

Mexico Lesson Plan Unit by Dawn Charlier

Mini-Lessons

1. Simon Says

Materials: body part vocabulary, flash cards or overhead of body parts

Prior Knowledge: Body parts

Directions: Teacher gives directions saying Simon Says touch your parts of the body. When teacher has given directions for awhile, she chooses a student to direct Simon Says. Student gives the directions in Spanish to the other students. Take turns.

2. Chico, Grande

Materials: parts of the face, markers for entire class, white boards for entire class.

Directions: Teacher reviews vocabulary of the face. Students point to their body parts. Teacher calls out parts of the body and add chico and grande to the word. Teacher models on the board. When students are comfortable, they place a barrier between them and get a partner. Students draw a face on their board. They describe in Spanish their face. The other student has to draw what they say. They look to see if they were correct at listening and giving directions.

You can also modify this using colors and shapes when they are learned.

3. Pin the Part on the Face

Materials: laminated clown or popular cartoon your students like, pieces of a face and body separated, tape, Spanish directional words.

Directions: Teacher reviews direction words. Students can use a pencil or other random object and follow directions the teacher

gives them. Once you have reviewed, have a student come up and blind fold them. The students have to direct that student where to put that body part as well as identify the body part they have.

4. Body Cutting

Materials: large butcher paper, markers, scissors

Directions: Students get into partners. They trace one partner using a marker. They can decorate with the clothes they learned in Spanish. Teacher directs which piece to cut out. They discuss with partner and cut apart the body parts or clothing parts. Students direct each other Spanish on how to put the body back together.

Lesson Unit: Being a Mayan Warrior

Lesson 1

Background Information: Mayans were almost always engaged in war. The rulers led their troops into battle, and their victories were celebrated on stone monuments. Their weaponry included shields, with feathers, spears, staffs, clubs, axes, slings, and dart throwers. The feathers were usually taken from tropical birds from the merchants. Sometimes the feathers were glued on in patterns.

Materials: feathers, long paper strips, pictures of Mayan Warriors, background discussion of Mayan Warriors, cardboard boxes, markers, crayons.

Directions:

Students will discuss how the Maya warriors compare to warriors of today and warriors of other cultures. Students will use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two warriors.

Once the discussion about warriors is complete, students will create a Mayan Warrior headdress and shield. What different kinds of

weapons did they use? How were their battle strategies different? What happened to the winner or loser of the battle?

Headdress Directions:

Materials: glue, construction paper, long feathers, crayons, markers

1. Take a construction paper strip about 24 inches long. (You will have to fit it for each student's head individually) and tape or glue it together to secure the headband.
2. Glue long craft feathers around the headdress. Have students color the wide part of the headband with designs from the Mayan culture.
3. Wrap up: Why did the warriors wear these huge headdresses? How did it help identify them?

Shield Directions:

Materials: cardboard pieces, markers, crayons, Mayan designs

1. Cut a circular shape out of cardboard.
2. Glue feathers around the circumference of the shield, preferably to match the headdress.
3. Glue a long strip of cardboard on the back for a handle.
4. Students create Mayan designs like the headdress to match on the front of the shield.

Cufflink Directions:

Materials: construction paper, scissors, markers, crayons, tissue or crepe paper.

1. Cut out wide cuff bands.
2. Tape or glue around wrists
3. Color Mayan designs.
4. Attach crepe paper or tissue paper to look like streamers from one sided of the cuff link.

Other: Discuss why these warriors had all of this gear. How did it protect them? What kind of gear do our soldiers have today? How does that protect them

Lesson 2

Maya Ceremonial Ball Game

Background Information: Archaeologists have found hundreds of ball courts in sites of many periods all over Mexico and nearby countries. The game was deeply rooted in the life of the people. On a long, narrow court, with spectators above, a rubber ball had to hit a marker, or be propelled through a high stone ring, without the use of the hands. Players wore hip guards and other special game gear. Two teams tried to keep the ball in the air. They could only hit with the hips, knees, and elbows. If one side let the ball drop, the other team scored a point. Sometimes a losing or winning team was sacrificed to the gods.

Materials:

Plastic basketball hoops with foam balls(you can find them at the dollar store), background knowledge of Maya Ball Games, Maya Warrior gear from previous lesson, strong packing tape.

Directions:

After discussion of the Mayan Ball games, students will be able to practice on their own. Attach the basketball hoop without the net somewhere outside on the playground. You will need a lot of space. After talking about the Mayan game and the rules, divide your class into two teams. Students will be wearing their headdress they created in Lesson 1. Students have to try to make the foam ball in the hoop just like the Mayan warriors did. They have to remember that they could only use their body and hands were not allowed.

