

**Summary Description**

This is the third 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 Salvadoran American history and culture.

**Approximate Time for Lesson**

40 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:**

"Salvadoran Americans", Jeremy Mumford, Multicultural America -

<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Pa-Sp/Salvadoran-Americans.html>

"Who's Who in Work and Family - Liz Figueroa", Alfred P. Sloan Foundation -

[http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/leaders\\_template.php?id=3398&topic=3&area=All](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/leaders_template.php?id=3398&topic=3&area=All)

**Materials Needed**

1. Internet Access - Pull up the following:
  - a. United States-El Salvador Map (go to <http://maps.google.com/maps>)

**Preparation**

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

**Script**

*Introduction (5 minutes)*

1. Teacher: Last time we learned about the Cuban and Dominican Americans, who are from the Caribbean are of Cuba and the Dominican Republic.
2. Teacher: Today, we're going to learn about the Salvadoran people from the smallest country in Central America, called El Salvador [[point to El Salvador on the United States-El Salvador Map - you will have to click anywhere in the map then drag down to show Central America. Then, use the zoom function by clicking the plus sign twice - El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America, located under Honduras and above Nicaragua](#)].
3. Teacher: So, are you ready to learn about the Salvadoran Americans? [[Get positive response from Student and begin lesson](#)].

*Lesson (30 minutes)*

1. Teacher: Great. Now, the Salvadoran Americans come from a country called El Salvador. Again, this country, like the other Latin American countries we talked about, was controlled by Spain long ago and that's why Salvadorans speak Spanish.

2. Teacher: Like the Dominican Republic, El Salvador was in a great civil war and that civil war was the reason why so many Salvadorans moved to the United States. A civil war is when two groups of people in the same country fight. But imagine, if you were running away from war, with homes and buildings being destroyed all around you, do you think you would have all the time you need to gather up all your belongings before moving to the United States? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that the war would make it very tough to gather everything you owned and instead, you would probably just go with what you could carry at the time\]](#).
3. Teacher: That's right - and so, many just made the journey to the United States anyway they could - by driving, walking, and even sneaking across into the United States. Of course, this is against the rules, so the Salvadorans didn't want to get noticed once they were in the United States. And do you know why they didn't want to get noticed? [\[Get negative response from Student\]](#).
4. Teacher: Because if the people in the United States government found that you came here against the rules, then they would just send you back to where you came from, which, in this case, was back to El Salvador. Oh wait, but there was a civil war going on in El Salvador so even though it was safe in the United States, if you got to this country against the rules, then you would have to go back to your home, no matter how dangerous the civil war was. Well, think about it - would you rather be safe and live against the rules somewhere or would you rather live in a dangerous place where you could get hurt or even killed, but live by following the rules? Which would you pick? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that safety is always top priority for people and so you would probably choose to live in safety although it meant living against the rules. In other words, rules mean very little when your safety \(and survival\) is at stake\]](#).
5. Teacher: And so, the United States has this problem today with people from El Salvador who have come to this country against the rules.
6. Teacher: And when the Salvadorans came to the United States, they basically lived in neighborhoods where there were other Salvadorans like California [\[point to California on the United States-El Salvador Map\]](#), Texas [\[point to Texas on the United States-El Salvador Map\]](#), Illinois [\[point to Illinois on the United States-El Salvador Map\]](#), Washington D.C. [\[point to Washington D.C. on the United States-El Salvador Map\]](#) and New York [\[point to New York on the United States-El Salvador Map\]](#).
7. Teacher: Not too long ago, the United States changed their rules to let Salvadorans get into the country more easily. But it didn't really solve the problem of Salvadorans already living here against the rules. And anyways, well, a Salvadoran could get paid more money here in the United States than he could in El Salvador, so there really was no reason to go back until maybe you could save up some money, or you could send back money as you make it here in the United States - and this is exactly what some Salvadorans do.

8. Teacher: In fact, the most popular way that the entire country of El Salvador receives money is not through business or farming, but through Salvadoran Americans sending money back to their families in El Salvador.
9. Teacher: And the Salvadorans are known to be one of the hardest working people in Central America. They work the jobs that many Americans today don't want to work because the job is too hard to do.
10. Teacher: And some Salvadorans have already risen high in American life. For example, Liz Figueroa, a Salvadoran American, is one of the leaders of the State of California. Also, Efren Ramirez, who is half Salvadoran, played the role of Pedro, Napoleon Dynamite's friend in the movie, Napoleon Dynamite.
11. Teacher: 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. Why did the first Salvadorans come to the United States? They came to escape the civil war going on in their country and they stayed to find better opportunities.
  - b. Where did most of the Salvadorans usually live in the United States? Any one of the following: California, Texas, Illinois, Washington D.C., and New York

Teacher reviews any questions that the Student missed].

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

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