



THIRD ROOT OF MEXICO:

Exploring Afro-Mexican History & Culture

A K-12 Curriculum Guide

by

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for

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Third Root of Mexico: Afro-Mexican People & Culture

The [Global Education Center](#) partnered with [Vanderbilt University's Center for Latin American Studies](#) to bring you Mexico's Third Root: Exploring Afro-Mexican History & Culture, a K-12 Curriculum Guide.

The goal of this project is to highlight the presence, people and culture of Afro-Mexico, by providing educators with the information and resources to introduce their students to the wealth of history and culture of Afro-Mexicans, an often overlooked group within Mexican society.

The author of this project is [Kana Kavon](#). As an experienced language educator of all ages, artist and woman of color, Kana brings expertise, passion, and empathy to this subject.

We would like to thank the artists who shared their gifts and work with the Nashville community during the 2017-2018 Third Root of Mexico Program Series at the Global Education Center:

Xánath Caraza	Ida y Vuelta
Hakeem Khaaliq	Sal Rojas
Queen Muhammed Ali	Renzo Devia
Camilo Nu	Bill LeVasseur
Reed Rickert	Jean-René Rinvil

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Introduction

Ask most people what comes to mind when they think of Mexico and you will undoubtedly receive a variety of responses ranging from the stereotypical to the culturally accurate. However, it is unlikely that people will reference Afro-Mexican culture.

Mexico was home to one of the largest populations of enslaved Africans in the 1600s. However, both national and international society has often overlooked this population and their descendants. What happened to descendants of the enslaved Africans in Mexico? The simple answer is, nothing! Afro-Mexicans have been around all along, living life, making art and carrying along rich traditions. And, finally, after centuries of political and social invisibility, Afro-Mexican people and culture are being recognized both at home and abroad.

The Mexican government began to recognize its African descendants in 1992 with the national *Third Root* project, a program focusing on the study of African presence and influence in Mexican history, culture, and contemporary society. The country designated Afro-Mexicans as the nation's

"third root" in acknowledgment that citizens are not only of indigenous and Spanish blood, but also of African ancestry. The Costa Chica region is where the majority of Afro-Mexicans call home. Costa Chica stretches along the southwestern coasts of Oaxaca and Guerrero states and encompasses the renowned tourist town of Acapulco.

In 2015, Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) conducted a landmark pre-census survey. For the first time in the nation's history, citizens were given the option to select "Afro-Mexicano." According to survey results, 1.4 million citizens self identified as Afro-Mexican (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, 2015).



Photo by Sal Rojas

This burgeoning awareness of Afro-Mexican identity begs many questions, but most importantly, it is a promising sign for Mexico's black population. It suggests that both their country and the world at large are beginning to recognize their presence and history.

How to Use this Guide

The purpose of this K-12 curriculum guide is to give you and your students an entry point for learning about Afro-Mexican people and cultures through an introduction to historical and contemporary Afro-Mexican artists, leaders and movements. Rather than serving as a comprehensive unit on Afro-Mexico, it is meant to encourage inquiry, wonder and delight through lessons and activities that center around exploration, play and discourse.

This curriculum is appropriate for courses covering general education topics, as well as specific subjects. This guide provides three sample culture-centered lesson plans. The plans are grouped according to grades, but lessons and the accompanying activity suggestions can be adapted to any age and subject.

We hope that this curriculum guide invites engagement, rich discussions and deeper investigation. We would love to hear your feedback and experiences; you can share them with the Global Education Center at ellen@globaleducationcenter.org.

Background and Context

African presence in Mexico dates back to the earliest stages of Spanish colonization at the beginning of the 16th century. **(1)** It is estimated that at least 200,000 Africans were forcefully migrated to Mexico through a major slave port in Veracruz (Minority Rights). Upon entry, Africans were forced to labor in mining, agriculture, and urban professions.

However, from the beginning of their arrival in the Americas, Africans and their descendants resisted through rebellion and escape. Runaways formed settlements in remote areas surrounded by natural barriers like mountains and forests. These communities of resistance were known as *palenques* (pah-LEN-kays). Their survival was based on subsistence farming and supplemented by plunder from raids on surrounding plantations and towns.

One palenque was so well-defended, that after 30 years of unsuccessful attacks by Spanish militia, the Spanish crown relented. On January 6, 1609, San Lorenzo de Los Negros (later named Yanga in honor of founder Gasar Yanga) became the first free black town in the Americas (Smith, 2007).

