

A TEACHING GUIDE FOR GRADES 9-12

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Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art: A Teaching Guide for Grades 9-12

Lessons developed by Peter Radetsky

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Courtesy of "Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge," produced by Clear Channel Entertainment-Exhibitions and presented by Target Stores and Hewlett Packard Company.



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Art patron and entertainer Cheech Marin commissioned Modern Multiples to produce commemorative sets of limited-edition fine art reproductions of works by 26 prominent Chicano artists. “The Chicano Collection/La Colección Chicana: Fine Art Prints by Modern Multiples” represents Cheech Marin’s long quest to advance Chicano art as a recognized school of American art and to increase public awareness and appreciation of this body of work. In partnership with Farmers and Bank of America, sets of these prints will be donated to major U.S. museums and universities and an exhibition featuring the prints has been created for travel to smaller cultural venues throughout the country. Proceeds from the sales of some of the print sets will fund scholarships for Latino artists through the Hispanic Scholarship Fund.

A note from Farmers and Bank of America

Farmers and Bank of America applaud educators who are making extra efforts to ensure that students can experience art and culture in the classroom. We believe that there is no better way to engage the hearts and minds of today’s students and encourage them to celebrate the increasing diversity found in communities across America.

That is why we are proud to present to you *Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art: A Teaching Guide for Grades 9-12*. This guide was created to help educators introduce several concepts that influence Chicano art: cultural identity, the history of the U.S.–Mexico border, the labor movement, and home life. The guide can be used alone or in conjunction with images from the traveling art exhibition.

Additional Resources

To assist you in teaching the lessons in this printed guide, we have provided the following additional materials online at www.thechicanocollection.net.

- Downloadable copy of the *Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art Supplement* (text of poems and stories referenced in this guide).
- Examples of work from featured artists in *The Chicano Collection*.
- Calendar of events, which includes *The Chicano Collection* exhibition schedule.
- List of institutions that have received a donation of *The Chicano Collection*.

Thanks again for all you do.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Beyer
Senior Vice President
Chief Communications Officer
Farmers Insurance Companies

Leticia Aguilar
President, Los Angeles Market
Bank of America

Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art: A Teaching Guide for Grades 9-12

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Descendents of the Fifth Sun: Lesson 1

Introduction

Labels and names identify a person and can help create a person's identity. "Chicano" is a term that most commonly refers to an American person of Mexican ancestry. It was not until the 1960s that many Mexican Americans in the southwestern United States began embracing the term and proudly identifying themselves as "Chicanos."

Objective

Students will examine the term "Chicano" and develop an understanding about what it means to be from more than one culture.

Materials

Descendents of the Fifth Sun: Background Information Sheet and Student Worksheet, the poem "Why Am I So Brown?" by Trinidad Sanchez and the story "My Name" from *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (download from the *Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art Supplement* at www.thechicanocollection.net).

Procedures

1. Distribute "Descendents of the Fifth Sun Background Information Sheet." Ask your students to think about their own mixed ethnic or cultural background. Where are your ancestors from? What traditions do your family or friends celebrate that may not be considered "all American" but are from another culture?
2. Open a discussion with the question: Have you ever wanted to be someone else or have a different body or a different family? (Give students time to share their feelings. Share your own feelings or memories about this question too.) Why do we feel this way? (Sometimes we are not happy with how we look or how our families behave. Or we don't always see the good things about our families or ourselves.) Read to the class the poem "Why Am I So Brown?" written by Trinidad Sanchez for Raquel Guerrero, a girl who was ashamed of being Mexican American.
3. Distribute "Descendents of the Fifth Sun Student Worksheet." Have your students write an acrostic poem (a number of lines in which particular letters such as the first in each line spell out a word or phrase) using the word PRIDE or SELF-ESTEEM. The poem should convey what the student is proud of, such as their personal talents, family or culture.
4. Have your students respond to the question: Do you like the name given to you by your parents? If you like your name, what do you like about it? If you don't like the name your parents gave you, what would you change your name to and why? Why are names important? Read the story "My Name" from *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros. After reading, ask the students how did they feel about the names in Spanish? Why did Esperanza want to change her name?

