

Google Arts & Culture

Learn Together: Latino Cultures in the United States — History and Expression



Using the lesson plan and Google Arts & Culture resources

This lesson plan is designed to support you as you explore Google Arts & Culture stories and exhibits related to the lesson topic. The images you will see here are just a sample of the media—texts, images, audio, and video—available to you on the Google Arts & Culture website. A parent or teacher might be guiding you through the lesson, or you might choose to complete it on your own.

All you need to access the lesson is an internet connection and a web browser. You may want to take notes, whether you do that digitally or with paper and pen.

The lesson plan has an **introduction**, which will describe the topic and provide some background information that will help you understand what you are seeing, hearing, and reading. Then the lesson will take you on a journey from one **Story** or **Exhibit** to another, fill in some details along the way, and pose **questions** that will help you focus on important ideas. Some lesson plans include a **project** related to the lesson topic. All end with a **quiz** some **ideas for exploring the topic further**.

The lesson plan includes **questions** about the main stories and exhibits, and there is also a **quiz**. You will want to write answers to the questions in a notebook or on a piece of paper. Then you can check all your answers when you've finished the lesson.

Resources on the Google Arts & Culture website include stories, exhibits, museum views, and collections.

- ❖ **Themes** bring together stories, exhibits, collections, images, audio, and video files that relate to a topic.
- ❖ In a **Story**, clicking on the arrow on the right side of a slide will move you forward. The arrow on the left side takes you back. Sometimes, clicking on the right arrow will zoom you in on an image. Just keep clicking to keep moving forward. Audio and videos on slides will play automatically. Clicking on an image title will take you to a page with more information about it.
- ❖ Some **Exhibits** have the same set up as stories. Others require you to scroll.
- ❖ In **Museum Views**, you move through a 3D space. Click to move forward. Click, hold, and move the cursor left or right to turn.



In this lesson, you will learn about:

- ❖ what it means to be a Latin American.
- ❖ some of the many different Latin American cultures.
- ❖ the lives and experiences of Latinos in the United States.
- ❖ how some Latinos have found ways to express their history and who they are through art.

You will:

- ❖ view some stories and exhibits about Latin Americans, including Latino artists—painters, sculptors, dancers, writers, and more.
- ❖ answer some questions about what you have seen and read.

This lesson will take **30–45 minutes** to complete.



Learn Together: Latino Cultures in the United States—History and Expression

"Latino" describes people originating from Latin America, a vast region comprised of 33 countries, including Mexico in North America, the countries of Central and South America, and some island countries in the Caribbean Sea. This region was colonized by Spain and Portugal beginning in the 1400s. Over three centuries, colonizers mixed with indigenous peoples to create a diverse, multi-racial, and multi-ethnic people who represent many different cultures. About 60% of Latin Americans speak Spanish, 34% speak Portuguese, and others speak English, other European languages, or indigenous languages. Latinos may identify with race, nationality, indigenous ancestral heritage, or with more than one of these things.

There were Latinos in what is now the United States well before it became a nation, and millions of Latin Americans have immigrated here since the 1800s. Today there are over 58 million people of Latin American descent making their lives in the US. Latin Americans have brought their diverse cultures north, and they give expression to them in diverse ways.

As you view the exhibits and stories in this lesson, think about these questions:

- ❖ Why have Latin Americans immigrated to the United States?
- ❖ What do Latinos in the United States have in common? What are some of their differences?
- ❖ What do we mean when we say "Latino Cultures"?



Nuestras Historias: Latinos in Richmond

Richmond is the capital city of Virginia. From 1990 to 2010, the American South had the fastest growing Latino population in the United States. Virginia's Latino population grew 92% from 2000 to 2010—that is, it almost doubled! Richmond, along with other southern localities in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia, is undergoing a dramatic demographic shift.

Click [here](#) to learn about the lives of Latinos living in Richmond.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. How many languages are spoken in Latin America? Name three of them.
2. Héctor “Coco” Barez talks about segregation in Richmond. What is segregation?
3. Explain the meaning of this statement:
Kevin Lamarr Jones “traces his family lineage to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, where his family was divided between the United States and Cuba.” Explain the meaning of this statement.



Hector “Coco” Marez (March 7, 2017), Steven Casanova, The Valentine



Latino Experience in the USA: Works from the MFAH Collection

Latin America has a long tradition of the arts, beginning with the architecture of the Mayas, Olmecs, Aztecs, and Incas and the sculptures that adorned it. European colonizers brought other artforms. Over time, Latin Americans developed diverse styles of visual art, music, dance, and other performance arts that reflect the distinct cultures of the region. Latinos in the United States continue to express the cultures where they have roots.

Click [here](#) to see artworks by several Latino artists in the US.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. César A. Martínez is “one of the most important living Chicano artists.” What is a Chicano?
2. How does Lorenzo Homar honor his heritage in his art?
3. Describe the painting "The Anguish of Being and the Nothingness of the Universe" by Marcos Raya. What was Raya's intent in making this painting?



