

- Help your students to understand how a map scale can be used to calculate distance. Using a large map of North America, have your students locate Mexico City and Washington, D.C. Use a ruler to measure the distance between the two cities. Check the map scale to see how many miles are represented by each inch on the map. What is the distance in miles between the capital cities of Mexico and the United States? Extend this activity by asking students how long it would take to drive between the two cities if your car traveled 60 miles per hour.
- Soccer, or *fútbol*, is a favorite sport in Mexico and in much of the rest of the world. Have your students use books and the Internet to research the rules of the game. Are the rules different in different countries? Extend this activity by organizing a soccer game with your students.
- What would a tourist want to see in Mexico? In small groups, have students list their top ten "must-see" or "must-do" sites to visit. Extend this activity by having students write brief descriptions of the places they would most like to visit on their Mexican tour.
- Diego Rivera was a famous Mexican artist who often used the culture and daily life of Mexico as subjects for his murals. Share samples of his work with your students at this web site: [www.diegorivera.com/murals/index.html](http://www.diegorivera.com/murals/index.html). As a class, design and paint a class mural depicting the students' daily life.

### Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [www.elbalero.gob.mx/kids/about/html/home.html](http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/kids/about/html/home.html)  
This bilingual web site targeted to children and sponsored by the Office of the President of Mexico offers recipes, myths, music, holidays and more about Mexico.
- [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mx.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mx.html)  
The CIA "World Factbook" features the flag, map, population, an economics overview and other current information about Mexico.
- [www.mexonline.com/cinco.htm](http://www.mexonline.com/cinco.htm)  
Cinco de Mayo is a Mexican holiday that is widely celebrated by Mexican Americans. You will find a concise history of the holiday, including how it is often celebrated, at this web site.

### Suggested Print Resources

- Binns, Tristan Boyer. *Mexican Americans*. Heinemann Library, Chicago, IL; 2003.
- Chavarría-Cháirez, Becky. *Magda's Tortillas*. Pinata Books, Houston, TX; 2000.
- Colon Garcia, Aurora. *Cinco de Mayo*. Heinemann Library, Chicago, IL; 2003.
- Mora, Pat. *Tomas and the Library Lady*. Knopf, New York, NY; 1997.
- Philip, Neil. *Hooves and Chicken Feet: Mexican Folktales*. Clarion Books, New York, NY; 2003.



## Mexican-American Heritage

Grades K-4

The United States has always been a country of immigrants, rich with the customs and traditions of the many countries they represent. *American Cultures for Children* introduces students to the heritage of some of the immigrant groups that make up this diverse land. Through songs, play, food, holidays and history, students are provided with an understanding of and appreciation for the cultural differences they see everyday in their classrooms and neighborhoods. Everyone has at least one culture to celebrate, and this series gives children a chance to explore their heritage and share it with others.

### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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### TITLES IN THIS SERIES

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## Program Summary

*Mexican-American Heritage* introduces students to the diverse cultures of the people of Mexico who now make their home in the United States. Students learn the location, geography and climate of Mexico, our neighbor to the south, and the sometimes stormy history of the relationship between Mexico and the United States. Students gain an understanding of how the first Mexicans came to the United States not as immigrants but as the result of land acquisitions resulting from the Mexican-American War, which occurred from 1846-1848. Today, many Mexicans come to the United States seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Students learn to count to ten and say a few words in Spanish. The history and production of chocolate is explained. In a field trip to the Olvera Street Market in Los Angeles, the oldest Mexican-American market in the United States, children see leather (being crafted into a belt) and colorful piñatas, hear traditional Mexican music, watch Aztec dancers and sample Mexican food. The Mexican folktale “The Great Race” is retold, and the Mexican folksong “Cielito Lindo” is sung. In an arts & crafts segment, students are given a lesson in the Huichol art of yarn painting.

