

Summary Description

This is the first in a series of four lessons that introduces the student to Latin American history.

Learning Objectives

To have the student learn a few key facts about Mexican American history and culture.

Approximate Time for Lesson

50 minutes

Suggested Maturity Level for Instruction

Student should be able to read simple words and perform simple addition and subtraction. Also, student should be able to sit still and engage in one-on-one conversation.

References:

"Mexican Americans", Allan EngleKirk, Marguerite Marin, Multicultural America - <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Le-Pa/Mexican-Americans.html>

"Cinco History", Viva! Cinco De Mayo - <http://www.vivacincodemayo.org/history.htm>

Materials Needed

1. Internet Access - Pull up the following:
 - a. World Map (go to <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas/index.html?Parent=world&Mode=d&SubMode=w>)
 - b. United States-Mexico Map (go to <http://maps.google.com/>)
 - c. Map of Mexico Before Mexican American War (go to http://content.answers.com/main/content/img/oxford/Oxford_Military/0198662092.mexican-war.1.jpg)
2. Cinco De Mayo Word Search
3. Pencil

Preparation

Make sure you have materials open, printed and/or available prior to beginning the lesson.

Script

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Teacher: Today, we learn about another group of American people called the Latin Americans. The Latin Americans come from Central America [[point to Central America on the World Map](#)], South America [[point South America on the World Map](#)] and the countries in the Caribbean Seas [[point to the Caribbean on the World Map](#)]. These Latin American countries were once controlled by a country called Spain long ago and still, the Spanish language is spoken in these countries today. In fact, as an entire group, the Latin Americans will soon be the second largest

group of people in the United States, and that's why it's important that we learn about them and why they moved to the United States.

2. Teacher: Today, we're going to learn about one Latin American people called the Mexicans. There are more Mexican Americans than any other Latin American people in this country and that's mostly because it's right next to the United States, here [\[point to Mexico on the United States-Mexico Map - you will have to click anywhere in the map and drag the map up a bit to show both countries\]](#).
3. Teacher: You're going to learn that the Mexicans had a pretty tough time with the Americans, but they became a valuable part of American life. So, are you ready to learn about the Mexican Americans? [\[Get positive response from Student and begin lesson\]](#).

Lesson (40 minutes)

1. Teacher: Great. Now, as I said before, Mexico is right next to the United States. Actually, Mexico is right under the United States. But did you know that long ago when the United States was just starting out as a brand new country, that Mexico was actually to the left of and under the United States? In fact, do you want to see a map of Mexico and the United States long ago? [\[Get positive response from Student and show Student picture of Map of Mexico Before the Mexican American War\]](#).
2. Teacher: Now, look at all that land that Mexico once had. Why, it had California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, most of Colorado, and a bit of Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma [\[point to each of these States as you say them on the Map of Mexico Before the Mexican American War\]](#).
3. Teacher: So what happened?! Well, here's the story. You see the State of Texas? Well, as you can see it belonged to Mexico long ago. These feisty Texans one day said they didn't want to be part of Mexico because they weren't free to do what they wanted and announced that Texas was now its own country, called the Republic of Texas.
4. Teacher: Well, at that time the Republic of Texas announced to the world that they are their own country; do you think Mexico thought that was a nice thing to do? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that Mexico did not like Texas seceding from Mexico\]](#).
5. Teacher: Well, with one big enemy like Mexico mad at you, Texas needed a big friend just in case Mexico decided to take Texas back with its army. And so, the United States stepped up and said that they would take in Texas as a State of the United States. How do you think Mexico felt when the United States said they would take in Texas as another State? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that Mexico didn't appreciate at all the United States was helping a large territory of land that once belonged to Mexico\]](#).
6. Teacher: And now things got interesting. The United States and Mexico went to war because of Texas and the United States won the war. This war was called the Mexican American War. And because the United States won, Mexico had to give up Texas, and all the other US States that I mentioned earlier that was part of Mexico (California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico,

Arizona, pieces of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma). That was a lot of land that Mexico gave up. In fact, Mexico had to give up about half of its lands to the United States. That's like having ten pieces of gum and having to give up five pieces to someone else. How would you feel if you were Mexico if you had to give up half your land? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that you would probably be mad about losing all that land\]](#).