Alternatively, many Afro-Mexicans resisted by becoming active agents of change within

1. Some scholars argue that African presence in Mexico predates European presence, citing the Olmec as African descendants.

mainstream Mexican society.

Afro-Mexican revolutionaries were critical in the Mexican victory against Spain in the War of Independence that began in 1810. (2) General Vicente Guerrero, an Afro-Mexican revolutionary, went on to become Mexico's second president. One of President Guerrero's first governmental actions was to pass more definitive legislation on the abolishment of slavery in 1829 (Legaspi, 2012).



Photo by Sal Rojas

Despite the freedom brought to Afro-Mexicans by the new legislation, in the centuries that followed the abolishment of slavery, Afro-Mexican people and cultures became gradually invisible within Mexican society. Let's explore a few of the contributing factors:

Contrary to the social norms in the Protestant

colonies of the United States of America, the Catholic Church permitted intermarriage between Spaniards, Africans and indigenous peoples. In colonial Mexico, blended families were commonplace. A caste system (3) was imposed by colonizers to maintain racial distinctions and keep power in European hands; however miscegenation played a major role in the "disappearance" of Mexico's black people.

Another blow to black identity came in the wake of the Mexican Revolution. The Revolution had been long, bloody, and fraught with dissensions amongst the revolutionaries themselves. In 1925, philosopher and presidential candidate José Vasconcelos sought to bring unity and direction to the country with the publication of "La raza cósmica" (The Cosmic Race).

In this seminal essay, Vasconcelos encourages his fellow citizens to adopt the identity of a cosmic race, doing away with titles of red, white, and black. He urges Mexicans to acknowledge themselves as a blend of all races. In the zeitgeist of the Revolution, his essay was wildly popular. Citizens were desperate for a common vision for Mexico, and Vasconcelos was right on time.

2. The beginning of the war in 1810 marked the last year that the Spanish crown collected official data on the colonial population, which included Afro-descendants. The next time that Afro-Mexicans were reflected in government census data was in the 2015 pre-census survey.

3. The colonial caste system was depicted in paintings of 16 potential racial mixtures and the names assigned to each category.

Unfortunately, the good intentions of his ideology were unable to bring equity to the most discriminated against--indigenous Mexicans and Afro-Mexicans. This cosmic race concept merely eliminated the language that made it possible to identify otherwise glaring disparities between groups.

These influences created the perfect vacuum for the Afro-Mexican identity, and have led to dire realities for Afro-Mexican people. In disproportionate amounts, Afro-Mexicans continue to live in poverty with limited access to education, healthcare, and adequate employment (CNDH Mexico Report, 2016).

Due to this invisibility, many Afro-Mexicans say they feel like foreigners in their own country. There have been documented cases of Afro-Mexicans being wrongfully arrested and deported to Caribbean nations by police who did not believe in the existence of black Mexican citizens (Hernandez, 2013). In many cases, the individuals were allowed to return, but the correction of the legal action does little to change the mindset and ignorance of the authorities.

Moving Forward

As a result of the historical realities that have formed Afro-Mexican realities, black identity is based on more than strictly physical features, which, due to centuries of racial mixing, can be quite ambiguous. Other factors that shape self-identification as an Afro-Mexican include town of origin, common cultural practices and emotional connection with black ancestors (Gregorius, 2016).

Musical traditions that carry heavy African influences include *son jarocho* and *la chilena*. These genres are widely known throughout the country as iconically Mexican art forms; however, their African roots are not common knowledge.

Another authentically Afro-Mexican art form is the Dance of the Devils. This dance dramatizes black slave labor and white authority, while subversively mocking the white ruling class. The dance is a masked dance. The "devils" wear horned masks and tattered clothings. The white foreman and his voluptuous, lascivious wife, although performed by black people, wear white masks.

The masks allow performers to tell the story through acting out aggression, sexuality and otherwise socially unacceptable behavior (Gonzalez, 2010). In Afro-Mexican towns, this rhythmic and entertaining dance is learned by even its youngest children. Adults typically perform the big spectacle during Days of the Dead in late October and early November. This integration of demonstrations of resistance from an early age shows the long lasting effects of colonial history.