Math/Science connection:

Students measure the difference between the height of their hoop and the Mayans hoop. Subtract the difference.

Students weigh the foam ball compared to a hard, rubber ball like the Mayans used.

Questions:

What made this game difficult? What happened to the winning and losing game in the Mayan Ball game? How long did a game last? What sport do we have today that compares to the Mayans ball game?

Lesson 3

Maya Glyphs

Materials: clay, plastic utensils, pictures of Mayan glyphs, pictures of other symbols we use today, Mayan books with glyphs, overhead transparency of Mayan glyphs.

Background Information: The Mayans developed the most elaborate writing system in ancient America. The images and glyphs are drawn to stand for a language with syllables and grammar just like our language. Although the system is far from being discovered, they have been found on architecture, sculptures, and ceramics.

Directions:

Class discussion about symbols used. Include sign language, symbols in the community, symbols in different cultures, symbols and writing in different languages. Symbols we use today. Show pictures on overhead of Mayan symbols.

Based on the background information the students know about the Mayans thus far, they need to choose 5-10 glyphs and come up with a logical meaning for them. Then, they must carve a conversation between two people on their clay. Students will display their Mayan creations.

Extension:

Students can create their own symbol system and create a key. You can put these in centers for other students to decipher. You could also do it as a class and have your very own classroom language!

Try making your own Aztec book. You need stiff paper, folded in a zigzag. Make up a story about your family. Try to write it in coloured pictures. Think up a sign for each person's name.

Lesson 4

Maya Artistry and Pottery

Materials: tins cans, paper towel or toilet paper rolls, old containers, oatmeal boxes. (any cylindrical shape) , paint, paint brushes, examples of reproduced Mayan ceramics, pictures of Mayan ceramics.

Background Information: Mayan ceramics have often been painted with elaborate scenes of everyday life. Sometimes they have the royal court, war and sacrifice, mythological scenes, and abstract designs.

Directions:

Students will discuss the importance of the pottery to the Mayan people. How Mayans used their craft to survive. Their art told stories. How is the pottery you see today unlike that of the Mayans? Do you think this is how they told stories since they didn't have books?

Students will paint a scene on their can or cylindrical figure of an experience they might have had if they were a Mayan warrior or a Mayan child at the time. Students will also write a story to go along with their can. Their story will fit nicely in the can for all to see. Students need to be sure to use their background information while they are telling their story.

Lesson 5

When did the Aztecs Live? -Setting up a giant time line.

Materials: a long piece of rope, string or clothes line about 10 meters in length, some cards or pieces of paper, pencils and clothes pins.

Background Information: The Aztecs lived in the Valley of Mexico for over 200 years before the Spaniards conquered them in 1521.

Directions:

Lay the rope on the ground and secure each end so it does not move.

You are going to walk back through time in Mexico. Every step is 100 years or a century. Start at one end of the rope and write the present date. Round up to AD 2000. Count steps down the rope to the Spanish Conquest and peg on another card with the date. Keep walking and pegging dates until you are back at the beginning of the Olmec period.

Extension: Be a time detective and find some dates for important events in Mexico after AD 1500 and peg them on your line. You could make another time line of other parts of the world.

Time Line Cards should include:

Central Mexico:

150 BC-AD 750 Teotihuacán "Place of the Gods"

900-1200 Toltec

1350-1521 Aztec

1521 Conquest of the Spanish

Southern Mesoamerica:

1200-600 Olmec

200-1200 Maya

1200-1521 Mixtec

Lesson 6

Merchant Game

Materials: enlarged copies of 6 bundles of feathers, 6 jaguar skins, 6 spondylus shells, 6 chiles, 6 cotton, 6 pieces of jewelry, 6 pieces of cloth, students with energy, start and a finish spot, enlarged copies of spears.

Background Information:

Merchants, called *pochteca* in the Aztec language were a group who traded goods made in Tenochitlan. They traded things such as raw cotton, feathers, food, jewelry, cloth, and other riches. They traveled on foot since there were no animals for riding. Many of their trips were very dangerous, often crossing enemy territory.

Directions:

In this game, you must set up all the enlarged copies of the good in a square that connects. If you laminate the sheets ahead of time, it is easier to use. You are creating a giant life-sized game board.

The students are Aztec merchants who have to travel hundreds of miles to a distant town to bring these trade goods safely back to Tenochitlan. The merchant who gets the most bundles of the two traded goods chosen back to Tenochitlan the fastest wins.