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Descendents of the Fifth Sun: Background Information Sheet

Who are you calling Chicano?

Many Mexican Americans, their parents, grandparents or great grandparents were born in Mexico and then moved or immigrated here to the United States. Even when they become American citizens, their history and culture are still connected to Mexico.

Chicano or Chicana refers to a person who is usually born in the United States but whose family originated in Mexico. The term "Chicano" proudly declares the melding together of bloods and heritages of multiple cultures: Mexican, Indian, Spanish and North American Anglo. In his 1971 *Chicano Manifesto*, writer Armando Rendon described the Chicano as "a descendant of the Fifth Sun*, bound to the land of Aztlan by his blood, sweat and flesh, and heir to gifts of language and culture from Spanish conquistadores..."

Self-identification

Chicano, Latino, Hispanic, Mexican American - it is up to each individual to decide which one term or combinations of terms they wish to use for identifying themselves to others. It is also important to know that how you identify yourself might change over time and change from situation to situation.

It's in the Mix

When you are from two cultures, you are "bicultural." If you speak, read, write and understand two languages, you are "bilingual." A person who is bicultural and bilingual can often make more connections between other cultures. "Spanglish" is a mix of English and Spanish that many Chicanos and Mexican Americans use to communicate. It is considered to be improper Spanish by some, yet it reflects the creativity, color and nuance of Chicano experiences that have been fed by Mexican and U.S. culture.

Knowing Me, Knowing You

Understanding your own cultural history helps you know yourself better and can also help you appreciate others who are from different cultures. Self-knowledge can help you see the world as a place of shared values and beliefs.

**Fifth Sun* is the name given by the Aztecs to the current calendar cycle.

Descendents of the Fifth Sun: Student Worksheet

Directions: Write an *acrostic* poem (one in which special letters spell another word). Select either the word PRIDE or SELF-ESTEEM, writing it vertically along the left side of the page (see example below). For each letter in your word, begin a sentence of your poem that describes your source of pride or self-esteem. It could be a talent that you have, your family, your culture-or the fact that you are bilingual or a great dancer.

Painting the women who are my heroes

Rejoicing in their glorious contributions to our community

Inviting *mis comadres* (my godmothers) to reflect on the gifts of our *raza* (race)

Dancing to the music of an accordion

Effortless pride of the women who sing our traditional *canciones* (songs)

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The Making of a Border: Lesson 2

Introduction

To most U.S. residents and Mexicans, the U.S.-Mexico border is more than a geopolitical designation. A contested and emotional history keeps this border alive in our consciousness.

Objective

Students will explore the history of the U.S.-Mexico border and express their own opinions about the border.

Materials

"The Making of a Border Background Information Sheet and Student Worksheet," magazines, newspapers, art supplies, and scissors.

Procedures

1. Distribute "The Making of a Border Background Information Sheet." Discuss with your students: Who created the U.S.-Mexico border? Why have borders?
2. Distribute "The Making of a Border Student Worksheet." Have the students create a collage to represent their own opinions about the border.
3. Tell students to imagine that the United States and Mexico eliminated the border between the two countries. What would the borderlands and the interiors of both countries be like if this happened?
4. Ask the students what the term "wetback" means to them.
5. Ask the students if they have ever crossed the border between Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico or San Diego, California and Tijuana, Mexico. What was it like crossing from one country into the other?

The Making of a Border: Background Information Sheet

A State of Mind

Before the arrival of the Spanish and long before the creation of the U. S.-Mexico border, many different groups of Native Americans lived, hunted and traded freely on the lands now divided by the present U.S.-Mexico border. It is believed that this region of deserts, mountains, rivers and forests that is now the southwestern part of the United States into the valley of Mexico was once the home of the Aztecs.