In the face of marginalization, Afro-Mexicans maintain their legacy of resistance through mobilizing, organizing, and reclaiming the legacy of their heritage. In 1999, a group of dedicated Afro-Mexicans founded the first annual Gathering of Black Communities (Encuentro de Pueblos Negros). This yearly meeting is now a blend of festival and forum. It is led by the community organization, Black Mexico (México Negro, A.C.), whose mission is “to give visibility to Afro-Mexicans in order to be included as a component of Mexican society.” (4)

Every year, Afro-Mexican and African cultures are proudly celebrated through food, music, and dance. Panel discussions are led by leaders

and activists to discuss community problems and solutions, and provide attendees with resources and information. Featured topics have included gender equity, domestic violence, reproductive health, and education. With the advent of social media, this event has grown to include international connections and communities, including African Americans from the USA.

This Afro-Mexican movement undoubtedly benefited from the momentum built by the Zapatista Movement of the early 1990s. In 1994, indigenous peoples in the southern state of Chiapas formed the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and led an armed uprising against the Mexican government; indigenous people demanded “work, land, housing, food, health, education, independence, liberty, democracy, justice and peace” (Godelmann, 2014).

The EZLN warred and seized towns until the Mexican Government relented and began negotiations that led to the San Andres Accords. Finally, in 2001, the Mexican Congress granted autonomy and self-determination to the indigenous peoples of Mexico. This rebellion and mounting pressure from Latin

4. The organization hosts their public communication with the public via the [Mexico Negro, A.C. Facebook page](#). USA

have played roles in nudging the Mexican government towards acknowledging its non-European descended citizens and their needs. In addition to the Third Root Program and the 2015 pre-census survey, the Bureau for Afro-Mexican Affairs in Oaxaca was also created to address the needs of Afro-Mexicans.

However, progress remains slow. Humberto Hebert Silva Silva, head of the Bureau for Afro-Mexican Affairs in Oaxaca, has suggested that Mexico's black people may soon follow the example of armed resistance to reach

acknowledgement and rights for Afro-Mexican peoples (Gregorius, 2016).

As with most lasting progress, it appears that the change will be fueled by the people themselves. This movement is benefitting from the interconnectivity of globalism and the phenomenon of social media. YouTube channels and radio stations are regularly broadcasting news, art and entertainment for Afro-Mexicans by Afro-Mexicans. Such mainstream recognition may indicate that the veil of invisibility on this population is beginning to disappear.



Photo by Hakeem Khaaliq and Queen Muhammad Ali, from *Invisible Mexico* exhibit at the Global Education Center, 2017.

Key Vocabulary

People, Places & Cultural Products

In this section you will find the names and descriptions of people, places and cultural products of significance to Afro-Mexico. While the list is not exhaustive, it provides a substantial beginning place for further exploration in your classroom.

People



Gaspar Yanga (1545- ?)

Gaspar Yanga (GAH-spar YAHN-gah) escaped slavery and founded the maroon settlement of escaped slaves in Veracruz in the late 16th century. Before being captured and sold into slavery, it is believed that he was born into a royal family in the West African region of Gabon. Yanga is also known by Nyanga.

Photo of Yanga statue taken by Hakeem Khaaliq & Queen Muhammad Ali. Image from *Invisible Mexico* exhibit at Global Education Center

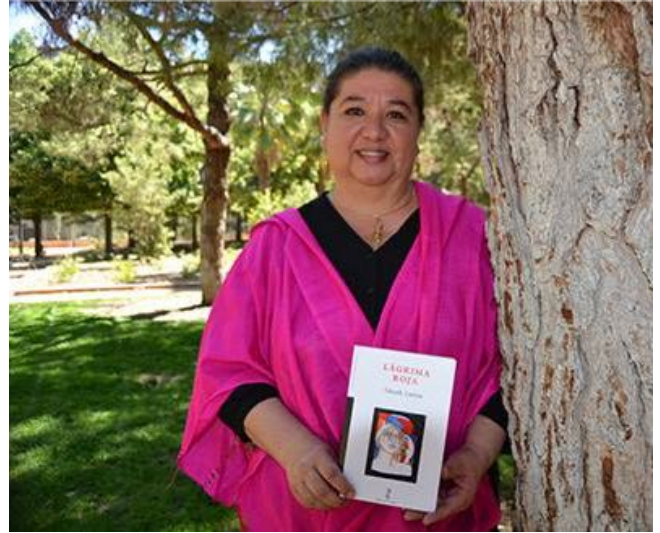
Vicente Ramón Guerrero Saldaña (1782-1831) Most commonly known as Vicente Guerrero (vee-SEHN-teh geh-REH-roh) was a leading Mexican general in the War of Independence against Spain in the early 19th century. After helping lead the country to victory, he became president of the new nation. Guerrero was of Afro-ancestry and was considered as a “mulatto” according to the colonial caste system.

