Corrido
Curriculum
Packet
LESSONS: LESSON PLAN

This Lesson at a Glance:

Grade Band: 9-12

Integrated Subjects:
- Music
- Language Arts
- Social Studies

Materials:
- Assessment Rubric
- "Tiempo Amargo" (Bitter Times)
- "Corridos Historia Y Muerte del Gral. Francisco Villa"
- "El Cuartelazo" (The Coup d'Etat) (Part I)
- "Senegal"

Related Lessons:
- 9-12: Five Artists of the Mexican Revolution

Related WebLinks:
- MexOnline.com: Mexican Revolution of 1910
- Smithsonian Institution: Corridos sin Fronteras
- PBS: Interactive Timeline on The Border
- Smithsonian Institution: Migrations in History

Related How-To's:
- Turning Students into Songwriters: Tips on Writing Corrido Lyrics
- There's a Song in Everyone: Tips on Composing a Simple Corrido

Targeted Standards:

Corridos About the Mexican Revolution

Part of the Unit: The Music & Meaning of Mexican Corridos

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, students will be introduced to causes of the Mexican Revolution and key revolutionary figures. They will gain an understanding of a particular Mexican song form, the corrido, and its role as a vehicle for communicating the news and other important events. Students will be introduced to the causes and outcomes of the Mexican Revolution by learning about key figures, including then-President Porfirio Diaz and revolutionaries Francisco Madero, Francisco Villa, and Emiliano Zapata. The lesson will culminate in the students' creation of original corridos based on a current event.

Length of Lesson:

Two 45-minute class periods

Notes:

This lesson is suitable with adaptation for grades 11-12. This lesson is particularly suited as an introduction to a unit on the Mexican Revolution.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will:
- discuss the Porfirio Diaz regime in Mexico and Diaz's ties to the United States.
- read a corrido about life under the Diaz regime in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of a dictatorship on individuals.
- analyze corridos that provide a greater understanding of tensions among revolutionary leaders who sought the presidency.
- write original corridos based on the traditional form.
- research a current event as the basis for subject matter for their corridos.

Supplies:

For the Student:
- Pen and journal

For the Teacher:
- Internet or print resources about the Mexican Revolution (see Sources section for more information)
- Computer with Internet access or CD player to play music (optional)
The National Standards For Arts Education:
Music (K-12)
Standard 6: Listening, analyzing, and describing music
Music (9-12)
Standard 8: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
Music (9-12)
Standard 9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Other National Standards:
Language Arts (K-12)
Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
Language Arts (K-12)
Standard 2: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing
Language Arts (K-12)
Standard 6: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
World History IV (9-12)
Standard 35: Understands patterns of nationalism, state-building, and social reform in Europe and the Americas from 1830 to 1914
World History IV (9-12)
Standard 38: Understands reform, revolution, and social change in the world economy of the early 20th century
World History IV (9-12)
Standard 40: Understands the search for peace and stability throughout the world in the 1920s and 1930s

Instructional Plan:

Teacher Preparation
Prior to teaching this lesson plan, assign students a reading assignment on the Mexican Revolution, such as Chapter 12 in Benjamin Keen’s Latin American History (see Print Sources) or selected sources available on the Internet such as the History of the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1929 on the University of San Diego’s Border Revolution Website and War and Revolution on Worldbook.com’s History of Mexico section.

Warm Up: Spread the News
Divide students into groups of five, and number the students in each group 1 through 5. Tell students who are assigned number 1 that they will be given some very important news that must be delivered to student number 5 in their group. But before student 5 can hear the news, the news must first be read from student 1 to student 2 to student 3, and so on, individually, but without writing anything down—just like the game “Telephone.”

Give students the following instructions: Each group will spread out across the length of the classroom in order as if lining up for a relay race. All the 1s will receive the breaking news on a folded piece of paper, but they cannot unfold the paper until you give the word. They will be given two minutes to read the news and do their best to memorize as many details as they can. When the two minutes are up, they must crumple up the piece of paper and return it to the teacher. Each student must “spread the news” to the next person in their group until the news spreads to the 5s. When all 5s have heard the news, each 5 will be given a piece of paper. On the count of three, the 5s in each group will write down the news as best as they can. Warn your class that the news will contain important specific details, so they’ll need to pay careful attention when listening to and spreading the news. The group that has written down the most accurate news wins.

When the class has understood the instructions, give all the 1s a copy of the Breaking News info sheet folded in half and begin the activity.

After the activity is completed, remind students that important news was spread by word of mouth before newspapers were widely printed and distributed. Explain that one way individuals could help remember the details of a particular event was to write a song that told the story in its lyrics. Point out that we could each sing along to a number of different songs without looking at the lyrics, but would have a hard time reciting the same amount of stories by memory. Tell students that the corrido, a particular type of song developed in Mexico in the 1800s and still popular today, was often used to transmit information about current events.

Introduction to Corridos about the Mexican Revolution
Pass out the What Is a Corrido? info sheet and discuss the characteristics of the corrido form. Tell students that they will be looking at corridos that provide information about the dictatorship of Mexican president Porfirio Diaz and other key figures during the Mexican Revolution. Pass out lyrics to the corrido “Tiempo Amargas” (Bitter Times). (You may wish to play an excerpt of the corrido for your class. See the ArtsEdge Look-Learn-Learn resource, Corridos.)

Ask students what they learned about Porfirio Diaz from their reading assignment. Tell students that “Tiempo Amargas” reveals just how awful people were treated under Diaz’s regime. Review the reasons why most of the population was living in poverty while only a few in powerful positions were wealthy (i.e., Diaz’s ties to U.S. corporations). Ask students for examples of feelings of injustice apparent from the corrido lyrics. Ask students what the symbol of “pants” signifies in the lyrics. Discuss how the act of buttoning someone else’s pants reflects how oppressed the people were under the Diaz regime.

Discuss what students can learn from a song that they might not be able to learn from a history textbook (i.e., personal narratives that might include
emotional responses to then-current events) and why this may provide a greater understanding for the effects of significant historical events such as war.

