

Clashing and Mingling: One City, Many Cultures

By Kelly Griffith

Duration, Class, Grade Level, Number of Students: Four 50 minute class periods, 7th Grade Texas History, 26 students.

Location: 7th grade classroom, Guadalupe Regional Middle School, Brownsville, TX

Key Unit Vocabulary:

Mariachis Mestizas Margin Rebellions Rancheros Bosom Citrus Orchard Wield Machete Tension Align	Pioneer Chicano studies Folklore Pioneer Pacific Ocean Japan Ballad Mingle Clash Culture Identity
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Instructional Material: A list of learning materials needed for instruction. All materials should be included with lesson.

La Tarde Era Triste By Américo Paredes (in Between Two Worlds) The Río Grande By Américo Paredes George Washington Lopez By Américo Paredes (p. 42) *In the GoogleSlides presentation Where I'm From by George Ella Lyon Personal Dictionary Graphic Organizer	Biography Graphic Organizer Where I'm From Template Where I'm From Template - Sentence Stems Library of Congress Class Materials Library of Congress Digital Collections Graphic Organizer for Interpreting Primary Sources https://goo.gl/2khTY6	Photos: International Bridge Boundaries between Brownsville and Matamoros - 1910 Mexican refugees afoot and in wagons crossing bridge into Mexico at Brownsville, Texas 1911 A group of people, including two children on a horse drawn cart , preparing to cross the Rio Grande River from Mexico to Brownsville, Texas Elizabeth Street in Brownsville, Texas, ca. 1865.
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Enduring Understanding (Big Idea):

This lesson plan aims to address the multicultural heritages present in the U.S.-Mexican borderlands. Throughout the lesson plan, students will grapple with the impact of the convergence of European, Latin American, and North American cultural overtones. Students will generate explanations for how Americo Paredes' poetry exemplifies cultures "mingling" and/or "clashing" in Brownsville. Paredes was born in Brownsville, a city on the U.S.-Mexico border between the Gulf of Mexico and the desert. Students will explore how cultural identities might fuse and conflict by examining the dynamics along the U.S.-Mexican border since 1821. They will use Americo Paredes' poetry and folklore, in addition to their own lived experiences and current events, to make an argument whether they experience cultures mingling, clashing, or both in their lives in Brownsville, USA and Matamoros, Mexico. Students will analyze Paredes' folkloric representations of border identity as they illuminate their own unique cultural experiences of living on the edge of two nations.

Essential Questions:

- How does our location shape who we are and what we believe?
- How have political events, like the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), affected the culture along the U.S.-Mexican border?
- How has human behavior changed to adapt to the environment of the Rio Grande Valley? In what ways does the Rio Grande River impact people's lifestyles?
- What is the connection between identity, the economy, and culture?
- In what ways have race and ethnicity impacted identity in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands?
- To what extent are we defined by our membership in a particular ethnic group? by our social and economic class? by the nation in which we live?

Learning Objectives:

Build vocabulary skills.

Define the factors that influence cultural identity.

Identify ways racial, ethnic, and religious conflicts on the U.S.-Mexican border began and the attempts to resolve them.

Analyze the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to the American national identity.

Analyze and interpret primary documents.

Make inferences through analysis of poetry and short stories.

Standards:

This lesson plan uses TEKS, or Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, which are the state standards for what students should know and be able to do.

The standards addressed through this lesson plan are:

- TEKS (23) Culture. The student understands the relationships between and among people from various groups, including racial, ethnic, and religious groups, during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The student is expected to:
 - (A) identify selected racial, ethnic, and religious groups that settled in the United States and explain their reasons for immigration;

- (C) identify ways conflicts between people from various racial, ethnic, and religious groups were resolved;
- (D) analyze the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to our national identity.
- TEKS (29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:
 - (D) identify points of view from the historical context surrounding an event and the frame of reference which influenced the participants.

Background:

This lesson introduces the theme of identity to students in the context of their lives in Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Mexico. As they examine their own identities through the lens of their culture, languages, and backgrounds, it is evident that their location shapes who they are and what they believe. My students will grapple with this lesson plan using their background knowledge of Texas and northern Mexico history as they trace the blend of Mexican and American cultures since Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821. During this period of early Mexican independence, a new wave of Anglo settlers began arriving in East Texas. Settlers in Texas swore loyalty to Mexico, though many saw themselves first and foremost as citizens of the U.S. Throughout the 1820s, Mexicans and Americans differed based on their views on government, religion, military, and slavery. As Mexico tried to strengthen control over the Texas region, Texas settlers pushed back which eventually led to the Texas Revolution in 1835. After the Republic of Texas was formed in 1836, there still remained a rather significant disputed territory between Mexico and Texas. In 1844, U.S. President James K. Polk took steps toward fulfilling Manifest Destiny including fixing the southern border at the Rio Grande River. The issue escalated into the Mexican American War in April 1846. The Battle of Palo Alto, one of the initial battles and a painful defeat for the Mexican Army, occurred in the area that is now Brownsville, Texas. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, recognized Texas as part of the U.S. and the Rio Grande River as the southern border of Texas. These political events, including the manipulation of the Rio Grande River as an international boundary, have shaped cultural identity in the U.S-Mexican borderlands, creating both unity and tension among its diverse residents.