(Photo courtesy www.eluniversal.com.mx)



Xánath Caraza, poet

Xánath Caraza (SHAH-nath kah-RAH-sah) is an internationally acclaimed poet who writes frequently about the forgotten people of Mexico who are of African heritage. She is the recipient of the 2015 International Book Award for Poetry and an honorable mention for the Best Book of Poetry in Spanish in the 2015 International Latino Book Awards. She was named one of the top 10 "New" Latino Authors to Watch and Read in 2013. <http://xanathcaraza.webs.com/biography>



Camilo Nu, guitarist



Camilo Nu (kah-MEE-loh nooh) is a talented Afro Mexican guitarist who is on a musical journey to discover what similarities may still exist between the traditional Mexican music of Veracruz and the music of Southern Europe, the Arab and African worlds. Camilo co-produced the film [The Third Root: La Tercera Raiz](#) with Reed Rickert. The film follows Camilo journeying through the rhythms, dances, cadences, and musical structures of Flamenco, Moroccan Andalusian, Sufi, Berber and Sub Saharan, in order to find a new understanding of his own African heritage. <https://www.camilonu.com/>
(Photo by Luis Murillo)

Hakeem Khaaliq and Queen Muhammad Ali, filmmakers and photographers

Hakeem Khaaliq and Queen Muhammad Ali showcase the isolated and forgotten descendants of African natives who settled in Mexico through their unique exhibit, Invisible Mexico. The exhibit documents over 10 years and more than 40 trips of their travels to various parts of Mexico. <https://www.behance.net/hakeem>



Ida y Vuelta, musical quartet

Ida y Vuelta's (EE-dah EE VWELL-tah) is a musical quartet based in Chicago whose presentations come from a long tradition of Mexican folk music called son jarocho. The genre is a fusion of African, Spanish and Indigenous music and poetry and is native to the Veracruz region. The instruments include jaranas (8 string small guitars), requinto (lead 4-string guitar), leona (acoustic bass), zapateado (percussive foot tapping). They also incorporate the cajón (wood peruvian box) and cajita (small peruvian box) for reinforcements. Ida y Vuelta takes inspiration from renowned son jarocho group, *Siquisiri*. The group plays traditional "sones" (SOH-nehs), some of which date back over 300 years, as well as their own arrangements and original tunes. www.idayvueltamusic.com



Sal Rojas, photographer & graffiti artist

Sal Rojas (sahl ROH-has) is a photographer and famed graffiti artist who explores the roots, culture and life of the Afro Mexicans through the lens of his camera. Sal's work is featured throughout this curriculum guide, including the cover image. His work is also featured in the film *Afro-Latinos: An Untaught History* by Creador Pictures. You can view more of his work at

<http://www.brownpride.com/sal/>

PLACES

The Costa Chica region is where the majority of Afro-Mexicans call home. Costa Chica stretches along the southwestern coasts of Oaxaca and Guerrero states and encompasses the renowned tourist town of Acapulco. Many Afro-Mexicans also reside in Veracruz state, located on the Gulf Coast. The first free black town in the Americas, named Yanga after its founder, was established and still stands in present-day Veracruz. Although the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Veracruz boast the higher percentages of Afro-Mexican inhabitants, there are also black Mexicans living in smaller numbers throughout the entire country.

