance to Mexican-Americans living in the Southwest. It ended the Mexican-American war by declaring:

- That Mexican citizens living in territories Mexico ceded to the U.S. could move south of the new border or remain in what had just become the U.S.
- If they remained, the United States granted them their right to:
 1. Keep their lands
 2. Practice their religion (Roman Catholic)
 3. Continue to speak Spanish

Marruca Salazar, of Lake Middle School in the Denver, designed a curriculum unit on this treaty for Denver Public School system's Alma de la Raza project. Contact the Alma Project to find out how to check out Latino curriculum units.

Language Arts Questions

(Language Arts Standards 4, 6)

1. Naming Traditions

Find out how you were named and what your name means. If you were named for someone in your family, write about that person. If you don't know him or her, what anecdotes do people tell about the person you were named for? Do different family members have different opinions of that person? What does your name mean to you? If you could choose your own name now, what would you choose, and why?

Who are other members of your family named for? Compare naming traditions among your classmates. Who is named for her mother? Who for his father? Who for a grandfather or grandmother? Why? Is anyone in your family or class named after a famous person? A saint or religious person? A place? A thing, like a flower? A month or a season?

2. Saint's Day

Many Latinos are named for saints and especially for the Holy Family, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus [María, José, and Jesús]. Because English speakers generally would consider it presumptuous or ridiculous to name a baby "Jesus," it is worth stressing to your students that this is a respected tradition in Latin America. It probably won't keep them from teasing a boy named Jesús, but this cultural difference in naming traditions explains the widespread use of the more accepted English nickname, "Jesse." Discuss saint's day traditions described on the section of *Do Not Pass Me By* (Volume I Side B #1) with Baca and García on the fiddle and guitar.

3. Describe a family tradition that your family celebrates. Illustrate your story. Who participates? Who does what?

What food is served? When do food preparations begin? Does someone ask a blessing or say grace? When does this event begin and end? What is the purpose of the celebration? Do certain people have traditional roles (do they do the same thing every year) for this event? What do you like best about the celebration? Least?



Ruby Aragon, shown here with her retablos, is a santera, a folk artist in a strong Hispanic sacred art tradition, who creates representations of saints and holy figures. In her painted retablos, the Greeley artist includes both Catholic and Native American symbols. Photo by Georgia Wier (Northeastern Colorado CCA Folklorist Collection at City of Greeley Museums.)

Art, Math and Science Questions

(Visual Arts Standards 1, 3, 4; Mathematics Standard 5)

The Spanish colonists of New Mexico were isolated from the Hispanic world by the Chihuahuan desert and the terrible Jornada de la Muerte (“Death’s Journey” is a 30 or so mile stretch in southern New Mexico with NO source of water). As a result, colonists had to make almost everything they needed. Distinctive styles of woodwork, weaving, and embroidery developed that are still in use in Colorado; in fact, all three are enjoying a widespread renaissance. Master/Apprentice: Colorado Folk Arts and Artists, 1986-1990, pp. 20-35. (See Resources Section for ordering information.)

Activities

1. Santero wood carving. There are santeros and other wood carvers all over Colorado. Carpenters measure carefully; do wood carvers? Invite one to discuss why they use certain woods, how wood shapes their designs, and how they handle knots in the wood, mistakes, etc. Do they make their own finishes? Do they use proportions to do so, or in design?

2. Weaving. Consider some of the variables and steps in weaving: shearing the sheep, carding, spinning, dying, designing a pattern, warping the loom. What plants, minerals, and insects provide natural dyes? What scientific knowledge is needed to dye wool? What is used to make dyed yarn color-fast? How did folk figure these things out without laboratories and chemists?



3. Colcha embroidery. See the Colcha **Lesson Plan** by Angelique Acevedo. Also check out the Resource section for lesson plans that use embroidery.

4. Estimate how long it might take someone traveling in an ox-drawn wagon to travel thirty miles.

5. Visit the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center’s “Sacred Lands” exhibit, Denver Art Museum, or Museo de las Américas. Docents are available for tours.



6. Listen to Angel Vigil’s story of “La Llorona” on ***Do Not Pass Me By***.

a. What other versions of the “Weeping Woman” have your students heard? One characteristic of oral tradition (and folklore in general) is that many variations exist. No one is “right” or “wrong,” but we all respond to the one that is most familiar to us--and often react against those that are different!

b. Discuss any other “bogeymen” or threatening figures students remember hearing about when they were little. What other threats of punishment did adults use to make them behave? Why do adults do this? Have students write a story about contemporary teens who disobey and suffer tragic consequences.

Music Questions

(Music Standards 4, 5)

1. Study the corrido or ballad in Mexican and Mexican American tradition.
2. There are some instruments on the tapes you may not be familiar with, like the guitarrón. What are some typical Latino instruments? Rhythms? What instruments are students familiar with that are part of their family or neighborhood traditions? Is there a parent who can play an instrument and talk about some particular music tradition--Irish, Japanese, or whatever?
3. Accordion music is popular in many cultures. Collect examples of accordion music from different regions, such as German, Eastern European, Tex-Mex, and Mexican. How do they differ? Can you begin to recognize where a tune may come from by the style of the music?
4. Special occasions. On what occasions is music essential? Describe one. (Hint: weddings)

Dance Questions

(Dance Standards 4, 5; Music Standard 5)

1. The video *Just Plain Art* (section 4) shows Matachines dancers. Describe the costumes. Who makes them? What clues suggest this is a very old dance? Do you know other Latino dance groups or dancers?
2. The square dance is Colorado's state folk dance. Where does it come from? Lloyd Shaw, a Cheyenne Mountain High School teacher, is famous as the "father of square dance"; he popularized this once-rural style. How has square dance changed? Compare to a Latino dance one of your students can demonstrate.
3. Can several students demonstrate steps or play the music for some different folk dances? Can someone teach the class a simple Latino folk dance?
4. Discuss "old" traditions, contemporary traditions, and the "generation gap." Do traditions help to bridge the generation gap? Why do people hang on to older traditions? Give an example from your family or neighborhood.

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