**Leading Revolutionaries**

Pass out the lyrics to "Corrido Historia Y Muerte del Gref Francisco Villa," a corrido about the legendary Mexican revolutionary leader Francisco Villa who attempted to overthrow Porfirio Diaz. Play an excerpt of the recording (available on the ARTSEDGE Look-Listen-Learn resource, Corridos) and note the less-than-perfect sound quality of the recording. Tell students that the recording was made on August 31, 1923, just sixty days after Francisco Villa’s assassination—certainly a corrido about a then-current event.

Ask students whether they learned more about Francisco Villa from the corrido than from their previous readings. What did they learn? Discuss how Villa is represented as an infallible hero in this corrido, but remind students that Villa was the leader of one of several factions who were fighting for presidential control (another was led by Emiliano Zapata). Many corridos have commemorated a particular leader (such as former U.S. President John F. Kennedy) with just as much praise as the corrido about Villa. Ask students if they can point out instances in the corrido that reveal one-sided opinions.

Pass out "El Cuartelazo" (The Coup d’Etat) (Part I), a corrido about revolutionary leader Francisco Madero who successfully defeated Diaz in 1911 and was elected president. Ask students whether they can detect any bias in the corrido. (Focus on the 8th and 9th stanzas of the poem if they need assistance.) Note that after Madero became president, he was challenged by both Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata. Zapata controlled the state of Morelos, where he took matters into his own hands and divided land among the peasants, thereby ousting the estate owners. Both Zapata and Madero were assassinated, in 1917 and 1913, respectively. Political instability continued after Victoria Huerta’s coup d’etat against Huerta in 1913 and through Venustiano Carranza’s presidency, which began when he overthrew Huerta in 1913. (You may wish to play an excerpt of this corrido for your class. See the ARTSEDGE Look-Listen-Learn resource, Corridos.)

Discuss how personal bias affects the re-telling of history, and how there are at least two sides to every war and to every story.

**From Student to Corridista**

Tell students that they will now become corridistas (composers of corridos). Have students research the topic of their choice for homework, and challenge students to write their own corridos about a pertinent current event. See the ArtsEdge How-to Turning Students Into Songwriters: Tips on Writing Corrido Lyrics for helpful guidelines. (You may instead wish to ask students to write a corrido based on a topic dealing with the Mexican Revolution to reinforce what they have learned.) Inspire students by sharing corridos written by fellow high school students. Recent winners of the annual Bilingual Corrido Contest in Arizona, a program conducted by the University of Arizona Poetry Center, wrote about current political and personal events. The winning 2001 corrido, “San Salinas” by Adolfo Salazar, critiques Vicente Fox, the elected Mexican president from 2000-2006. The winning 2002 corrido, “Sonocat” by Eleuterio Cortez, tells the story of a young man who was tragically killed by people he considered his friends. (Both student corridos and additional examples of corridos are available on the ARTSEDGE Look-Listen-Learn resource, Corridos.)

**Assessment:**

Assess the students based on the following criteria:

- evidence of understanding of major figures in the Mexican Revolution through insightful and frequent participation in class discussions
- evidence of understanding of the corrido form
- wrote an original corrido in the traditional form that reflects the student's understanding of a current event.

You may also use the Assessment Rubric.

**Extensions:**
Organize a corrido concert, asking students to read the lyrics of their songs aloud—or better yet, to sing or perform them if a student in your class plays an appropriate instrument (i.e., guitar, accordion). See the ArtsEdge How-to: There's a Song in Everyone: Tips on Composing a Simple Corrido for useful guidelines on helping students to compose music.

Examine how events and figures of the Mexican Revolution influenced visual art, including murals by Diego Rivera and paintings by José Clemente Orozco through the ArtsEdge lesson plan Five Artists of the Mexican Revolution.

**Sources:**

**Print:**

**Media:**

**Web:**
- *South Texas Border, 1900-1920: Photographs from the Robert Runyon Collection*
  http://runyon.lib.utexas.edu/
- *The Handbook of Texas Online: Cortez, Lila Gregorio*
  http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/CT/ctc094.html

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**Collaborating Organizations:**
- The University of Arizona Poetry Center
  Tucson, AZ

The University of Arizona Poetry Center, an area of emphasis within the College of Humanities, is a nationally renowned special collections library and archive, academic and community resource, and
sponsor of numerous outreach programs, including a distinguished poetry reading series.

http://www.poetrycenter.arizona.edu
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research a current event as the basis for subject matter for their project. The traditional Roman nobility used their landed properties to support their political power. Read a comic about the life under the Diaz regime in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the Diaz regime in Mexico and Diaz’s rise to the presidency. Among revolutionary leaders who sought the presidency, analyze corridos that provide a consistent theme. In Mexico and Diaz’s rise to the presidency, analyze corridos that provide a consistent theme.</td>
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**Student Name:**

**Comics About the Mexican Revolution**

**Assessment Rubric:**

- [ ] 0: None of the criteria are met.
- [ ] 1: Criteria partially met.
- [ ] 2: Criteria mostly met.
- [ ] 3: Criteria fully met.
Extra! Extra! This just in! Porfirio Diaz has done it again! He sold another oil field to an American corporation in collusion with the Mexican elite. The rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer. Ninety percent of the people are living in poverty. Meanwhile, the textile workers who were on strike were met by the brute force of Diaz's men. Reports reveal massive bloodshed. We'll report more on the Rio Blanco textile strike as we find out more information.
What is a Corrido?

The *corrido* is a musical form developed in Mexico during the 1800s and originally sung throughout the country. Although still popular in Mexico, over time it became known as "música de la frontera" (border music) because it was especially popular along both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. This musical-poetic form continues to be popular wherever Mexicans and Mexican Americans live.

**Language**
The following elements characterize the language in * corridos*:

- *Corridos* are stories told in poetic form and sung to simple, basic music, much like English ballads.
- *Corridos* use common, everyday language.
- Although traditional *corridos* were always in Spanish, in recent years some have appeared in English as well, or have mixed the two languages.
- The audience, if addressed is always addressed politely.
- The tone can vary from sincere to satirical.