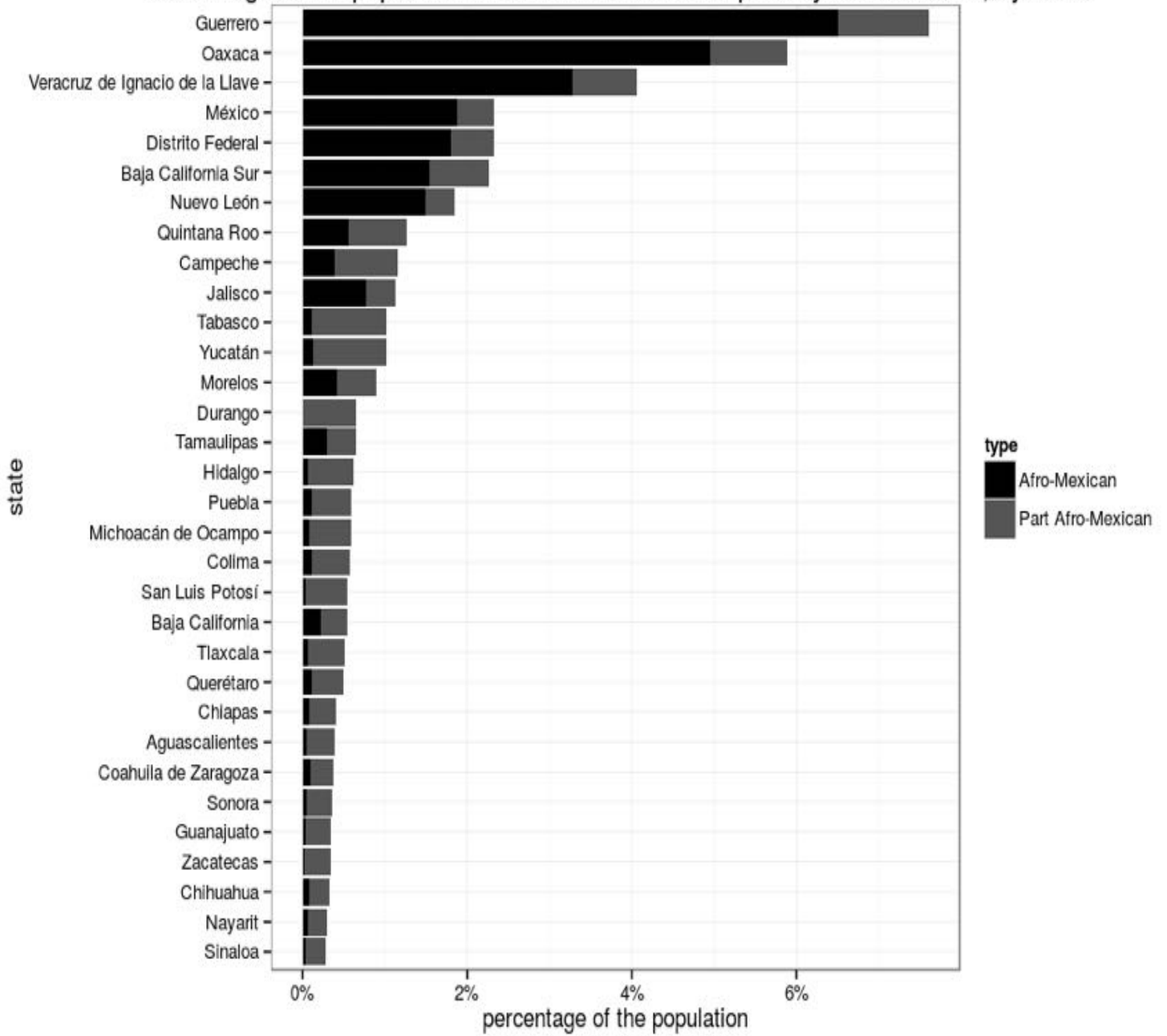
The following map and data on Mexico's afro-descendants is property of Diego Valle-Jones. More detailed information can be found at his website, <https://blog.diegovalle.net/2016/01/afro-mexicans.html>.



[Click here for an interactive version of the map.](#)

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Percentage of the population that is Afro-Mexican or partially Afro-Mexican, by state



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State	Municipio	Total Population	Afro-Mexicans (totally or partially)	Percent
Oaxaca	Santiago Tapextla	3208	2756	85.9%
Oaxaca	Santo Domingo Armenta	3469	2678	77.2%
Oaxaca	San Juan Bautista Lo de Soto	2593	1920	74%
Guerrero	Cuajinicuilapa	27266	16907	62%
Oaxaca	Santa María Cortijo	1075	660	61.4%
Oaxaca	Santiago Llano Grande	3284	1934	58.9%
Oaxaca	Santa María Huazolotitlán	11400	6201	54.4%
Oaxaca	Magdalena Mixtepec	1375	742	54%
Oaxaca	Villa de Tutuepec de Melchor Ocampo	46152	200669	44.8%
Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave	Xoxocotla	5446	2312	42.5%