A Stake of Land

The southwestern border between the United States and Mexico has evolved under shifting claims of territorial ownership. The Spanish took these lands as their own in 1535 and began colonizing them. Once Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico claimed the former northern Spanish territories. The Treaty of Guadalupe was signed in 1848 by Mexican and U.S. representatives to "peacefully" hand over Mexican territories to the United States. This land included Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Oklahoma and Kansas.



A Line in the Sand

Today the U. S.-Mexico border spans 2,000 miles, encompassing four U.S. states and six Mexican states. The United States has built guard stations, check points, and a fence along many parts of this border. The fence and Border Patrol protect this border from illegal or undocumented crossings from the Mexican side, which might include people from other countries like Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Despite these obstacles, people continue to travel from Mexico into the U.S.

The Making of a Border: Student Worksheet

Directions:

In the space below, or on a separate piece of paper use images patterns and symbols from magazines, newspapers, found objects and your own drawings to create a collage that represents your understanding of the U.S.-Mexico border. Remember to use symbols that you believe represent your opinions of the border. Give your collage a title.

Title _____

By _____

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A Hard Day's Work: Lesson 3

Introduction

Latino workers contribute greatly to the U.S. economy but have often been discriminated against. The Chicano Movement arose from the civil unrest of the 1960s and battled this discrimination by raising social consciousness about the rights of workers in the U.S.

Objective

Students will investigate the Chicano Movement in the U.S. and think about their own future in the workplace.

Materials

"A Hard Day's Work Background Information Sheet and Student Worksheet," Internet access, access to a library or resources on the labor movement in the U.S. and career resources with current job descriptions.

Procedures

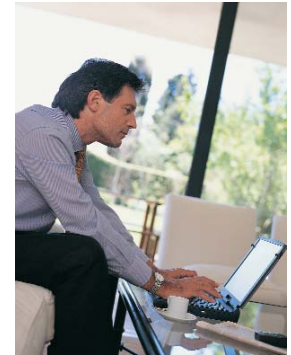
1. Distribute "A Hard Day's Work Background Information Sheet." Discuss with your students: Most people in our country work at some occupation. How does a person benefit from doing work? How does their work contribute to their family, neighborhood, city or region and country?
2. Distribute "A Hard Day's Work Student Worksheet." Instruct the students to select two labor leaders and/or labor organizations from the lists provided. Have them use the Internet or library to research the issues associated with the people or groups they selected and complete the chart on the worksheet. Indicate whether a solution was identified for the problem and if so or if not, what was the impact on future workers.
3. Ask your students to think about the kind of work they want to do for a living. Allow them to work in pairs, using the Internet or library to research the salary, workplace and educational requirements for their chosen jobs. Have them complete their worksheets.
4. Discuss with the students: What did labor leaders contribute to American society?

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A Hard Day's Work Background Information Sheet

Contributing to the Economy

People of Mexican descent in the U.S. have performed many kinds of work. Just as there were farmers, musicians, priests, healers, merchants, weavers, astronomers, writers, artists and laborers in the 14th century Aztec civilization in Mexico, so have there been ranchers, railroad workers, miners, artisans, actors, musicians, ballet dancers, migrant workers, factory workers, doctors, nurses, military officers, police officers, activists and so on of Mexican descent contributing to the U.S. economy.



Raising the Social Conscience

In the 1960s, amidst the unrest of the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movement, Mexican American labor leaders pushed for the rights of migrant and factory workers, giving rise to the Chicano Movement. Labor organizations were formed to fight against discrimination in the workplace. Cesar Chavez is the most well-known labor activist to emerge from this period.

Chavez was a lifelong farm worker who cared deeply about improving the pay and working conditions of farm workers. In 1962, Chavez and fellow organizer Dolores Huerta founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). In 1965, they supported a walkout by farm workers in Delano, California by asking members of NFWA not to work for the Delano grape growers. That strike lasted for five years and inspired a nationwide boycott of California grapes that was supported throughout the country.