**Structure**
The stories that *corridos* tell, either fictional or historical, must be sung in the vernacular language of the people in order to be remembered (whether in English, Spanish or a mixture.) There is some variation in the poetic form, but most *corridos* have the following structure:

- 36 lines (6 stanzas of 6 lines each or 9 stanzas of 4 lines each)
- 7 to 10 syllables per line (sometimes the lines are repeated)
- Rhyme scheme that varies but most commonly uses an ABCBDB form in a six-line stanza or ABCB in a four-line stanza. (Sometimes couplets are used: AABB.)
- By tradition, the first stanza provides a setting for the story by either giving a specific date or naming a place.

**Content**
The traditional historical *corrido* told about actual events, especially the exploits of famous heroes or the tragic deaths of individuals fighting unjust authorities. When *corridos* became more commercially exploitable, some became mostly fictional. Today, a *corrido* can be about almost anything. These are some of the popular subjects:

- animals (such as racehorses or roosters)
- tragic love affairs
- criminal dealings, especially with contraband and smuggling
- migration and migrant labor
- social and political events
- the struggles of everyday life along the border
- assassinations or other violent deaths
- humorous occurrences or relationships
- catastrophes
- hometowns and regions
- miraculous events
- wars and revolutions
- local or national heroes
¡Ay, qué contentos hemos llegado a estos tiempos que ahora se ven! Nosotros somos los agraristas, varios amigos que ni lo creen.

Ya no es el tiempo del porfirista, que antes lloraban por el patrón, que lo encontraban, le dan la mano, y le abrochan el pantalón.

Y si algún día el mayordomo se desgustaba con algún peón era porque otro andaba más cerca a los remaches del pantalón.

Y el que tenía hijas bonitas ahí se la daban de velador, o se granjeaban muy buena chamba o cuando menos de rayador.

El que tenía mujer bonita no lo dejaban ni descansar, los levantaban muy de mañana como a los bueyes a trabajar.

Ya me despido de mis amigos ahí me dispensan la indiscreción, tiempos amargos del porfirista que aquí les canto en mi canción.

Oh, how pleasant it is to live during these times of today. We are the agraristas, though some people still doubt it.

These are no longer the times of Porfirio (Díaz), when they cried for the master when they'd meet him, they'd shake his hand, and button his pants.

If one day the steward became angry with a worker it was because there was another one closer to the snaps of his pants.

If someone had pretty daughters he'd get a job as a night watchman, or else he'd land a good job, at least as a payroll clerk.

If someone had a pretty wife they didn't let him rest, they'd get them up very early to work just like the oxen.

I bid you farewell, friends, you'll forgive my frankness. I've sung about the bitter times under the Porfiristas.

Source:
Lyrics of "Tiempos Amargos" by an unknown composer. Reprinted from the CD The Mexican Revolution: Corridos about the Heroes and Events 1910-1920 and Beyond! (CD 7041-7044) courtesy of Arhoolie Records (http://www.arhoolie.com).
Part I

En una hacienda en la sierra, de México maravilla, de un labrador de mi tierra nació el gran general Villa.

Trabajó por mantener a su madre y a su hermana y luchó por obtener de trabajador la fama.

Pero el hijo del patrón, con su dinero y poder, burló a la hermana del peón que al fin era una mujer.

Pero Pancho era muy hombre, y en prueba de su valor, lavó con sangre su nombre malhiriendo al burlador.

A las fuertes de Madero entró con brazo potente y aquel humilde ranchero fue un indomable insurgente.

Por su valor sobrehumano, y fiereza sin igual, don Pancho le dió en Rellano el grado de general.

Mas sus más valientes soldados fueron su escolta y su corte: los indomables dorados de la División del Norte.

Mas por una imprevisión, o tracción de algún canalla, perdió la brillante acción del combate de Celaya.

In a hacienda in my country, marvelous México, from a worker of the land the great General Villa was born.

He worked to support his mother and sister, and aspired to be known as a good worker.

But the son of the boss, with money and power, seduced the peon's sister, who, as a woman, was helpless.

But Pancho was truly a man and, proving his courage, cleared his name with blood, badly wounding the seducer.

He joined Madero's forces with a strong hand, and the once lowly farmworker became an undefeated rebel.

Due to his extraordinary bravery and unsurpassed fierceness, at Rellano Don Panchc (Madero) promoted him to the rank of general.

His most courageous soldiers were his elite guard: the indefectible dorados of the Northern Division.

Yet an unforeseen incident, or the treachery of a scoundrel, caused him to lose his brilliant campaign in the battle of Celaya.

Continued on the next page
Part II

Fue temerario y valiente
y noble de corazón
y admitió a toda su gente
al Presidente Obregón.

Como pago a sus proezas
le dieron el Canutillo,
la hacienda que manejaba
con su secretario Trillo.

Pero la envidia y traición,
que se arrastraba escondida,
esperaba la ocasión
para arrancarle la vida.

Y muy cerca del Parral,
sin descubrir aún el móvil,
mataron al General
que iba guiando su automóvil.

Mas no tuvieron valor
para enfrentarse al caudillo,
y disparando a traición
también mataron a Trillo.

Le lloraron sus soldados
pues él era su esperanza
y los valientes dorados
juraron tomar venganza.

Solo así podían vencer
a ese valiente caudillo
que con temor le llamaban
el señor de Canutillo.

Duerme en paz porque tu nombre
cual astro en la historia brilla:
será inmortal el renombre
del general Pancho Villa.

He was fearless and courageous
and of noble heart,
and accepted into his ranks
President Obregón's men.

In payment for his deeds
they gave him "El Canutillo,"
the hacienda he administered
with his aide, Trillo.

But envy and treachery
lurked nearby
waiting for the opportunity
to take his life.

Near Parral,
the motive has yet to be discovered,
they killed the General
as he was driving his automobile.