7. Teacher: So why am I even telling you this story about Mexico and the United States? Because this war really began how Americans felt about Mexicans and how Mexicans felt about Americans. Even today, some of the old feelings are there in both people.
8. Teacher: And interestingly enough, when the land that belonged to Mexico became part of the United States, the Mexican people that lived in those lands became Mexican American. Well, more and more Mexicans started to come to the United States once they heard that land was cheap and the Americans would pay more than Mexicans would for doing same kind of work.
9. Teacher: Many of these Mexicans that moved to the United States went to where the "old" Mexican Americans lived, mainly to California and Texas. And it was easy to move to the United States. After all, all you had to do was cross a river that at times wasn't even knee-high with water. In fact, one of the reasons why Mexican Americans are the largest group of Latin Americans is because Mexico is next to the United States, making it easier to get into the United States.
10. Teacher: As more and more Mexicans wanted to come to the United States, the United States started to not let as many to come into the country. Sure, a lot of Mexicans came to the United States by following the rules, but still a lot of Mexicans came into the United States in a way that was against the rules. And although the United States tries to guard their boundaries as best as it can, Mexicans coming into the country illegally is still a problem that exists today. Illegal means "against the law".
11. Teacher: And the biggest reason for the Mexicans to come the United States is, as I said earlier, to find a better opportunity for their families.
12. Teacher: Once the Mexicans would gather some money from working, they would send it back to their families in Mexico.
13. Teacher: And one thing interesting about Mexican Americans is that, unlike most Americans, the Mexican Americans hope to keep their way of living while living in the United States is so strong that their Spanish language is still spoken well even after the Mexican parents are long gone. In fact, the many Spanish television channels today are a sign that the Spanish language is strong and alive. Do you know of any Spanish language television channels that are on your T.V.? [\[Engage the Student in conversation\]](#).
14. Teacher: Now, because there are many Mexicans living in the United States today, these people gave a lot of great things to this country. For example, every time you eat a taco, burrito, enchilada, fajitas or nachos, you can thank the Mexican Americans for bringing their delicious food over to the United States.

15. Teacher: The Mexican Americans, like other American people, are hard workers and it shows in American life. Romana Acosta Banuelos, who was born from poor Mexican parents, became the first Mexican American Treasurer of the United States, who is in charge of making American coins and dollars. Also, Jessica Alba who is half Mexican American, played the role of Sue Storm (the Invisible Woman) in the Fantastic Four movies.
16. Teacher: And Lee Trevino, a Mexican American professional golfer is perhaps one of the most famous of his time.
17. Teacher: Also, there's a day that is celebrated in the United States called Cinco De Mayo. This special day is from the Mexicans and means "May 5th", which was the date when Mexican soldiers beat an army commanded by the French that was twice its size on May 5, 1862, near Mexico City, which is the capital of Mexico. That's kind of like you beating two other kids in a game.
18. Teacher: Because of this battle, the Mexicans celebrate the bravery and victory of those Mexicans. Well, in the United States, we also celebrate Cinco De Mayo because the Mexican Americans brought that day of celebration over to this country.
19. Teacher: And now, it's time for you to do an activity about Cinco De Mayo. You're going to do a Cinco De Mayo word search, and the words that you have to look for are related to the Mexican way of life. [\[Hand out the Cinco De Mayo Word Search and have Student complete the activity\]](#).
20. Teacher: Good job. OK - time for review. Get in front of the class. [\[Have the Student stand in front of you \(consider inviting other members of the family also to set the stage\) and ask her the following:](#)
 - a. [How did Mexico lose half of its land to the United States? Mexico lost its lands through the Mexican American War](#)
 - b. [Why did the Mexican Americans come to the United States? Mostly, to make money and provide for their families.](#)
 - c. [Why was it easier for the Mexicans to come to the United States compared to other people? Since Mexico was right next to the United States, it made it easier for Mexicans to cross over into the United States](#)
 - d. [Can you name something in the American way of life that was brought over by Mexican Americans? Food \(taco, burrito, fajitas, enchilada, etc\) and Cinco De Mayo](#)

[\[Teacher reviews any questions that the Student missed\]](#).

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

ProntoLessons.com

Lessons

People of America - Latin Americans Lesson 1 - Mexican - Part I (4/29/09)

Teacher: [\[Clapping\]](#) You did GREAT! Wonderful job! Are there any questions that you have regarding the Mexican Americans? [\[Engage in conversation with the Student and resolve further questions by researching the Internet\]](#).