Mundos de Mestizaje

The artist Frederico Vigil was born in 1946 and grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He specializes in fresco painting, which involves painting on fresh wet plaster. In 2002, he began work on a vast fresco—4,300 square feet (399.5 square meters), almost as big as a basketball court—in a tower in Albuquerque, New Mexico’s National Hispanic Cultural Center. The mural depicts hundreds of years of Hispanic history and culture. The title of the fresco is “Mundos de Mestizaje,” or “World of Mestizos.” The word *mestizo* refers to a person of European and Indigenous American descent. For a long time, this word was often used as an insult, but Frederico Vigil is using it in a careful way. His painting depicts, in part, the mixing of Indigenous American people with European newcomers.

Click [here](#) to see the fresco and learn more about it.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. How long did it take Frederico Vigil to complete the mural “Mundos de Mestizaje”?
2. Why do you think Vigil had the help of scholars in making the mural?
3. Do some research to learn about Our Lady of Guadalupe and write a short essay—three to four paragraphs—about this important Mexican figure.

Ballet Hispánico: History and Mission

Ballet Hispánico, America's leading Latino dance organization, has been bringing people together to celebrate the joy and diversity of Latino cultures for 50 years. Over the past five decades, Ballet Hispánico's mission-driven ethos has been a catalyst of change for communities throughout our nation.

Please note that this exhibit includes audio and video.

Click [here](#) to learn about Ballet Hispánico.

Then come back to answer these questions:

1. Who is Tina Ramirez?
2. Why did Tina Ramirez found the Ballet Hispánico?
3. The text uses the term "Latinx". What is the meaning of this term?

To learn about a Latina dancer who has become an international star, click [here](#).



Eduardo Vilaro, Dancer, 1996, by William Frederking, Ballet Hispánico

Quiz

Read the questions and write your answer in your notebook or on a piece of paper.

1. What makes a Latino living in the United States a Latino?
2. What is a *siesta*?
3. Explain this statement:
Language brings people together but can also create barriers.
4. What are two things all the artists you learned about in this lesson have in common?
5. Why is Christopher Columbus a controversial figure today?
6. What is “Manifest Destiny”?
7. In what country was Tina Ramirez born?
8. In what way is Ballet Hispánico Hispanic?

Explore Further

This lesson has given you some vocabulary to talk about Latino cultures in the United States. It has also introduced you to some basic ideas that are relevant to this topic. To learn more about Latino cultures in the US, click [here](#).

It's Your Turn!

In this lesson, you learned about the experiences of some Latinos living the United States. You saw and read about the works of several Latino artists—painters, a sculptor, and dancers—who express themselves through doing. Now it's your turn to do something. Here are some ideas for projects that you can do at home or in the classroom.

- ❖ Create a design for a poster about a Latin American country. Choose a country that interests you and do some research to learn about it. You can draw or paint your poster or make a collage with pictures from the internet. Choose images that show some of the important landmarks of the country. Include captions that identify the landmarks.
- ❖ Create an interactive artwork like “Kiss of the Egg” by Gabriel Orozco—a sculpture that people can touch and move and even change in some way. For materials, use things you find around the house, but nothing as fragile as an egg!
- ❖ Do some research about types of dances that come from Latin America and create a dance of your own. Or create a dance that shows your response to one of the artworks you saw in this lesson.



Answers

Nuestras Historias: Latinos in Richmond

1. Over 100 languages are spoken throughout Latin America. The text mentions Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and English.
2. Segregation is the forced separation of racial groups.
3. Jones's ancestors were enslaved Africans. Some were brought to the United States (perhaps before the nation had been founded), and some were brought to the island of Cuba.

Latino Experience in the USA: Works from the MFAH Collection

1. A Chicano is an American of Mexican descent. *Chicano* is the masculine form of the word, and *Chicana* is the feminine form.
2. Homar is a Latin American descended in part from Spaniards. He uses traditional Spanish calligraphy in his art.
3. Descriptions will vary. Rayas felt that society was turning people into machines. He depicted this in his works with figures with human features that look like they are formed from metal.

Mundos de Mestizaje

1. It took Vigil over a decade to complete the mural.
2. Answers will vary. Vigil knew the story he wanted to tell with his mural was long and complicated. Probably, he wanted to make sure he got it "right."
3. Essays will vary.

Ballet Hispánico: History and Mission

1. Tina Ramirez is a dancer who founded Ballet Hispánico.
2. At the time that Ramirez founded the company, Latinos were a marginalized people in the US. She wanted to empower them and give them a voice.
3. In Spanish, nouns and adjectives can be masculine or feminine. The word *Latino* is masculine, while *Latina* is feminine. But in English, *Latino* is used for both men and women, and some people wanted a word that is gender-neutral—that is, neither masculine nor feminine—and coined the word *Latinx*.

Quiz

1. Answers may vary. A Latino living in the US is a person who came from Latin America or is descended from someone who did.
2. A *siesta* is a midday break from work, a time to eat and rest.
3. Answers may vary. People who speak the same language can communicate with one another. People who don't speak the same language may have difficulty communicating.
4. Answers will vary. The artists are all Latino, and they all are using their art to explore their Latino heritage.
5. Columbus was a brutal ruler on the islands he took over.
6. Manifest Destiny is the idea that the European settlers in North America had a right given to them by God to expand across the continent and take over the land.
7. Tina Ramirez was born in Venezuela.
8. Ballet Hispánico incorporates distinctly Hispanic dance forms into its dances.

Sources

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