Preparation

All necessary links are included in this lesson plan and in the [Google Slides presentation](#). A projector hooked to the teacher computer is needed as well as access to computer lab for student use.

Procedure:

Note: The instructional strategies that I used vary because all of my students are English Language Learners. Throughout the lesson, class-wide read alouds are in English and Spanish, students record vocabulary words in written and visual dictionaries, and the final assessment is scaffolded to reflect the needs of my ELL students who will break down the writing process step by step using sentence starters.

Day 1:

Time	Student Learning Task or Activity	METHOD/Teacher Activity
5	Warm Up (Task students complete immediately upon entering class) What is "identity"? HOOK - TED Radio Hour Podcast: Identities	Share the essential question that we will discuss throughout the 3 day lesson: How are cultural identities impacted by the political and geographical factors in a location?
5	CLASS WORK: Define chicano civil rights movement. As a class, we will discuss the origins of the chicano movement and its impact on the arts and on the civil rights movement. In addition, we will trace the strikes and protests that began in the movement and continue today in response to issues like discrimination, educational segregation, voting rights, stereotyping, and the minimum wage for migrant agricultural workers	Direct Instruction (Teacher-led) Google Slides
15	PARTNER WORK: SW read a New York Times Piece, "Americo Paredes, a Pioneer In Chicano Studies, Dies at 83" and annotate using their annotation guidelines with their partners. They will make five annotations on the page as they read. When completed, SW complete a bio graphic organizer of Americo Paredes.	Americo Paredes Bio- New York Times
5	CLASS WORK: Share Out using Paredes Graphic Organizer	Display map of his house/where he lived in Brownsville/photograph of what Elizabeth Street (city center) looked like when he lived here What has changed then and now? - Class Discussion Links for photographs/maps are above in Resources section (Library of Congress) and here in Google Slides format. Students will view images of Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Elizabeth Street (downtown), International Bridge, and the Rio Grande River.

5	CLASS WORK: Discussion: What can poems teach us about culture?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think (Students will think about the question alone) 2. Pair (Students will discuss with the classmate sitting next to them) 3. Share - Whip Around (Each pair will share a sentence with the rest of the class summarizing their conversation)
10	GROUP WORK: "La Tarde Era Triste" by Américo Paredes Read in small groups; make annotations; analyze poem using discussion questions	Display map of Japan Google Map Directions from Brownsville to Japan Read piece in small groups (in Spanish) - Ask student to translate for non-Spanish speakers in the class if necessary
5	INDIVIDUAL WORK: Exit Ticket: What did Paredes' poem tell you about his cultural identity?	Teacher will collect exit tickets as students leave class.

Day 2:

Time	Student Learning Task or Activity	METHOD/Teacher Activity
5	INDIVIDUAL WORK: Warm Up (Task students complete immediately upon entering class) Students will define the vocabulary words "mingle" and "clash" by drawing images.	Student-led Review warm-up answers as a whole class
5	Introduce: "The Río Grande" and George Gomez excerpts by Américo Paredes	Direct Instruction (Teacher led) Discuss Paredes' quote from <u>Between Two Worlds</u> : The Río Grande was "published in the Harlingen <i>Valley Morning Star</i> on October 1934." In his note, he states this was "odd in retrospect, since Harlingen at the time was extremely racist." Why might the <i>Valley Morning Star</i> have published the poem? Infer what the public reaction might have been.
20	PARTNER WORK: SW read and analyze the poem and excerpt with a partner, making 5 annotations. Find and record 3 pieces of support for either side: A. Paredes felt tension between the	Circulate the room to provide assistance and remind students to stay on task.

	two worlds. B. Paredes felt that the two worlds aligned.	
10	<p>PARTNER WORK: As a pair, choose the side that you agree with most.</p> <p>A. Paredes felt tension between the two worlds B. Paredes felt that the two worlds aligned</p> <p>Chalk Talk of Multi-Layer T-Chart on Board Pairs will write text evidence next to statement A or B in the appropriate box on chart on the board.</p>	Work one-on-one with groups in need of more assistance.
5	CLASS WORK: Review evidence as a class.	Project on board and annotate/underline on master copy of poem and excerpt with dry erase marker based on student responses.
5	INDIVIDUAL WORK: Based on what we have discussed so far, what does Paredes mean when he says, "The two cultures mingled and clashed"?	Informal Assessment Exit Ticket - Students will respond by writing on post-it notes and placing them on the board as they leave.