## Vocabulary

**rainforest** — A tropical woodland with a high annual rainfall and very tall trees.

**tourist** — A person who takes a trip for pleasure.

**Mexico City** — The capital of and largest city in Mexico.

**Maya** — An ancient civilization of Mexico famous for its hieroglyphics and astronomy.

**Aztec** — The most powerful and advanced ancient civilization of Mexico. The Aztec were conquered by Spain in 1519.

**immigrant** — A person who makes a new home in a country other than his or her own.

**piñata** — A papier-mâché toy or object, filled with candy or presents, that is broken with sticks as part of a children’s game.

**saguaro cactus** — A large cactus found in the desert areas of northwestern Mexico. The saguaro often grows to a height of 40 feet and can live for 200 years.

**gila monster** — A lizard, with a poisonous bite, found in parts of northwestern Mexico and the southwestern United States.

**fútbol** — The Spanish word for soccer. *Fútbol* is a popular game played in Mexico.

**Huichol** — A people descendant from the Aztec and related to the Hopi of Arizona. They make their home in the mountains of north central Mexico and are famous for their handicrafts.

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**cacao tree** — A native tree found in Mexico and South America. Its seeds are the main ingredient in chocolate.

## Words in Spanish

Hello = Hola

Good-bye = Adiós

friend (m) = amigo

friend (f) = amiga

Thank you = Gracias

## Numbers in Spanish

One = Uno

Two = Dos

Three = Tres

Four = Cuatro

Five = Cinco

Six = Seis

Seven = Siete

Eight = Ocho

Nine = Nueve

Ten = Diez

## Focus Questions

1. Name the four states of the United States that share a border with Mexico.
2. What is the capital city of Mexico?
3. What two animals can be found on the Mexican flag?
4. How do you say “thank you” in Spanish?
5. What is an immigrant?
6. Count from one to three in Spanish.
7. What is the name of the oldest Mexican-American market in the United States?
8. What is a gila monster?
9. In the Mexican folktale “The Great Race,” how did the frog win the race?
10. What is *fútbol*?
11. Name the tree that produces the seeds that are made into chocolate.
12. What ancient Mexican civilization highly valued chocolate?
13. Name the large desert cactus that grows in northwestern Mexico.

## Follow-up Discussion

- After the Mexican-American War, land that was once part of Mexico became part of the United States. Have your students imagine that the land their houses are on is now part of a different country. How would this change their life? Would they have to learn a new language? Follow different laws?
- New immigrants to the United States often settle where there are other people from their homeland. Have your students discuss the good points of living with others who share their language, traditions and customs. Are there any disadvantages that come with living in a neighborhood where everyone is an immigrant from the same country?
- Mexican-American children speak two languages: Spanish at home and English at school. Have your students brainstorm both the good and bad points of learning and speaking two languages.

## Follow-up Activities

- Like the United States, Mexico is divided into states. Locate a map of Mexico to use as a reference and distribute an outline map to each of your students. Have them locate and label each of the 31 states and state capitals. The following web site has outline maps that can be downloaded for printing: [www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/n\\_america.html](http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/n_america.html).
- Many city names in the United States are of Spanish origin, like Los Angeles or San Antonio. Divide your class into smaller groups and give each group a map of the United States to look for cities that have Spanish names. Which states have the most Spanish names? Why?
- Have your students learn a little Spanish with this activity. Use several English-Spanish dictionaries and have students work together to find the Spanish word for each month of the year and each day of the week. Write the Spanish and English words on the board. Using this information, have each student create a calendar for the month of his or her birth. Remember, the month and all days of week must be in Spanish. Finish the activity by having students write “happy birthday,” in Spanish, on their birth dates.
- The Maya and Aztec were two of the ancient civilizations of Mexico. Arrange a trip to your school, or public, library, divide your students into smaller groups, and have each group research the history of the Maya and Aztec. Have students share their research with the class. Prepare two wall charts — one for the Maya and one for the Aztec — listing information about each civilization.
- The Spanish word for party is *fiesta*. Have a Mexican *fiesta* and invite students to bring in foods of Mexican origin, including tacos, enchiladas, salsa and tortillas, for everyone to sample.

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