Using nonviolent tactics such as strikes, boycotts and protest marches, labor organizations were usually able to pressure growers into signing agreements with the farm workers. Through the efforts of activists like Chavez and Huerta, many legal and illegal mechanisms of racism, discrimination and social injustice were dismantled. Their work raised the consciousness of workers, politicians, corporations and the general public to problems facing many minorities and immigrants in the workplace.



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A Hard Day's Work Student Worksheet

Directions:

Research 2-3 labor leaders and/or labor organizations or the history of the migrant worker using the Internet or books from the library. (See examples below.) How did the solution or lack of solutions to workplace problems affect future generations of workers? Enter your responses in the chart.

Labor Leader	Problem	Solution	Future Effect

Labor/Rights Organizations

United Farm Workers
Organizing Committee (UFWOC)
Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)
American GI Forum

Chicano Labor Leaders

Cesar Chavez
Marcela Lucero Trujillo
Emma Tenayuca
Dolores Huerta
Baldemar Velasquez
Virginia Musquiz

Problems

race & gender discrimination
child labor
unfair wages
unsafe working & housing conditions

Directions:

Think about what kind of work or occupation you would like to do. Use the Internet or go to the library to research the salary, workplace and educational requirements for your job. Record your findings below.

Occupation _____

Salary Range _____

Workplace _____

Educational Requirements _____

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Home Sweet Casa: Lesson 4

Introduction

Home life, especially food and cultural traditions, have a strong influence on artists and writers. You can see these influences in their paintings and writings.

Objective

Students will explore the influence of family, food and culture on art and creatively document their own experiences.

Materials

Home Sweet Casa Background Information Sheet and Student Worksheet, drawing paper and art supplies, stories and poems by Chicano writers (download from the *Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art Supplement* available on www.thechicanocollection.net).

Procedures

1. Distribute the "Home Sweet Casa Background Information Sheet." Ask your students to recall a favorite family event. It might be a holiday, birthday, wedding, reunion, vacation or similar event. Record their answers on the board. Now ask: At this event, what did you hear? Smell? How did it feel do be around your family? What foods did you taste? What and who did you see? These are the details that add depth and meaning to art.
2. Distribute the "Home Sweet Casa Student Worksheet" along with additional paper and art supplies. Have your students think about an important personal event or accomplishment that they would want to share with their own children. Have them create a *codex* (handwritten, illustrated book) which describes this event or accomplishment.
3. Ask the students to write 3-5 paragraphs describing a family or religious tradition that calls for specific foods to be served. Have them describe these foods and their meanings. Or students can write a poem or story about food which reflects their family or culture. Have students complete "Food Source" on the "Home Sweet Casa Student Worksheet."
4. Read a variety of stories and poems by Chicano writers to your students so they can experience how food is used to describe culture and identity (available for free download from the *Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art Supplement*). How do the writers use images of food? Are they only talking about food or is the food symbolic? For what?

Home Sweet Casa: Background Information Sheet

Family Influence

Families are the foundation for how we learn about and experience the world. Your family is like the first school you attend. It is through your family that you first learn values and beliefs, how to live with others and how to understand the world. Families can vary. You may consider your immediate or your extended family as your family. It is through our families that we begin collecting our first memories that influence how and what we communicate with others.

Getting Personal

Paintings by Chicano artists often reflect memories of family and community events that express the day-to-day living of relatives and neighbors. They portray many customs and beliefs. It is through their memories of family events that we can see connections with our own family traditions and practices. These artists share a personal gift with us, their own family history. Like their ancestors, they pass on accounts of a lived history by documenting those events important to them.

The Aztecs and other Native American groups did this kind of documentation through oral storytelling and through written and illustrated *codices* (early handwritten books). Their history and accomplishments were passed from generation to generation. Through these stories, people would get to know their history and the record of their community, giving individuals an understanding of their role in their family and community.



Images from Pics4Learning (<http://pics.tech4learning.com>)

Staples of the Mexican diet include avocados, corn, tortillas, peppers, tomatoes, chiles, beans and chocolate.