But they did not have the courage
to face the leader,
they fired treacherously
and also killed Trillo.

His soldiers grieved for him
because he was their hope,
and the brave Dorados
swore to avenge his death.

That is how they defeated
such a fearless leader
who was respectfully known
as the gentleman of "El Canutillo."

May you rest in peace, because your name
shines like a star in history:
immortal will be the fame
of General Pancho Villa.

Source:
Mil nuevecientos once, veintidós de febrero, en la capital de México mataron a Madero.

A las cinco de la mañana fue el primer cañonazo, ésa fue la contraseña para dar el cuartelazo.

Daba el reloj ese día las siete de la mañana cuando a México llegó, Mondragón con fuerza armada.

Llegó don Félix Díaz con orden militar:
—Renuncias de la silla o te mando asesinar.—

Le respondió Madero en su silla presidencial: —Primero me asesinas, que tú me hagas renunciar.—

Madero, estando en palacio, dijo: ¡—Qué ingrata es mi suerte! ¡Doy la vida por el pueblo, yo no le temo a la muerte!—

Madero les contestó:
—No presente mi retiro; yo no me hice presidente, fue por el pueblo elegido.—

Señores, les contraré lo que en México pasó: que una bala de asesinos a Madero asesinó.

Madero ya murió, y está debajo la tierra, ya nomás quedó Carranza de Administrador de Guerra.

Nineteen hundred and eleven, twenty second of February, in Mexico's capital they killed Madero.

At five in the morning was the first cannon blast, that was the signal for the coup d'etat.

As the clock struck seven that morning into Mexico City arrived Mondragon and his armed troops.

Félix Díaz arrived with a military order: "Either you resign or I'll have you killed."

Madero answered from his presidential chair: "You'll have to kill me first before you make me resign."

Madero in the presidential palace said: "How unfortunate is my fate! I give my life for the people, I do not fear death!"

Madero answered then: "I will not resign! I'm not a self-appointed president, I was chosen by the people."

Gentleman, let me tell you what happened in Mexico: a bunch of murderers killed Madero.

Madero is dead now and buried down below, only Carranza is left as Minister of War.

Continued on the next page
Llegó la artillería,
conducida por un tren,
porque iban a bombardear
la cárcel de Belén.

Tocaban los clarines,
sonaban los tambores,
y andaba el cañón niño
por los alrededores.

The artillery arrived
transported by train,
they were going to attack
the jail of Belen.

The bugles were calling
and the drums were playing and the
canon niño
was placed nearby.

Source:
Lyrics of "El Cuartelazo" by an unknown composer. Reprinted from the CD The Mexican Revolution:
Corridos about the Heroes and Events 1910-1920 and Beyond! (CD 7041-7044) courtesy of Arhoolie
Records (http://www.arhoolie.com).
Este es el nuevo corrido
Que yo les vengo a cantar
Lo que sucedió en Sonora
En la planta Sonocal.

Sonocal una empresa
Donde él laboraba
No pensó que sus dos amigos
Su vida pensaban truncarla.

Martín era muy querido
Del pueblo, muy respetado,
Nunca pensó que en el cielo
La gloria se había ganado.

La ambición es muy canija
No se le puede negar
Por culpa de unos billetes
Una vida fueron a seguir.

A los que hicieron el robo
Nunca se les olvida
Que él mismo les consiguió trabajo
Y les dio mucha comida.

Tres fueron los culpables
De este humillante suceso
Dos andan huyendo
Y uno se encuentra preso.

El que compuso estos versos
Nunca se desvaloriza
Sólo le pide al Creador
Que se las haga justicia.

Toda la gente admiraba
De lo que había sucedido,
Porque el joven era bueno
Por todo el pueblo querido.

Continued on the next page

This is the new corrido
That I sing to no one and all
About what happened in Sonora
In a place called Sonocal.

Sonocal was the factory
Where he worked every day
He never thought that his two friends
Would take his life away.

Everyone in the pueblo
Loved and respected Martín
No one imagined that soon
In heaven he would be.

Ambition is corrupt
And that we can’t deny
Because of a few dollar bills
This young man had to die.

As for the men who robbed him
Never forget the truth
He was the one who found them work
And shared with them his food.

Three men were guilty
On that tragic day
Two are wandering fugitives
And one is locked away.

He who composed these verses
Knows what he is worth
He only asks his Creator
For justice here on earth.

The whole town was shocked
By this brutal tragedy
Because he was a fine young man
And kind to those in need.
Un día su fue al trabajo
Pero él no se suponía
Que hasta en su propia casa
El mismo Diablo tenía.

Declan que eran karatekas
Los que lo asesinaron
Después de darle muerte
Luego lo encajelaron.

Su padre se lo decía
"Mijo no hagas confianza
Mira que el demonio
Dondequiera mete la pata".

Cortez era su apellido
El "ELE" su apelativo
Toda la gente decía
"No debía morir por ese motivo".

Ya me voy, ya me despido
Me voy por el carrizal
 Esto le pasó a un joven bueno
Por culpa de Sonocal.

Source:
Translated by Wendy Burk
Reprinted with permission from author.

One day he went to work
But did not understand
That the Devil himself
Held his life within his hands.

They say the men who murdered him
Were experts in karate
And that the trunk of an old car
Was where they hid his body.

His father always told him,
"Don't give your trust away
For the Devil walks among us
Dragging his ball and chain"

His last name was Cortez
And his initial "L"
His tragic death was senseless
We remember him so well.

My time with you is over
But I say to one and all
This happened to a fine young man
Because of Sonocal.
Five Artists of the Mexican Revolution

Lesson Overview:
Much of Mexican art at the beginning of the 20th century was influenced by or created in response to historical events. In this lesson, students will research the major events and personalities of the Mexican War of Independence and the Mexican Revolution, and explore how these people and events influenced the art that was created in early 20th century Mexico. Using the guided directions, students will learn about the relationship between art and history. Students may complete this lesson in English or in Spanish, depending on the level of the students’ fluency.