Municipios with the highest percentage of Afro-Mexicans

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State	Municipio	Total Population	Afro-Mexicans (totally or partially)	Percent
Guerrero	Acapulco de Juárez	810669	86157	10.6%
México	Ecatepec de Morelos	1677678	37638	2.2%
Distrito Federal	Iztapalapa	1827868	34239	1.9%
Nuevo León	General Escobedo	425148	33849	8%
Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave	Veracruz	609964	30688	5%
México	Chimalhuacán	679811	30190	4.4%
Jalisco	Guadalajara	1460148	26018	1.8%
Jalisco	Zapopan	1332272	22275	1.7%
Distrito Federal	Coyoacán	608479	21101	3.5%
Distrito Federal	Álvaro Obregón	749982	20806	2.8%

Municipios with the largest population of Afro-Mexicans

CULTURAL PRODUCTS

Danza de los diablos (Dance of the Devils)

Danza de los diablos (DAHNSAH deh los dee-AHB-los) was first performed in colonial times. This theatrical portrayal of black slave labor and white authority that mocks the white ruling class. Now, the dance is performed during Days of the Dead in late October and early November.

Danzón

The *danzón* (dahn-SOHn), as a formal partner dance and musical genre, was developed by enslaved Africans in Cuba in colonial times. The music and dance migrated to Mexico with the purchase and importation of Afro-Cuban workers. Mexican society popularized and appropriated the *danzón*.

Fandango

El fandango (el fahn-DAHNGOH) is a communal jam session where musicians, dancers and anyone who loves a good party come together and enjoy the rhythms and humorous, romantic, and some offensive lyrics of *son jarocho*.

Son jarocho

Son jarocho (SOHN hah-ROH-cho) is a traditional folk music that originated in the Gulf Coast state of Veracruz. It is a fusion of African, indigenous and European musical elements and instruments. The genre is marked by syncopation, percussive rhythms, and lyrical improvisation and humor.

La Bamba

La Bamba (la BAHM-bah) is a traditional Mexican son jarocho. In the 1950s, singer Ritchie Valens made the song an international hit with his rock and roll rendition. Its earliest versions were sung by enslaved Africans working in Veracruz. It is believed that the song is named after Bamba, a town in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and its original inhabitants, the Mbamba.

Zapateado

The *zapateado* (sah-pah-teh-AH-doh) is a style of dancing wherein the dancer percussively punctuates the musical rhythms by striking the heels of their shoes. The dance traditionally accompanies *son jarocho* music during fandangos. Zapateado comes from the Spanish word for “shoe,” zapato.



Photos by Sal Rojas

LESSON PLANS & ACTIVITIES

The following lesson plans are suggestions for how teachers can introduce students to Afro-Mexican culture. Tips for planning affirmative, culture-centered lessons:

- Present the culture as factual and natural, not as a strange or surprising occurrence.
- Consider anchoring units and lessons with Essential Questions (EQs).

Essential Questions should be broad in scope and allow for multiple points of entry and exploration across the unit. The EQs suggested in the provided lesson plans are intended to encourage teachers and students to seek cultural connections and similarities. The same EQ may be used throughout a unit. [Read more on Essential Questions here.](#)

The plans are divided according to grade level simply for the sake of organization. However, we encourage teachers to adapt them and make them their own! The lessons here are for traditional 50 minute classes. For block scheduling (and future lessons), consider the ideas for additional activities and resources at the end of each lesson plan.

A copy of the lesson plan template is included in the Additional Resources. Teachers are encouraged to make copies of the template for future use in culture-centered lessons.



Photo by Sal Rojas

CULTURE-CENTERED LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

Grade/Course:

Date:

Minutes:

Unit Theme: Mexico's Third Root

Essential Question:

Standards:

RESOURCES/MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY:

CULTURAL ENCOUNTER, # MINUTES

(Introduce students to authentic cultural resource)

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT, # MINUTES

(Give students a hands-on experience with the resource)

CULTURAL DISCOURSE, # minutes

(Facilitate discussion encouraging cultural comparisons)

CULTURAL CONNECTION, # minutes

(Encourage continuation of learning and transfer)

REFLECTIVE NOTES & FUTURE PLANNING:

(What worked well? What would you do differently? What ideas do you have for follow-up activities?)

