

Title: Cinco de Mayo — What is it?

Grade Ranges:

K-4

5-8

9-12

Subject Tag:

World Languages: Spanish

Synopsis:

Elementary students are exposed to many cultures. They are then able to enjoy similarities and differences between cultures. Cinco de Mayo is a very important holiday to Mexican Americans, but it is often confused with Mexican Independence Day. In this lesson, students will benefit from learning the correct information regarding Cinco de Mayo. After students learn why Cinco de Mayo is celebrated, they will plan a fiesta that includes invitations, games, authentic music, and a menu of authentic foods. Encourage students to decorate using paper flowers and flags. Students will use Spanish as much as is appropriate for their age level.

Keywords:

Cinco de Mayo, piñata, food, Benito Juarez, Napoleon III, Veracruz, mariachi music, Mexico, Mexican holidays, The Battle of Puebla, General Ignacio Zaragoza

Body:

Students need to be informed regarding the historical situation regarding Cinco de Mayo. The origination for Cinco De Mayo, *The Fifth Of May*, commemorates the defeat of the French army by the Mexicans at The Battle Of Puebla in 1862. It is primarily a regional holiday celebrated in the state capital city of Puebla and throughout the state of Puebla, but is also celebrated in other parts of the country and in U.S. cities with significant Mexican populations.

For younger children, you may want to tell the story through puppets, while for older children you may want to tell the story as if you were a soldier or sister of a soldier from the battle. After telling the story, check for understanding by asking questions that require “si” or “no” for answers.

Explain (in character if you can) that because of this great accomplishment there is to be a fiesta and plans need to be made. Help students decide what needs to be considered for a successful fiesta. Use the target language for the items when possible (e.g., food — comida; milk — leche, etc.). Don’t forget decorations and invitations.

Have students select what part of the fiesta they would like to help plan. (You may need to divide students into groups and then assign each group a role.) Guide them to Internet sites to learn about appropriate items to prepare and how to prepare them. Help students keep the choices simple. You may also want to consider making the main meal a whole-

class effort, or you can see if the cafeteria will prepare your menu if you ask far enough in advance.

Make sure invitations go out and decorations are ready. All students can participate on at least one team. On the day of the fiesta follow through with the students' plans and enjoy.

Related Links:

Mexico Online: Mexican Holidays: Cinco de Mayo

<http://www.mexonline.com/cinco.htm>

This site provides a brief overview of the historical importance of the holiday in English.

Cinco de Mayo

www.nacnet.org/assunta/spa5may.htm

This page provides another summary of the events celebrated on Cinco de Mayo. From a class at Sinclair Community College

Mariachi Music

<http://www.ifccsa.org/menumari.html>

This site houses information on and examples of mariachi music, traditional Mexican music, which will give you ideas for music to play at your party. Site created by the International Folk Culture Center, San Antonio.

Cinco de Mayo: Recipes to help you celebrate!

<http://holidayrecipe.com/features/cinco.asp>

This page has a small but nice listing of menus for the fiesta.

Kidchef

<http://www.kidchef.com/cda/index.cfm>

Click on "Recipes" at the top of the page for a listing of "Recipe Categories." Then click on the category you want and find kid-friendly Mexican recipes such as "Easy Guacamole" under appetizers and "Green Burritos" under main courses.

123 Greetings

www.123greetings.com/events/cinco_de_mayo/

Students can send out invitations over the Internet through this site.

Features:

- Contains special education tips
- Quick Activity (less than 30 minutes; story starter)
- Requires Internet access for students to complete

Objectives:

Students will learn why Cinco de Mayo is celebrated by Mexicans and Mexican Americans, and then students will plan and execute a Cinco de Mayo fiesta including invitations, decorations, menu items, flags, and music.

Standards:

NY: 2: Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understandings.

NYC: A1c. Plan and organize an event or an activity: Take responsibility for all aspects of planning an event. **A2b.** Compose and send correspondence. **A3a.** Gather information to assist in completing project work.

CT: 4. Cultures. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the traditions, products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

NJ: 7:2. All students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture for at least one world language in addition to English.

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:

Review Comments:

Check Web sites.