Length of Lesson:
Eight 45-minute class periods

Notes:
This lesson is particularly suitable for grades 6-10.

Instructional Objectives:
Students will:
- learn to identify an artist by his or her style,
- be able to identify specific paintings,
- define the vocabulary of the paintings,
- draw their own mural using contemporary events and the style of one of the artists studied,
- learn about the Mexican War of Independence and the Mexican Revolution,
- research five famous Mexican artists associated with the Mexican Revolution,
- research prominent revolutionary figures from Mexico’s history.

Supplies:
A notebook in which students can assemble their various research pieces (one per student).

Instructional Plan:
Hone: Before exposing students to the Mexican artists who depicted the struggles of the Mexican people, be sure to discuss the History of Mexico, including the Mexican War of Independence (1810) and the Mexican Revolution (1910). Introduce the related Vocabulary handout as appropriate.

First Classroom Session
Students understand the history of political struggles in Mexico and the main figures and personalities involved. Discussion should center not only around Mexican desire for independence, but also the inflation to which they were exposed on a daily basis. Bring to light the oppression of the 19th century, and note that the events were not always directly related to the revolution. Ask students what they see in those paintings.

Second Classroom Session
The first critical event against the Spanish took place spontaneously in 1810. Here students research the context and take notes on the important events. They may use the following Web sites for research:

- The Father of Mexico:
- History: The Father Who Fulfilled a Country

Bring the students back together and have them discuss what they discovered about the early history of Mexico’s revolution. Have someone list the main topics on the board as they are being discussed. Ask for volunteers to read the short biographies of the revolutionaries they researched. Have a student at the front of the classroom where the main points can be recorded as the biography is being read. Ask students if anyone discovered additional information that is not yet listed.

Third and Fourth Classroom Sessions
As a warm up, have students write or set the main events that they remember from the previous day’s lesson on the history of early Mexico during the Spanish rule. Lead then into a discussion about the reasons that the Mexican people wanted to participate in the War of Independence.

Now, have students begin their research on the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and its leaders. Research will be done primarily through the Internet. Have the students research the following men that had major roles in the Mexican Revolution:

- Porfirio Diaz
  (1830-1915)
- Francisco I. Madero
  (1873-1913)
- Venustiano Carranza
  (1859-1920)

Research online the Mexican Revolution of 1910.
Jose Guadalupe Posada
http://marx.makingnews.org/joseguadalupe_posada.html

Diego Rivera
http://www.si.edu/exhibitions/mexicorivers.html

Frida Kahlo
http://www.artsedge.org/lesson/1498.html

David Alfaro Siqueiros
http://www.artsedge.org/lesson/1498.html

Jose Clemente Orozco
http://www.artsedge.org/lesson/1498.html

Have students type and print out answers in the form of a short narrative biography on one of the Mexican revolutionaries.

Fifth Classroom Session
Share results of the previous day’s research. Discuss the revolutionaries and their actions. List events associated with each and have a student record them on the board as they are being discussed. Explain to the students that they will be creating a notebook on the Mexican Revolution and the influence that it had on their lives.

Sixth and Seventh Classroom Sessions
Write the following names on the chalkboard:

Jose Guadalupe Posada

Diego Rivera

Frida Kahlo

David Alfaro Siqueiros

Jose Clemente Orozco

Instruct the students to complete the Research Questions Worksheet handed out earlier. After students finish quickly, have them choose their artist to work on. The students should type and print out answers to the research questions on each artist. They should also copy and print two pictures by each artist and include them with the answers to the research questions.

Eighth Classroom Session
After students have researched the artists and answered the questions pertaining to each, initiate a discussion on each artist. Select a student to record the pertinent information on a chart in the front of the class. In addition to discussing the information that the students discovered, have each student share a poster they have created showing the major events and accomplishments of the artist. The students should also create a timeline of the artist’s work and include any significant events in the timeline.

Give the students the following homework assignment:

Select the Mexican artist that had the greatest influence on you. Then, choose a contemporary artist that is similar to the Mexican artist. Create a mural that represents both artists. Write a paragraph explaining how you identified some of the artist’s techniques.

Closure: Classroom Presentations
Allow students to present their findings and discuss the influence of the Mexican Revolution on their lives. Have the discussion on the role of the artist in society and the importance of their work. The students should be able to discuss how the Mexican Revolution has shaped their understanding of history.

Assessment:
Assess the students’ works using the Assessment Rubric.

Sources:

Media:

Diego Rivera. VHS/DVD recording. Available through Appleab Learning Resources (Item number K91669)

Frida Kahlo. VHS/DVD recording. Available through Appleab Learning Resources (Item number K91686)

David Alfaro Siqueiros. VHS/DVD recording. Available through Appleab Learning Resources (Item number K91689)

Mexican Revolution: A Story of Courage and Conquest. VHS/DVD recording (New Installments). Available through Appleab Learning Resources (Item number AA962319)

Note: Some of these video recordings contain sensitive material and may not be suitable for classroom viewing. A pre-recorded version of suitable content may be ordered by the educator.

Authors:

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LESSONS: LESSON PLAN

This Lesson at a Glance:
Grade Band: 9-12
Integrated Subjects:
- Music
- Language Arts
- Social Studies

Materials:
For the teacher:
☐ Assessment Rubric

For the student:
☐ What is a Corrido?
☐ "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez"
☐ "Story of Gregorio Cortez"
☐ "El Moro de Cumpas"

Related Lessons:
9-12: Five Artists of the Mexican Revolution

Related WebLinks:
MexOnline.com: Mexican Revolution of 1910
Smithsonian Institution: Corridos sin Fronteras
PBS: Interactive Timeline on The Border
Smithsonian Institution: Migrations in History

Related How-To’s:
Turning Students into Songwriters: Tips on Writing Corrido Lyrics
There’s a Song in Everyone: Tips on Composing a Simple Corrido

Related Look-Listen-Learn:
Corridos

Targeted Standards:
The National Standards For Arts Education:
Music (9-12)
Standard 8: Listening to, analyzing,

Form and Theme in the Traditional Mexican Corrido

Part of the Unit: The Music & Meaning of Mexican Corridos

Lesson Overview:
Students will learn about the traditional Mexican musical form of corridos, which dates back to the 1800s and continues to be very popular. They will analyze the themes and literary devices used in corridos such as "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez" and "El Moro de Cumpas". The lesson will culminate in students writing their own corridos based on the traditional form.