Grade/Course: Pre-K through 3rd grades

Date:

Minutes: 50

Unit Theme: Mexico's Third Root

Essential Question: How do different kinds of music make me feel?

Standards: *Select according to your state/subject/grade*

RESOURCES/MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY:

Youtube.com video links to son jarocho musical performances:

1. "La Morena" by Los Vega <https://bit.ly/2M1BeQS>
2. "Colas" by Ida y Vuelta <https://bit.ly/2vxVbVa>
3. Map of the Americas

CULTURAL ENCOUNTER, 10 MINUTES

Teacher assists students in locating Mexico on a map.

Listen to son jarocho song, ["La Morena" by Los Vega](#).

Prior to having students watch, assign them a thinking task. For example, have one group look closely for the shape and size of instruments. Have another group be ready to report on how the musicians and dancers are moving their bodies.

After watching the video, have a class discussion about their discoveries.

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT, 15 MINUTES

Teacher models basic zapateado footwork.

Students practice & perform zapateado along with another son jarocho, ["Colas" by Ida y Vuelta](#). Students may choose to be dancers or musicians, or both!

CULTURAL DISCOURSE, 10 minutes

Teacher explains that son jarocho is the music that began many years ago when Native Mexicans, Africans and Europeans brought their instruments and songs together. Teacher should explain that fandango is the name of the big dance with everyone dancing together and singing. Sometimes the party can last all night until the next morning!

CULTURAL CONNECTION, 15 minutes

Students draw images of a fandango and write an age-appropriate description of how they enjoyed the music! Share descriptions and drawings in small groups and/or whole group.

REFLECTIVE NOTES & FUTURE PLANNING:

Enter notes here

Ideas for future lessons/activities:

- Look at and discuss different instruments used in son jarocho
- Use found objects to create & decorate traditional son jarocho instruments
- Learn and perform basic zapateado steps and perform a fandango
- Make "tap shoes" pennies and hot glue gun

**THIRD ROOT OF MEXICO
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN
PRE-K - 3RD GRADES**

Grade/Course: 4th -8th

Date:

Minutes: 50

Unit Theme: Mexico's Third Root

Essential Question: How are stories told through lyrics and music?

Standards: *Select according to your state/subject/grade*

RESOURCES/MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY:

1. AfroPop in Mexico: Keepers of the Chilena video, <https://bit.ly/2OqBSo3>
2. KWL Charts
3. Map of the Americas/ Map of Mexico.

**THIRD ROOT OF MEXICO
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN
4th-8th GRADES**

CULTURAL ENCOUNTER, 10 MINUTES

Students locate the states of Guerrero & Oaxaca (Costa Chica region) on a map of Mexico.

Students watch a 4 minute video on Afro-Mexican musical traditions "Keepers of the Chilena"

While viewing video, students complete a KWL chart.

After the video, in pairs or small groups, students discuss their KWL charts.

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT, 25 MINUTES

Teacher introduces additional traditional Afro-Mexican genre, **son jarocho**, briefly explaining the history of the music and its social purposes of developing community and expressing group and individual sentiments about personal experiences ranging from oppression to love. Discuss typical characteristics of son jarocho: improvisation & humor

In small groups, students brainstorm topics for a group song. Students then write first drafts of lyrics to a traditional **son jarocho**.

CULTURAL DISCOURSE ,10 minutes

Groups may share lyrics/perform their own sones jarochos for the class. Audience participates by clapping along rhythmically.

Discuss cross-cultural comparisons (eg. hip hop cyphers, square dances, etc.).

CULTURAL CONNECTION, 5 minutes

Have students develop lyrics and create a 2-3 minute music video for presentation. Share with class in a later lesson.

REFLECTIVE NOTES & FUTURE PLANNING:

- Have students work in collaborative learning groups to read and develop questions about the accompany blog post "[Afro-Mexico Road Trip #2: The Chilena.](#)"
- Students listen to world-famous son jarocho, "La Bamba." Compare lyrics in English and Spanish. Great for Spanish language class.
- Create their music videos in groups, integrating the elements of son jarocho--improvisation & humor.
- Read along with the audio version of [Xánath Caraza's poem "Mother of the Lands."](#) at <https://bit.ly/2haVder>. Then create art inspired by the poem.

Grade/Course: 9th-12th

Date:

Minutes: 50

Unit Theme: Mexico's Third Root

Essential Question: What makes a community?

