

Why teach about Hispanic heritage? Or, for that matter, why teach about any heritage?

Clearly, teaching about the contributions of Latinos can only help to build the self-esteem and the pride of those who identify themselves as Mexican-American or Cuban-American or Puerto Rican-American or

But, even more importantly, it is essential that all students learn to understand the ethnic diversity that is our country, according to Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives (Banks and Banks, 1992). Integrating the cultures in the social studies classroom helps develop "ethnic literacy" in all students. Developing ethnic literacy fosters pride in one's own culture and a respect and appreciation for the uniqueness of others.

Many Hispanic Americans trace their roots to the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Americas -- including the Arawaks (Puerto Rico), the Aztecs (Mexico), the Incas (South America), the Maya (Central America), and the Tainos (in Cuba, Puerto Rico and other places). Some trace their roots to the Spanish explorers -- who in the 1400s set out to find an easier and less costly way to trade with the Indies. Other Latinos trace their roots to the Africans who were brought as slaves to the New World. For purposes of the U.S. Census, Hispanic Americans today are identified according to the parts of the world that they or their ancestors came from, including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spain, or the nations of Central or South America.

Here are some activities that you might use to explore Hispanic heritage. These activities -- which touch on the people, the statistics, the Internet resources -- are just the tip of the tortilla!

ACTIVITIES TO CELEBRATE HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Trivia. *Challenge students to use Internet or library resources to locate answers to the trivia questions below.*

Why should you think of Hispanic Heritage when you see the yellow veil of mustard blossoms on the roadside? Spanish soldiers and friars scattered the seeds...to mark a trail. What event do Mexicans and Mexican-Americans celebrate on Sept. 16? September 16 is Mexican Independence Day.

What are sikus, quenas, wankaras and charangos? Andean musical instruments.

What three U.S. states are home to most Hispanic-owned businesses? California, Texas and Florida.

Who is the city of Galveston, Texas named after? Marshall Bernardo de Galvez

What historic event is remembered in Puerto Rico on Sept. 23? El Grito de Lares.

What historic event is celebrated on May 5th (or Cinco de mayo)? On May 5, 1862, Mexican forces defeated the invading soldiers of France at the Battle Of Puebla.

What is one of the accepted roots of the word Mariachi? It is a variation of the French word mariage, meaning wedding or marriage; or that it comes from the name of the wood used to make the platform on which the performers danced to the music of the village musicians.

U.S. geography.

Many U.S. place names are derived from the Spanish language. *Invite students to locate, tag on a U.S. map, and translate the following states and cities:*

States -- Arizona, Colorado, Florida, and Montana.

Cities -- El Paso, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Pueblo, Colorado; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego, California; San Francisco, California; San Jose, California; and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Challenge students to find additional U.S. place names of Spanish origin.

Graphing. *Invite students to use the following information from the U.S. Bureau of the Census to create a bar graph, a picture graph, or a circle graph showing the country of origin of U.S. Hispanics. The information below shows how many of every 100 Hispanic Americans list each of seven different countries as the nation from which their ancestors came.*

Mexico 67 out of 100

Puerto Rico 9 out of 100

Cuba 4 out of 100

Nations in Central & South America 14 out of 100

Other Hispanic Nations 6 out of 100

Statistics from U.S. Census

- At 44 million, Hispanics constituted 14 percent of the U.S. population.
- In the U.S. 1990 census, the Hispanic population was 22.4 million.
- Hispanics are the fastest-growing minority group.
- The Census bureau projects that the U.S. Hispanic population will reach 102.6 million by 2050.
- 64% of the U.S. Hispanic population are of Mexican background. Another approximately 10 percent are of Puerto Rican background.
- The median age of the Hispanic population is 27.2 years; that compares with 36.2 years for the population as a whole.
- 49% of the U.S. Hispanic-origin population lives in California or Texas. California is home to 12.4 million Hispanics, and Texas is home to 7.8 million.
- 13 states (AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, NV, NJ, NM, NY, NC, TX, and WA) have at least half a million Hispanic residents.

Art. Invite students to design a postage stamp that could be part of a Hispanic Heritage stamp series. The stamp might show a famous Hispanic American or some aspect of Hispanic-American history or culture.

Dictionary skills. Many common English words are very similar to Spanish vocabulary. Following are a list of Spanish words and their English translations. Invite students to read each Spanish word below and to tell what the English equivalent might be.

Spanish	English	Spanish	English
armadillo	armadillo	banana	banana
barbacoa	barbecue	botella (boh-TEH-yah)	bottle
cafetería	cafeteria	cañón (kan-YOHN)	canyon
chocolate	chocolate	colores	colors
ensalada	salad	explorador	explorer
inteligente (in-teh-lee-HEN-teh)	intelligent	mapa	map
mucho (MOO-choh)	much	música (MOO-see-cuh)	music

no	no	números (NOO-meh-rohs)numbers
papel (pah-PEL)	paper	patio
rosa	rose	tomate (toh-MAH-teh) tomato
tornado	tornado	vegetal (veh-heh-TAHL)vegetable

HISPANIC HERITAGE ON THE INTERNET

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/hispanic/index.htm>

Scholastic's home page for Hispanic heritage resources

Lesson Plans for Teaching About the Americas

<http://retanet.unm.edu/index.pl?section=1996LPs>

More than 65 lesson plans written by secondary teachers in 1995 as part of a summer institute at the Latin America Data Base. Many activities are cross-disciplinary and some integrate the Internet

The Society of Hispanic Historical and Ancestral Research (SHHAR)

<http://members.aol.com/shhar/>

SHHAR (pronounced "share") is a non-profit volunteer organization with the specific goal of helping Hispanics research their family history. Includes much research support and links to many other sites for additional help in genealogical research.

History of Hispanic Heritage Month

<http://latino.sscnet.ucla.edu/heritage/hhhispan.htm>

A legislative history.

How to Make a Pinata

<http://www.chevroncars.com/learn/fun-games/how-to-make-pinata>

Pinatas are easy to make, though they require a few days and some planning ahead.

Make a Paper Mache Bowl

<http://www.kid-at-art.com/htdoc/lesson37.html>

In Hispanic cultures, clay bowls often conveyed history

Hispanic Heritage Month

http://www.history.com/classroom/hhm/HHM_home_c.html

The History Channel offers resources and program listings

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Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/feature/hispanic/>

The National Register of Historic Places presents lesson plans and much more.