Length of Lesson:
Two 45-minute class periods

Notes:
This lesson is particularly suitable for grades 11-12.

Instructional Objectives:
Students will:
- analyze corridos to gain a sense of the traditional form
- analyze theme and literary devices in corridos
- write original corridos based on the traditional form

Supplies:
For the Student:
- Pen and journal

For the Teacher:
- Computer with internet access or CD player to play music (optional)

Instructional Plan:
Warm Up
Begin with a freewriting exercise (or if using class journals, ask students to write in their journals). Ask students to describe what their everyday life is like. Then ask them to write about a time when their everyday life was disrupted in some way—anything from a humorous anecdote to a significant event.

Ask students how the language they used in their freewriting exercise may differ from essays they turn in as homework assignments or from business letters. Explain that many forms of literature are written in everyday, ordinary language (i.e., poems by Langston Hughes, contemporary slam poets, etc.); the Mexican corrido is one example of a literary tradition written in everyday language.
and describing music
Music (9-12)
Standard 8: Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts

Music (9-12)
Standard 9: Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Other National Standards:
Language Arts IV (9-12)
Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Language Arts IV (9-12)
Standard 2: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

Language Arts IV (9-12)
Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Language Arts IV (9-12)
Standard 6: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts

United States History IV (9-12)
Standard 17: Understands massive immigration after 1870 and how new social patterns, conflicts, and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity

ICON LEGEND:

= part of the current spotlight
= opens in a new window
= kid-friendly
= interactive
= audio
= video
= images

Introduction to the Corrido

Pass out the What is the Corrido? Info Sheet and discuss the characteristics of corridos. Explain that the corrido is a type of ballad or short narrative, a story usually based in real life. Ballads have been written in cultures all over the world, and the form dates back to the 14th and 15th centuries. The ballad has roots in the oral tradition, and thus the form is simple and direct, and uses ordinary, everyday speech and dialogue. The subjects in ballads tend to be about lost love and recent events. Some traditional corridos, in particular, tended to focus on events due to the clashing of cultures—that of the United States and Mexico. However, almost any subject can be the focus of a corrido.

When Daily Life is Disrupted

Although many traditional corridos were written about historical events (wars and revolutions) and heroes (John F. Kennedy and Fernando Valenzuela), and major catastrophes (earthquakes and train wrecks), many corridos were written about the common aspects of everyday life, and the ways that everyday life is disrupted. Subjects of such corridos have included the struggles and joys in relationships and employment, the characteristics of a hometown or region, and stories of individuals who defend themselves from outside forces.

Corridos sung along the U.S.-Mexico border in the 19th and early 20th centuries, for instance, often dealt with conflict between the U.S. and Mexico that affected their daily lives. Pass out the lyrics to the famous corrido, "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez" and the "Story of Gregorio Cortez" Info Sheets.

Provide students with some historical context surrounding Cortez's story. Cortez epitomized the border hero for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans because he represented a man who stood on principles and defended his rights against the richens, the name given to Texas Rangers (a "law enforcement" group that was founded in 1823 to fight Native Americans).

The Texas Rangers had achieved worldwide fame as a fighting force during the Mexican-American War, but when the war ended, the Rangers no longer had an official function since it was up to the U.S. military to defend Texas. The Texas Rangers continued to participate in fights with Mexican nationals. In 1916, Pancho Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico and intensified tensions between Anglos and Hispanics. The Rangers, along with hundreds of special Rangers appointed by Texas governors, killed approximately 5,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans between 1914-1919. Stories of brutality and injustice among the Rangers were common.

Discuss how Gregorio Cortez is depicted as a border hero in the corrido. Ask students whether they think he would be such a hero if he were not a farm hand and vaquero, but an outlaw prior to his encounter with the sheriff. Albeit Cortez's story is a more extreme example of conflict between cultures, the Mexican and Mexican-American people could relate to Cortez's struggle, because it mirrored their own everyday struggles living in under poor employment and economic conditions and their own conflicts with the richens. Discuss how the theme of "his pistol in his hand" is linked to the oppression of Mexicans by the United States.

Examine how the lyricist glorifies Cortez through simile (comparison of two unlike objects with the word "like" or "as") and hyperbole (exaggeration for emphasis) in "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez." Ask students for examples ("leaped out of the corral", "his voice was like a bell", "trying to catch Cortez/ Was like following a star."). Remind students that the characteristics of heroes in many literary traditions (i.e., folk tales) are often depicted in hyperboles (obvious exaggeration for effect).

Analyzing Symbolism & Theme in Corrido Lyrics

Inform students that corridos were usually written in a timely fashion in response to current events. Pass out the lyrics to the corrido "El Moro de Cumpas" by Leonardo Yañez, which tells the story of a very famous horse race that took place in 1957 in the town of Agua Prieta, Mexico, which borders Douglas, Arizona. Composer Leonardo Yañez (nicknamed "El Naco"), a member of the Mariachi Copacabana, wrote this corrido after watching the
race from the finish line. "El Moro de Cumpas" is one of the best known corridos; almost every singer of this tradition knows it. This corrido also served as the inspiration for a feature-length commercial film about the horse race it documents.

Tell students that the horse is an important symbol in Mexican culture. First of all, horses are essential to the cattle industry, a widespread source of employment in many parts of Mexico, including the northern border states. Secondly, without horses, the Spanish conquistadors would not have been able to defeat the native peoples and occupy their land. Point out that a horse is also important in "El Corrido de Gregorio Cortez" since without the horse, he would not have been able to outrun the riches. Also, in rural Mexico, the horse used to be an important means of transportation. Horseracing became a popular form of entertainment for Mexicans and Mexican Americans, and remains so today. In Mexican horse races, usually only two horses are raced against each other.