Standards: Select according to your state/subject/grade

RESOURCES/MATERIALS/TECHNOLOGY:

1. Map of Mexico
2. Yanga, Veracruz promotional video <https://bit.ly/2vPuuuE>
3. KWL charts
4. Poster boards
5. Text: Yanga, New Mexico from [Encyclopedia of Slave Resistance and Rebellion, Volume 2](#) at <https://bit.ly/2MwzoUv>

**THIRD ROOT OF MEXICO
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN
9th-12th GRADES**

CULTURAL ENCOUNTER, 10 MINUTES

Have students locate Veracruz on a map. Then have students locate Yanga, Veracruz. Students begin KWL chart for what they Know, Want to Know, and Learned about Mexico.

Students view a short promo video for Yanga, Veracruz, Mexico. Students should revisit KWL chart after watching.

In small groups, students share their observations/questions.

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT, 25 MINUTES

Class reads text about Yanga, Mexico. Students break into small groups and choose one of the following projects:

1. Imagine that you travel back in time and get to interview the leaders and members of Yanga's newly formed palenque. Write a 3-minute skit. Be sure to interview Yanga and at least 2 other community members. Humor is acceptable, but it should be something that a descendant of Yanga's would appreciate.
2. Use a large poster to draw a blueprint of what you imagine an early palenque to have looked like. Consider and include details of daily life like cooking, washing clothes, shelter, bathing, entertainment, etc.

CULTURAL DISCOURSE , 10 minutes

As a class, discuss the questions and points of interest that arose during the collaborative work.

Teacher makes note of interesting points and inquiries during discussion. Follow up in future lessons.

CULTURAL CONNECTION, 5 minutes

Give direction for how projects should be developed/continued with deeper research.

REFLECTIVE NOTES & FUTURE PLANNING:

(see following page)

- Class debate about using racial titles vs. not using racial titles. Read and discuss accompanying NY Times article by Randal C. Archibold, "[Negro? Prieto? Moreno? A Question of Identity for Black Mexicans](#)" at <https://nyti.ms/2vuxzpk>

- Listen to traditional and contemporary Afro-Mexican artists. Compare styles to other musical styles with which students are familiar. Discuss possible cross-cultural influences.
 - Select clips from AfroPop Worldwide podcast, "[La Bamba: The Afro-Mexican Story](https://bit.ly/2AVZcl8)" at <https://bit.ly/2AVZcl8>
 - Listen to Ida y Vuelta's traditional song, "[Colas](https://bit.ly/2vxVbVa)" at <https://bit.ly/2vxVbVa>
 - Ras Levy's song, "[Mensaje Consciente](https://bit.ly/2OVHt6P)" at <https://bit.ly/2OVHt6P>
- Further Reading: Colin A. Palmer's narrative essay, "[Africa's Legacy in Mexico: A Legacy of Slavery](https://bit.ly/2nn5wyl)" at <https://bit.ly/2nn5wyl>
- Learn more about Annual Meeting of Black Communities that occurs yearly in Mexico. Discuss implications that this has for Afro-Mexican communities. Put it into action by having class brainstorm ideas for their school/local community. Plan a gathering and set an agenda--Identify the group (should pertain to the entire class)? (e.g. Students at the school, teenagers in the community, the entire town) What problems plague the group being discussed? What issues need to be addressed? What education needs to take place? How will the organizers (students in the class) advocate and spread the word to the other members of the identified group?

Additional Resources

Film

Afro Latinos: An Untaught History by Renzo Devia and Creador Pictures

Link to trailer: <https://vimeo.com/151897541>

The Third Root: La Tercera Raiz by Reed Rickert and Camilo Nu

Link to trailer: <https://thethirdrootmovie.com/en/trailer/>

Photos

Invisible Mexico: An Augmented Reality Exhibit by Hakeem Khaliq and Queen Muhammed Ali

Link to photos <https://bit.ly/2KE5oEn>

Article

Muhammad, Shahida. "Culture Clash: New Univision TV Documentary Reveals Afro-Mexican Struggle for Identity." *Ebony.com*, August 6, 2014.

Link: <https://bit.ly/2AUS5Qj>

Website

Smithsonian Museum. Africa's Legacy in Mexico: Mexico's Third Root

Link to site: <http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/migrations/legacy/almthird.html>

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