Are you what you eat?

In *Chicano Foods: A Cultural Perspective of the Rio Grande Valley*, a study conducted by the University of Texas - Pan American, it is noted "Cultural values are prescribed through food usage. Family ties, religion, and traditions are all reinforced through culinary practices. The commemoration of specific events with special foods relates the importance of celebrations. Food is a rich part of a people's culture and is part of one's very identity, part of one's flavor." It is no surprise that stories and pictures about one's family often include references to and images of food.

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Home Sweet Casa: Student Worksheet

Directions: Think about an important event or accomplishment in your life that you would want to share with your own children. Create a *codex* (handwritten, illustrated book) describing this event or accomplishment to pass down to them.

Questions you may want to address include:

Where and when did this take place?

Who was involved?

What did people eat and wear?

Why was it important or what is the lesson to be learned?

Food Source

Directions: Many of the foods and drinks we enjoy in the U.S. today originated from other cultures. Draw a line to connect the culture with the associated food.

Culture	Food
Dutch	Hot Dogs
Mediterranean	Pizza
Jewish	Coffee
Mexican	French Fries
Chinese	Yogurt
Ethiopian	Sandwiches
German	Noodles/Pasta
Italian	Bagels
French	Mayonnaise
British	Hot Chocolate

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Supplement

Visit www.thechicanocollection.net to download the *Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art Supplement*, which contains:

1. A bibliography for each of the four lessons in *Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art: A Teaching Guide for Grades 9-12*
2. Web links for each of the four lessons in *Themes and Dreams in Chicano Art: A Teaching Guide for Grades 9-12*
3. Answer key to "Food Source" from the "Home Sweet Casa Student Worksheet."
4. Text of the following:

"Ode to a Tortilla" from *Neighborhood Odes* by Gary Soto

"A Rice Sandwich" from *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

"Who Am I?" from *Why Am I So Brown?* by Trinidad Sanchez, Jr.

"The Mexican Sangwitch" from *Why Am I So Brown?* by Trinidad Sanchez, Jr.

"My Name" from *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros



To advance Chicano art as a recognized school of American art and to increase public accessibility of this work, art advocate and entertainer Cheech Marin commissioned Modern Multiples to produce commemorative sets of limited-edition reproductions (*giclées*) of paintings by 26 prominent Chicano artists.

Depicting images of urban life and the Chicano experience during 1969 through 2001, these archival-quality digital prints are accompanied by original linocut-print portraits of the featured artists by Artemio Rodriguez of La Mano Press, a documentary by award-winning director Tamara Hernandez, and an essay by Chon A. Noriega, Ph.D. of UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center. In addition to donating sets to major U.S. museums and universities, an exhibition featuring the prints has been created for travel to smaller cultural venues throughout the country.

For more information about *The Chicano Collection*, visit www.thechicanocollection.net, or contact Melissa Richardson Banks at (213) 972-0884.

Front Cover (top to bottom): 1. Raul Guerrero. *Molino Rojo (Moulin Rouge)*. 1989. Arches paper, pastel, and gouache, 15" x 22". 2. Marta Sánchez. *La Danza (The Dance)*. 1994. Oil enamel on metal, 35 1/2" x 59 1/2". 3. Alex Rubio. *La Lechuza (The Owl Woman)*. 2001. Oil on wood panel, 48" x 84". 4. Gaspar Enríquez. *Tirando Rollo (I Love You)*. 1999. Acrylic on paper. 81" x 58" overall (triptych).

INSIDE FRONT COVER: Wayne Alaniz Healy. *Una Tarde en Meoqui (An Afternoon in Meoqui)*. 1991. Acrylic on canvas, 53 1/2" x 53 3/4".

INSIDE BACK COVER: Gilbert "Magu" Lujan. *Base Dog*. 1990. Pastel on paper, 44" x 30".

All images are from the collection of Cheech Marin.