In corridos about horse races, the horses are often given human characteristics that describe them as brave, respectable men. And although there is one winner in the competition, both participants are honored. Read the lyrics of "El Moro de Cumpas" aloud. You may also wish to play an excerpt of the corrido for your students (see the ArtsEdge Look-Listen-Learn resource Corridos.) Ask students to point out instances in the lyrics in which the horses were given human characteristics (i.e., El Moro is described as handsome, both horses are "two seekers after triumph").

Discuss the themes of the corrido. One theme involves the way people are prone to make judgments based on appearances. Point out the lines "Everyone kept saying / that that horse came / especially to win." Ask students why everyone thought El Moro was going to win (they were charmed by his good looks). Note that Relámpago surprised many of the betters (note that "relámpago" translates to "lightning").

Discuss the theme of gambling in the poem. Note how many people from Agua Prieta and neighboring towns voted on the match. Discuss what the allure of gambling is, in general, including at American horse and dog tracks as well as the lottery and casinos. Ask students if they think economic conditions in the border town of Agua Prieta may have influenced more people to gamble. Tell students that many who bet on Moro lost not only money but also vehicles and ranches. Discuss how the descriptions of the horses and the horserace reveal a general respect for horses. Gambling is not criticized in the lyrics, for example. The horses are lauded for their beauty and speed. Ask students how the description of the horses reflects the important position of the horse in Mexican culture.

Ask students how Yañez builds suspense in this corrido (by waiting until the last two stanzas to state the winner of the race). Discuss how writers are able to create "page turners" through suspense.

**Student Corridistas**

Challenge students to write their own corridos. You may wish to encourage them to write on whatever they would like, or provide some options (see the What is a Corrido? handout for potential themes). The main criterion is that the corrido should be centered on an event, character, or story that is happening in the present time. Tell students that they must follow the form of traditional corridos and use colloquial language. You may also wish to ask students to make their corridos suspenseful.

See the ArtsEdge How-to: Turning Students into Songwriters: Tips on Writing Corrido Lyrics for helpful guidelines on writing lyrics. Inspire students by sharing corridos written by fellow high school students. Winners of the annual Bilingual Corrido Contest in Arizona, a program conducted by the University of Arizona Poetry Center, have written some excellent corridos. See the 2003 winner, "El rancho de los pinos" by Juliana Echenivel Prieto, a corrido about a family that gathers on Sundays to spend time together, and "El corrido de caballo con hambre y sed" by Adriana Aguilar, a corrido about a child who is tasked with feeding a hungry, thirsty horse. Both student corridos and
additional examples of corridos are available on the ARTSEDGE Look-Listen-Learn resource, Corridos.

Assessment:
Assess the students based on the following criteria:
- evidence of understanding through insightful and frequent participation in class discussions
- evidence of understanding of the corrido form
- wrote an original corrido in the traditional form that reflects the student's understanding of the corrido tradition

You may also use the Assessment Rubric.

Extensions:
Organize a corrido concert, asking students to read the lyrics of their songs aloud or better yet, sing them or even perform them in a student in your class plays an appropriate instrument (i.e., guitar, accordion). See the ArtsEdge How-to: There's a Song in Everyone: Tips on Composing a Simple Corrido for useful guidelines on helping students to compose music.

Sources:
Print:

Media:

Web:

Authors:
- Theresa Sotto
  Santa Monica, CA

Collaborating Organizations:
- The University of Arizona Poetry Center
  Tuscon, AZ
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**Student Name:**

**Form and Theme in the Traditional Mexican Corrido**

**Assessment Rubric:**

- Analyze Mexican corridos to gain a sense of the traditional form.
- Analyze the corrido's form and theme.
- Develop an original corrido based on the traditional form.
- Write the original corrido based on the traditional form.
The University of Arizona Poetry Center, an area of emphasis within the College of Humanities, is a nationally renowned special collections library and archive, academic and community resource, and sponsor of numerous outreach programs, including a distinguished poetry reading series.

http://www.poetrycenter.arizona.edu

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The *corrido* is a musical form developed in Mexico during the 1800s and originally sung throughout the country. Although still popular in Mexico, over time it became known as "musica de la frontera" (border music) because it was especially popular along both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. This musical-poetic form continues to be popular wherever Mexicans and Mexican Americans live.

**Language**
The following elements characterize the language in *corridos*:

- *Corridos* are stories told in poetic form and sung to simple, basic music, much like English ballads.
- *Corridos* use common, everyday language.
- Although traditional corridos were always in Spanish, in recent years some have appeared in English as well, or have mixed the two languages.
- The audience, if addressed is always addressed politely.
- The tone can vary from sincere to satirical.

**Structure**
The stories that *corridos* tell, either fictional or historical, must be sung in the vernacular language of the people in order to be remembered (whether in English, Spanish or a mixture.) There is some variation in the poetic form, but most *corridos* have the following structure:

- 36 lines (6 stanzas of 6 lines each or 9 stanzas of 4 lines each)
- 7 to 10 syllables per line (sometimes the lines are repeated)
- Rhyme scheme that varies but most commonly uses an ABCDB form in a six-line stanza or ABCB in a four-line stanza. (Sometimes couplets are used: AABB.)
- By tradition, the first stanza provides a setting for the story by either giving a specific date or naming a place.

**Content**
The traditional historical *corrido* told about actual events, especially the exploits of famous heroes or the tragic deaths of individuals fighting unjust authorities. When *corridos* became more commercially exploitable, some became mostly fictional. Today, a *corrido* can be about almost anything. These are some of the popular subjects:

- animals (such as racehorses or roosters)
- tragic love affairs
- criminal dealings, especially with contraband and smuggling
- migration and migrant labor
- social and political events
- the struggles of everyday life along the border
- assassinations or other violent deaths
- humorous occurrences or relationships
- catastrophes
- hometowns and regions
- miraculous events
- wars and revolutions
- local or national heroes
Translated by Américo Paredes

In the county of El Carmen
A great misfortune befell;
The major sheriff is dead;
Who killed him no one can tell.