Day 3

Time	Student Learning Task or Activity	METHOD/Teacher Activity
5	INDIVIDUAL WORK: Warm Up: Students will take a post-it note off of the board and respond to their classmates answers on the same post-it note to the prompt: "What Paredes mean when he says, "The two cultures mingled and clashed"?"	Ask for three volunteers to share out with the class.
5	Students will listen to directions and take notes as they watch the teacher model the exploration of the Library of Congress' Digital Collections.	Model catalog searching using keywords in the digital collection. Show students Teachers > Classroom Materials Link as well.

30	<p>GROUP WORK: Students will work in groups to find one example of cultural interaction on the U.S.-Mexican border from the Library of Congress and one example of a current event article using NewsELA. Students should print their image, photograph, map, artifact, or article to share with the class.</p>	<p>**Technology used - Use computer lab**</p> <p>Provide students with one-on-one assistance as needed, especially those with limited internet search experience.</p>
10	<p>Each group will share one example of economic, social, religious, lingual, cultural, or political interaction between groups on the U.S.-Mexico border with the rest of the class.</p>	<p>Collect student work as they complete their group sharing.</p>

Day 4

Time	Student Learning Task or Activity	METHOD/Teacher Activity
5	<p>INDIVIDUAL WORK: Warm Up: In what ways do you experience cultures interacting here in Brownsville? Explain.</p>	<p>Circulate the room to help students in need of assistance.</p>
5	<p>PARTNER PAIR/SHARE: In what ways do you experience cultures “mingling,” “clashing,” or both in Brownsville?</p>	<p>Think/Pair/Share Popcorn share (Students will share their thoughts and then call on another classmate)</p>
5	<p>Explain prompt: In what ways do you experience cultures “mingling,” “clashing,” or both in Brownsville? Share your thoughts through the form of a “Where I am From” poem. Review the model (Read aloud).</p>	<p>Read through “Where I am From” model with the class. Ask for questions.</p>
35	<p>INDIVIDUAL WORK: Students will write a “Where I am From” poem. They will work on the assignment independently and quietly.</p>	<p>Circulate to check in with students, monitor for progress, ask for questions. Formal Assessment (To be collected at the end of the class).</p>
<p>To engage with an authentic audience, teacher will send students’ poems to the local newspaper, the <i>Brownsville Herald</i>.</p>		

Resources:

Texas Beyond History, <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/st-plains/peoples/coahuiltecans.html>

Texas State Historical Association, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcc04>

Américo Paredes Library,

<https://www.lib.utexas.edu/benson/paredes/bibliography.html#theriogrande>

<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/migrations/bord/cultid2.html>

Facing History (Lesson: Identity and Place), <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/decision-making-times-injustice/identity-place>

Where I'm From Template,

<https://www.sausd.us/cms/lib/CA01000471/Centricity/Domain/3043/I%20Am%20From%20Poem.pdf>

Rubric: Amundsen HS,

<http://amundsenhs.org/ourpages/auto/2013/9/24/56309343/Where%20I%20m%20From%20Project%20Description%20-%20Rubric%20.docx>

La Tarde Era Triste

By
Américo
Paredes

La tarde era triste

Tequila, mestizas y mariachis
vienen a llamarme con las quietas
noches glaciales:
mestizas, mariachis
y el sol de Brownsville.⁹

—Okazaki
1945

The Rio Grande

Muddy river, muddy river,
Moving slowly down your track
With your swirls and counter-currents,
As though wanting to turn back,

As though wanting to turn back
Towards the place where you were born,
While your currents swirl and eddy,
While you whisper, whimper, mourn;

So you wander down your channel
Always on, since it must be,
Till you die so very gently
By the margin of the sea.

All my pain and all my trouble
In your bosom let me hide,
Drain my soul of all its sorrow
As you drain the countryside,

For I was born beside your waters,
And since very young I knew
That my soul had hidden currents,
That my soul resembled you,

Troubled, dark, its bottom hidden
While its surface mocks the sun,
With its sighs and its rebellions,
Yet compelled to travel on.

When the soul must leave the body,
When the wasted flesh must die,

I shall trickle forth to join you,
In your bosom I shall lie;

We shall wander through the country
Where your banks in green are clad,
Past the shanties of rancheros,
By the ruins of old Bagdad,

Till at last your dying waters,
Will release their hold on me,
And my soul will sleep forever
By the margin of the sea.¹

George Washington Lopez

By
Américo
Paredes

But the American had begun to “develop” the land. He had it cleared and made it into cotton fields, into citrus orchards and towns. And it was the Mexicotexan’s brown muscular arms that felled the trees. He wielded the machete against the smaller brush and strained his back pulling tree stumps out of the ground. For this he got enough to eat for the day and the promise of more of the same tomorrow. As day laborer clearing more chaparral, as cotton and fruit picker for as few cents a day as he could subsist on. Every stroke of the ax, every swing of the mattock clinched his own misfortune. Feliciano had been spared all that. He had a quiet well-paying job in the shade.

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