At two in the afternoon,
In half an hour or less,
They knew that the man who killed him
Had been Gregorio Cortez.

They let loose the bloodhound dogs;
They followed him from afar.
But trying to catch Cortez
Was like following a star.

All the rangers of the county
Were flying, they rode so hard;
What they wanted was to get
The thousand-dollar reward.

And in the county of Kiansis
They cornered him after all;
Though they were more than three hundred
He leaped out of their corral.

Then the Major Sheriff said,
As if he was going to cry,
"Cortez, hand over your weapons;
We want to take you alive."

Then said Gregorio Cortez,
And his voice was like a bell,
"You will never get my weapons
Till you put me in a cell."

Then said Gregorio Cortez
With his pistol in his hand,
"Ah, so many mounted Rangers
Just to take one Mexican!"

Source:
A farm hand and vaquero (cowboy), Gregorio Cortez had not gotten into much legal trouble until a sheriff shot his brother while looking for a horse thief. On June 12, 1901, Karnes County sheriff W.T. "Brack" Morris, accompanied by two deputies, sought out Cortez because a resident in the town stated he recently acquired a mare after trading a horse with Gregorio Cortez. According to official testimony, the deputy who translated Morris's questions to Cortez was not a proficient translator. When Cortez said, "You can't arrest me for nothing," Morris believed he said, "No white man can arrest me." As a result, Morris shot and wounded Gregorio Cortez's brother Romaldo Cortez, and in retaliation, Cortez shot and killed the sheriff and fled. While trying to escape, Cortez was apprehended by a sheriff (Glover) and his posse in a nearby county. In the attempt to capture Cortez, Glover and one of his men, Schnabel, were killed. Cortez soon gained a reputation as a gang leader and sheriff-killer, and a $1,000 reward was offered for his capture. Hundreds of men, including the Texas Rangers, sought to capture Cortez, but Cortez was able to evade them for 10 days. On June 22, 1901, Cortez's acquaintance, Jesus Gonzalez, led a posse to Cortez. Many consider Gonzalez a traitor to his people.

Tejanos, who saw Cortez as a hero able to evade the rinchos, were the recipients of violence. By the time Cortez was captured, at least nine persons of Mexican descent had been killed and three wounded.

Once Cortez was captured, many organizations were founded to support Cortez and assist him in gaining legal representation. One lawyer, B.R. Abernathy, was instrumental in Cortez's trial, and instead of being charged guilty of first-degree murder of Schnabel, Cortez was charged with second-degree murder and was sentenced to fifty years in prison. However, a Texas Court of Criminal appeals reversed the verdict, and sentenced him to life in prison for the murder of Sheriff Glover. While in prison, Cortez worked as a barber, and meanwhile, many supporters of Cortez attempted to get him pardoned, and in 1913, the attempts proved fruitful. Cortez was granted a conditional pardon.
"El Moro de Cumpas" by Leonardo Yañez

El diecisiete de marzo, a la ciudad de Agua Prieta vino gente de dondequiera; vinieron a las carreras de Relámpago y El Moro, dos caballos de primera.

El Moro de Pedro Frisby era del pueblo de Cumpas, muy bonito y muy ligero. El Relámpago era un zaino; era caballo de estima de su amo, Rafael Romero.

Cuando paseaban al Moro, se miraba tan bonito que empezaron a apostar. Toda la gente decía que aquel caballo venía especialmente a ganar.

Cheques, billetes, y pesos le sobraron al de Cumpas el domingo en la mañana. Por la tarde, las apuestas pasaron de cien mil pesos en esa Copacabana.

Aprovecharon la apuesta rancheros y ganaderos, obreros y campesinos, cantineros y meseros, amigos y visitantes de pueblos circunvecinos.

Frank y Jesús Valenzuela taparon quince mil pesos con el zaino de Romero. Decía el Puyo Morales, "Se me hace que con El Moro nos ganan todo el dinero."

On the seventeenth of March, to the city of Agua Prieta people came from all over; they came to the races between Relámpago and El Moro, two first-class horses.

Pedro Frisby's Moro was from the town of Cumpas, very good-looking and very fast. El Relámpago was a chestnut; he was the favorite horse of his owner, Rafael Romero.

When they exercised El Moro, he looked so handsome that people started to bet. Everyone kept saying that that horse came especially to win.

Checks, bills, and coins were placed on the horse from Cumpas on Sunday morning. By afternoon, the bets exceeded a hundred thousand pesos in that Copacabana.

The betting was taken advantage of by ranchers and cattlemen, workers and peasants, bartenders and waiters, friends and visitors from neighboring towns.

Frank and Jesús Valenzuela put fifteen thousand pesos on Romero's chestnut. Puyo Morales said, "It seems to me that with El Moro they're going to win all our money."

Continued on the next page
Andaba Trini Ramírez
también Chendo Valenzuela
paseando ya los caballos:
dos corredores de faja,
dos buscadores de triunfo,
los dos eran buenos gallos.

Por fin dieron el Santiago,
y El Moro salió adelante
con la intención de ganar.
Ramírez le tupe al zaino
y arriba de mediotaste
dejaba El Moro pa’ atrás.

Leonardo Yáñez, "El Nano,"
compositor del corrido,
a todos pide disculpa.
Aquí se acabaron dudas
ganó el zaino de Agua Prieta,
y perdió El Moro de Cumpas.

Trini Ramírez and also
Chendo Valenzuela walked along
excercising the horses:
two surcingle-style racers,
two seekers after triumph,
the two were real fighting cocks.

At last they started the race,
and El Moro started off ahead
intending to win.
Ramírez quirted the chestnut
and halfway down the track
he left the Moro behind.

Leonardo Yáñez, "El Nano,"
composer of this corrido,
begs pardon of everyone.
There is no doubt that
the chestnut from Agua Prieta won,
and El Moro from Cumpas lost.